NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

# HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 23 June 2023

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on key human resources metrics for the period 1 April to 31 May 2023, with the exception of absence data, which is for the reporting period 1 January to 31 March 2023.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the contents of this report.

**CONTACT OFFICER**


| | |
|---|---|
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## 1. BACKGROUND

1.1 As part of its remit, the Human Resources Committee of Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority receives regular updates on human resources (HR) issues within the Service. This includes issues such as sickness absence, formal discipline, grievance, employment tribunal cases and staffing numbers. These issues are collectively referred to as HR metrics.

1.2 Reports are on a quarterly basis and allow the Human Resources Committee to keep informed of ongoing issues and offer their guidance and scrutiny. Due to the timing of this Committee, the review period does not cover the whole of Quarter One but runs from 1 April to 31 May. Metrics from May-June will be reported as part of the next update.

## 2. REPORT

### STAFFING NUMBERS

2.1 During the period 1 April 2023 to 31 May 2023, 14 employees commenced employment. Establishment levels as of 31 May 2023 are highlighted below:

| | Approved | Actual | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wholetime** | 431<br>(431 fte) | 413<br>(412.3fte) | -18<br>(-18.7fte) |
| **On-Call** | 192 Units | 239 persons<br>(includes 73 dual contracts) | -63.5 units |
| **Support** | 163<br>(161.3 fte) | 156<br>(145.23 fte) | -7<br>(-16.07fte) |

2.2 There have been 18 leavers and 14 starters since the last report. This has resulted in an actual workforce figure of 807 (this includes 73 dual contractors). Leavers are broken down as follows: eight wholetime, three on-call and seven support roles.

2.3 As at 31 May 2023, wholetime strength stood at 413 operational personnel (412.3 fte) employees against an establishment of 431 posts.

2.4 During the period, the Service has appointed to eleven wholetime and three support roles.

### SICKNESS ABSENCE – Q4

2.5 The review period covers the three-month period between 1 January and 31 March 2023.

2.6 Target absence figures for 2022/23 are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Wholetime: | 9.05 days per person |
| Support: | 9.35 days per person |
| On-Call Workforce: | 13.2 days per person |

(The average is affected by the numbers of employees in each work group and the average work shift and reflects national sector averages in 2021-22).

2.7 For the purposes of reporting, on-call absence analysis is shown separately to other workgroups due to the nature of their working arrangements. Absence related to Covid has been included in the total absence figures.

**Workforce (Excluding On-Call)**

2.8 Total absence across the workforce decreased by 203 days (-12.2%) in Q4 compared to the previous quarter.

2.9 This also represents a decrease compared to the same quarter of 2021-22 of 459 days (–24%).

2.10 Absence related to Covid represents 88.54 working days lost, which accounts for 6.1% of total absence, compared to 9.2% in Q3.

2.11 Long term absence equated to 54.8% of sickness absence in Q4. It is notable that 71.7% of absence for employees undertaking support roles was long-term in nature.

2.12 Absence trends across the last three years are shown in the table set out in Appendix A.

**On-Call Workforce**

2.13 For on-call staff, absence figures in Q4 decreased by 215 days (-17.9%) compared to the previous quarter.

2.14 This also represents a decrease compared to the same quarter of 2021-22 of 125 days (-11.2%).

2.15 Absence related to Covid represents 41 working days lost, which accounts for 4.1% of total absence.

2.16 Long term absence equated to 67% of sickness absence in Q4.

2.17 A summary of the reasons for absence by workgroup are attached at Appendix C.

**Whole Year Review**

2.18 Absence overall decreased in 2022-23 by 11.47% compared to 2021-22 with reductions across all work groups, broken down as follows: 14.9% for

wholetime employees, 6.6% for employees undertaking support roles, and by 10.1% for on-call employees.

2.19 Average absence across work groups was as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Wholetime employees: | 9.73 days |
| On Call employees: | 17.08 days |
| Support employees: | 12.97 days |

2.20 Long-term absence accounted for 61% of all sickness absence.

2.21 Absence related to Covid still accounted for 1182 days of sickness absence, equating to 11.75%.

**NATIONAL ABSENCE TRENDS**

2.22 The Service contributes to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) sickness absence survey, which is undertaken quarterly and allows for comparison between contributing fire and rescue services.

2.23 Reasons for sickness absence at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) broadly mirror the national trends with musculo-skeletal and mental health related absences featuring significantly in all workgroups.

2.24 Appendix B reflects the national absence trends at the end of Quarter 4 (whole year). The three charts reflect wholetime, support staff (green book) and on-call the average of duty days/shifts lost per person for those fire and rescue services who contribute to the survey.

2.25 For wholetime staff, NFRS has an average of 9.75 days lost per employee, equating to 5.33% of lost working time, compared to a national average of 6.25%, which ranks the Service as 18 out of the 34 Services included in the survey. This figure is below the sector sickness average of 11.43 days per employee. The lowest average was 4.79 days and the highest 26 days.

2.26 For on-call staff, NFRS has an average of 17.08 days lost per employee which ranks the Service as 13 out of 21 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 16.44 days per employee. The lowest average was 4.33 days and the highest 41.01 days.

2.27 For support staff (green book) the Service has an average of 12.97 days lost per employee, equating to 4.97% of lost working time, compared to a national average of 3.7%, which ranks as 32 out of the 35 Services included in the survey. This figure is above the sector sickness average of 9.56 days per employee. The lowest average was 2.93 days and the highest 18.71 days.

**OTHER WORKFORCE METRICS**

2.28 This section reviews the following activities: disciplinary cases, grievances raised, harassment cases raised, dismissals, appeals and active employment tribunal cases.

2.29 Over the period, there were no grievances, disciplinary or harassment investigations completed. It should be noted that a discrimination claim that has previously been lodged with the employment tribunal office and reported to this committee has now been settled. There has been an ill-health retirement during the period.

## 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Authority's pay budgets cover the cost of the workforce, and these include budgets for overtime to cover sickness absence where operational cover is affected. The actual numbers of employees in post compared to the establishment can cause budgetary variances and these are reported to the Finance and Resources Committee.

3.2 Any increase in absence can have a direct impact upon the Service's operational pay budget as gaps in the ridership can lead to an increase in overtime pay to cover for long-term absence.

3.3 Any additional employment termination costs are included in revenue budget reporting to Finance and Resources Committee.

## 4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The human resources and learning and development implications are set out in the report.

## 5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

As this review does not impact upon policy or service delivery, no equality impact assessment has been undertaken.

## 6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## 8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A regular reporting system on the management of human resources ensures that the Service and the Authority are aware of any developing workforce issues.

## 9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

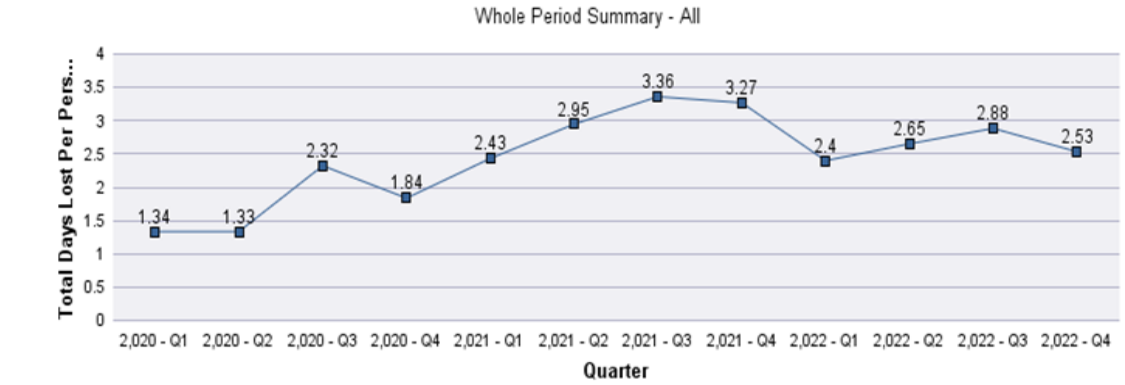
That Members note the contents of this report.

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

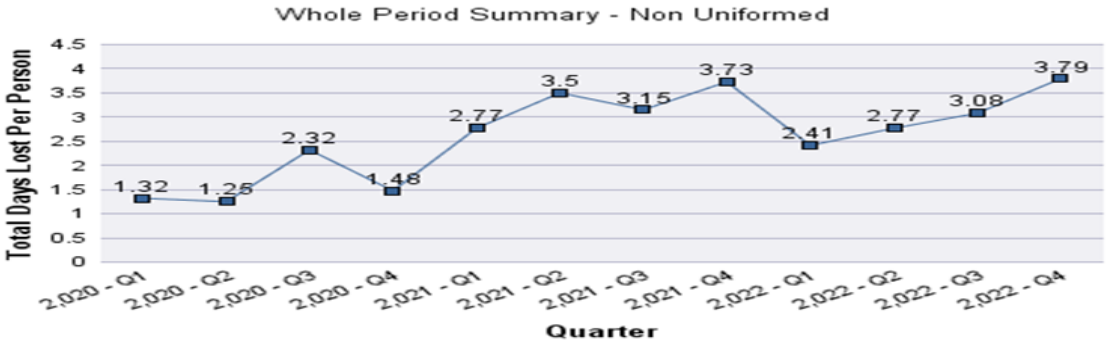
None.

Craig Parkin
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**APPENDIX A**

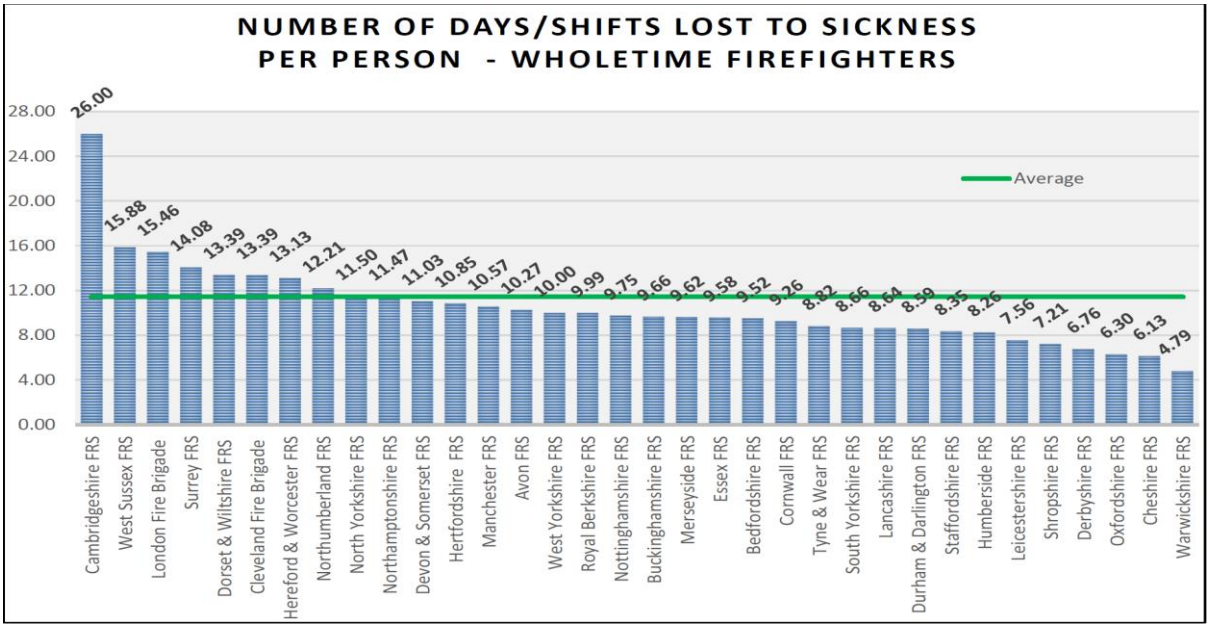

Whole Period Summary - All
Total Days Lost Per Pers...
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
1.34
1.33
2.32
1.84
2.43
2.95
3.36
3.27
2.4
2.65
2.88
2.53
2,020 - Q1
2,020 - Q2
2,020 - Q3
2,020 - Q4
2,021 - Q1
2,021 - Q2
2,021 - Q3
2,021 - Q4
2,022 - Q1
2,022 - Q2
2,022 - Q3
2,022 - Q4
Quarter

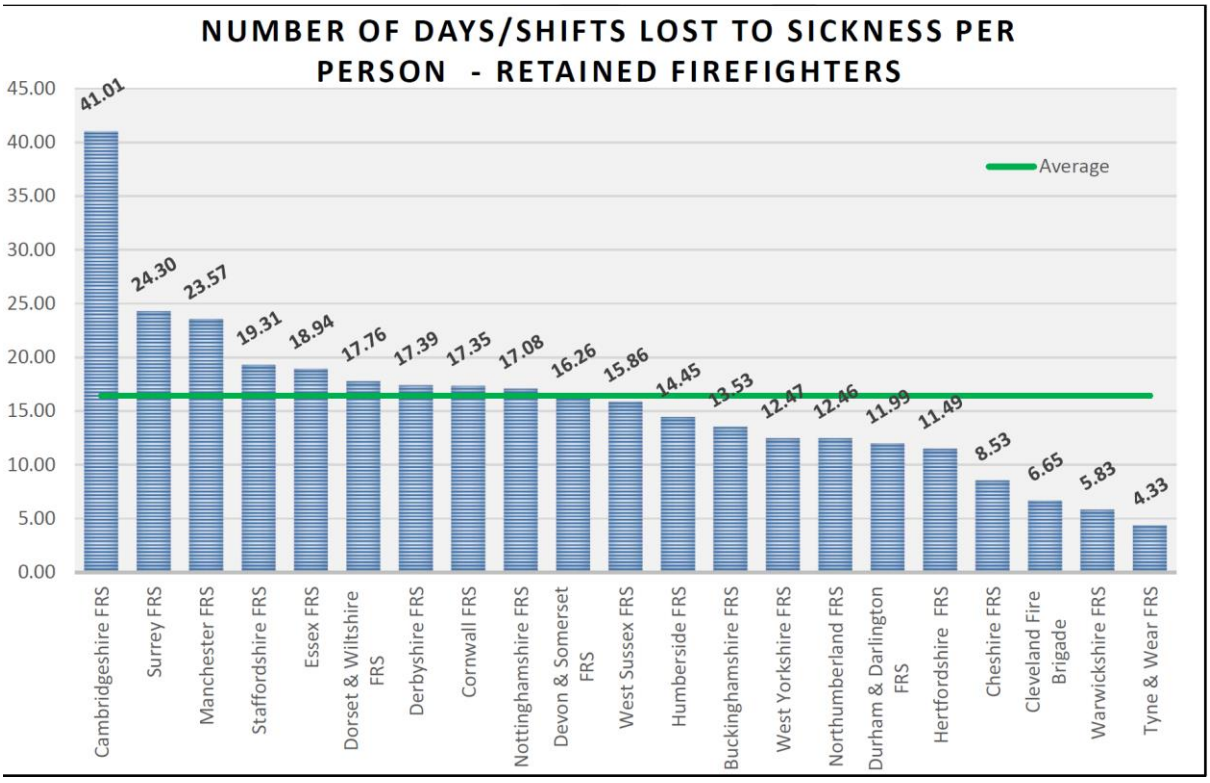
Whole Period Summary Wholetime & Control
Total Days Lost Per Person
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
1.34
1.37
2.32
1.98
2.3
2.73
3.44
3.09
2.39
2.61
2.81
2.03
2,020 - Q1
2,020 - Q2
2,020 - Q3
2,020 - Q4
2,021 - Q1
2,021 - Q2
2,021 - Q3
2,021 - Q4
2,022 - Q1
2,022 - Q2
2,022 - Q3
2,022 - Q4
Quarter

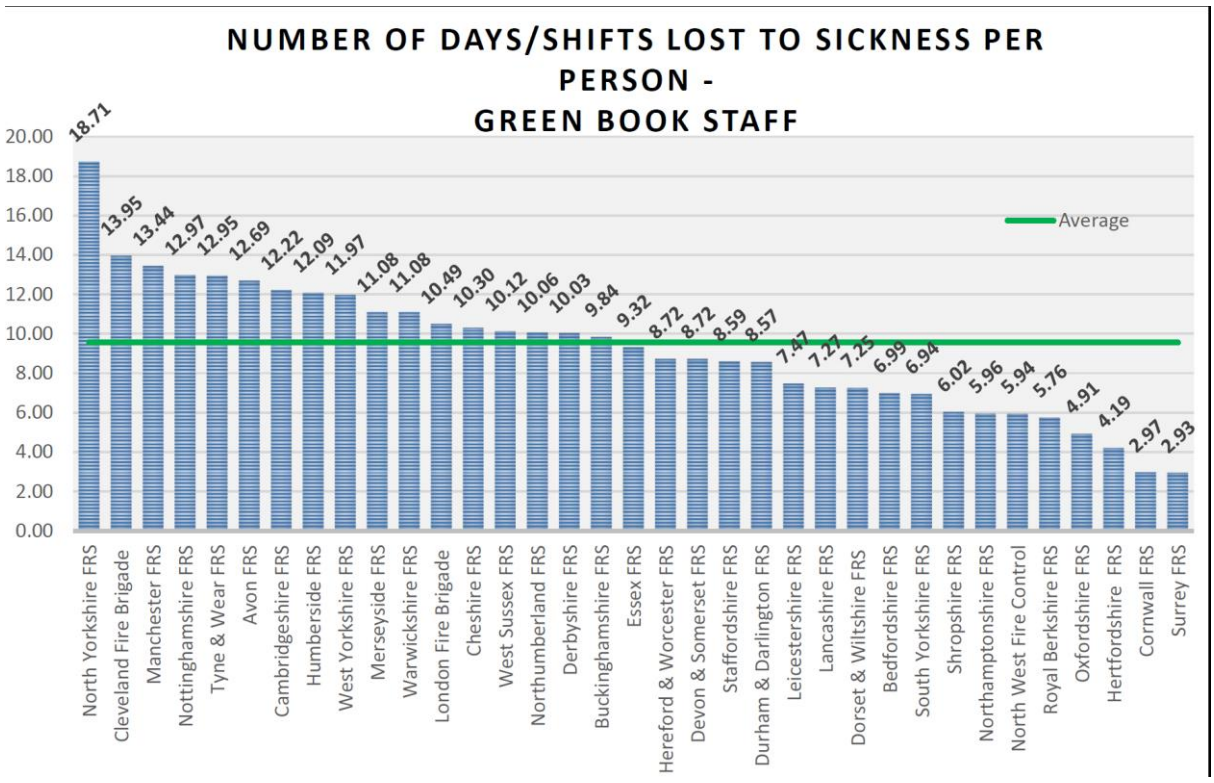

Whole Period Summary - Non Uniformed
Total Days Lost Per Person
4.5
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
1.32
1.25
2.32
1.48
2.77
3.5
3.15
3.73
2.41
2.77
3.08
3.79
2,020 - Q1
2,020 - Q2
2,020 - Q3
2,020 - Q4
2,021 - Q1
2,021 - Q2
2,021 - Q3
2,021 - Q4
2,022 - Q1
2,022 - Q2
2,022 - Q3
2,022 - Q4
Quarter

**APPENDIX B**

## National Absence Survey




NUMBER OF DAYS/SHIFTS LOST TO SICKNESS PER PERSON -
GREEN BOOK STAFF
Average
20.00
18.00
16.00
14.00
12.00
10.00
8.00
6.00
4.00
2.00
0.00
18.71
13.95
13.44
12.97
12.95
12.69
12.22
12.09
11.97
11.08
11.08
10.49
10.30
10.12
10.06
10.03
9.84
9.32
8.72
8.72
8.59
8.57
7.47
7.27
7.25
6.99
6.94
6.02
5.96
5.94
5.76
4.91
4.19
2.97
2.93
North Yorkshire FRS
Cleveland Fire Brigade
Manchester FRS
Nottinghamshire FRS
Tyne & Wear FRS
Avon FRS
Cambridgeshire FRS
Humberside FRS
West Yorkshire FRS
Merseyside FRS
Warwickshire FRS
London Fire Brigade
Cheshire FRS
West Sussex FRS
Northumberland FRS
Derbyshire FRS
Buckinghamshire FRS
Essex FRS
Hereford & Worcester FRS
Devon & Somerset FRS
Staffordshire FRS
Durham & Darlington FRS
Leicestershire FRS
Lancashire FRS
Dorset & Wiltshire FRS
Bedfordshire FRS
South Yorkshire FRS
Shropshire FRS
Northamptonshire FRS
North West Fire Control
Royal Berkshire FRS
Oxfordshire FRS
Hertfordshire FRS
Cornwall FRS
Surrey FRS

**APPENDIX C**

# Q4 2022/23 - Wholetime

**Short Term Absences**

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|---|---|---|
| Mental Health | 8 | 213 |
| Musculo Skeletal | 27 | 191 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 24 | 90 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 5 | 58 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 18 | 54 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 18 | 50 |
| Unknown causes, not specified | 9 | 42 |
| Other known causes (not specified in list) | 7 | 28 |
| Mental Health - Other | 3 | 25 |
| Virus/Infectious Diseases | 7 | 25 |

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|---|---|---|
| Musculo Skeletal | 23 | 119 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 24 | 90 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 18 | 54 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 18 | 50 |
| Mental Health | 4 | 36 |
| Other known causes (not specified in list) | 7 | 28 |
| Unknown causes, not specified | 8 | 26 |
| Virus/Infectious Diseases | 7 | 25 |
| Respiratory - Other | 1 | 13 |
| Ear, Nose, Throat | 4 | 12 |

**Long Term Absences**

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absen | Days Lost |
|---|---|---|
| Mental Health | 4 | 177 |
| Musculo Skeletal | 4 | 72 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 2 | 51 |
| Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems | 1 | 18 |
| Unknown causes, not specified | 1 | 16 |
| Mental Health - Other | 1 | 15 |

# Q4 2022/23 - On Call absence

**Short Term Absences**

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|---|---|---|
| Musculo Skeletal | 11 | 331 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 5 | 204 |
| Mental Health - Other | 2 | 92 |
| Respiratory - Other | 1 | 90 |
| Mental Health | 4 | 71 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 10 | 59 |
| Respiratory - Chest Infection | 5 | 44 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 8 | 41 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 7 | 19 |
| Other known causes (not specified in list) | 3 | 19 |

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|---|---|---|
| Musculo Skeletal | 7 | 71 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 10 | 59 |
| Respiratory - Chest Infection | 5 | 44 |
| Mental Health | 3 | 42 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 8 | 41 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 7 | 19 |
| Other known causes (not specified in list) | 3 | 19 |
| Unknown causes, not specified | 2 | 11 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 2 | 9 |
| Virus/Infectious Diseases | 1 | 7 |

**Long Term Absences**

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|---|---|---|
| Musculo Skeletal | 4 | 260 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 3 | 195 |
| Mental Health - Other | 1 | 90 |
| Respiratory - Other | 1 | 90 |
| Mental Health | 1 | 29 |

# Q4 2022/23 – Support staff absence

**Short Term Absences**

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|---|---|---|
| Mental Health | 8 | 212 |
| Musculo Skeletal | 6 | 121 |
| Mental Health - Other | 1 | 65 |
| Other known causes (not specified in list) | 4 | 47 |
| Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems | 1 | 39 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 10 | 36 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 11 | 34 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 4 | 22 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 5 | 13 |
| Respiratory - Chest Infection | 2 | 10 |

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|---|---|---|
| Mental Health | 4 | 41 |
| COVID-19 Isolating - Tested Positive | 10 | 36 |
| Respiratory - Cold/Cough/Influenza | 11 | 34 |
| Gastro-Intestinal | 5 | 13 |
| Respiratory - Chest Infection | 2 | 10 |
| Headache/Migraine/Neurological | 4 | 9.5 |
| Other known causes (not specified in list) | 3 | 9 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 3 | 8 |
| Musculo Skeletal | 3 | 8 |
| Virus/Infectious Diseases | 1 | 4 |

**Long Term Absences**

| Absence Reason - Grouped | Unique Absence Count | Days Lost |
|---|---|---|
| Mental Health | 4 | 171 |
| Musculo Skeletal | 3 | 113 |
| Mental Health - Other | 1 | 65 |
| Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems | 1 | 39 |
| Other known causes (not specified in list) | 1 | 38 |
| Hospital/Post Operative | 1 | 14 |