

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Corporate Governance Committee

Date: 12 July 2023

Subject: Sickness Analysis – April 2022 to March 2023

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For: Information Only

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present an update on sickness analysis for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) for the period April 2022 to March 2023.

Recommendations

2. The Committee is asked to note the sickness analysis for the period April 2022 to March 2023.

Executive Summary

3. Sickness performance data is provided on a quarterly and annual basis for both wholetime and support members of staff. The sickness analysis looks at performance against previous years for both the total number of days/shifts lost and also the number of days/shifts lost on average per person. The analysis provided in Appendix 1 breaks sickness down by station/department and looks into the differences between short term and long term sickness and the reasons for absence. Covid-19 data from April 2022 is included in short term and long term sickness, where as previously it was reported separately.

Background

4. The overall combined sickness (long-term, short-term and Covid) has decreased for wholetime staff and support staff when comparing against the previous year. Overall, the total number of days/shifts lost for wholetime has decreased by 23.1% and support has decreased by 19.4%. The average number of days/shifts lost per person was 7.53 for wholetime and 7.47 for support staff.
5. Wholetime sickness – In this section there would normally be analysis on short term sickness and long term sickness compared to the previous year. However, because this is the first year Covid-19 is included as a category in short and long term sickness, a comparison cannot be provided at this level of detail. Overall, there were a total of 2881.34 days/shifts lost to sickness between April 2022 and March 2023, with 1317.69 days/lost to short term sickness and 1563.65

days/shifts lost to long term sickness. During the same period last year, there were a total of 3744.49 days/shifts lost to sickness, which included 741.10 days/shifts lost to short term sickness, 1608.51 days/shifts lost to long term sickness and 1394.88 days/shifts lost to Covid-19.

6. In wholetime, there were 1317.69 short term sickness days/shifts lost, of which 286.34 days/shifts were recorded as Covid-19. As a comparison, during April 2021 to March 2022, 1394.88 days/shifts were recorded as Covid-19. There have been 524 periods of short term sickness recorded between April 2022 to March 2023, compared to 308 the previous year. It is important to note that Covid-19 was not recorded in short term sickness last year. During April 2021 to March 2022 there were 432 periods of Covid-19 reported.
7. In wholetime long term sickness, there were 1563.65 long term days/shifts lost. Of these, 493.14 days/shifts were recorded as some type of musculo skeletal sickness, compared to 563.70 days/shifts lost the previous year. There were also 362.06 days/shifts lost recorded as all mental health/stress, compared to 526.12 days/shifts lost during April 2021 to March 2022. Each of the previous three years shows there were over 500 days/shifts lost, so to have lost 362.06 days/shifts shows this category is reducing. There have been 66 periods of long term sickness recorded, compared to 67 between April 2021 and March 2022.
8. Support sickness – There has been a decrease in the number of days/shifts lost for support staff when compared against the previous year. Overall, there were a total of 927.35 days/shifts lost to sickness between April 2022 to March 2023, with 345.59 days/lost to short term sickness and 581.76 days/shifts lost to long term sickness. During the same period last year, there were a total of 1150.03 days/shifts lost, which included 193.40 days/shifts short term sickness, 559.40 days/shifts long term sickness and 397.23 days/shifts lost to Covid-19.
9. In support long term sickness, there were 581.76 long term days/shifts lost and of these, 218.00 days/shifts lost were recorded as mental health/stress, compared to 231.37 days/shifts the previous year. There have been 19 periods of long term sickness recorded, compared to 21 between April 2021 and March 2022.
10. Appendix 2 is a report which is produced by Cleveland Fire and Rescue Service and concentrates on comparing national statistics in relation to Fire and Rescue Service's sickness data. The first section of the report provides a national picture regarding the number of days lost and the reasons for sickness, the second section shows how individual Service data compares against others. The report clearly shows that the rate of sickness in LFRS is excellent and compares very favourably against the national position. LFRS is consistently in the lower quartile of Service's who have submitted data for operational, support and Control Room staff.

Report Implications / Impact

11. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The timely production of relevant performance information and the achievement of continuous improvement is a statutory duty as described in the Local Government Act 1999.

12. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)
None arising from this report.
13. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)
Effective performance management including the reporting, monitoring and analysis of performance indicators enables proactive control measures to be implemented to reduce risk and demand.
14. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)
Any identified action plans will be developed and delivered by relevant managers and staff.
15. Environmental
None arising from this report.
16. Impact upon Our Plan Objectives
Active monitoring of performance indicators allows the Service to assess the effectiveness of delivering its corporate objectives, influencing changes to strategies and policies where necessary.
17. **Background Papers**
None.
18. **Appendices**
Appendix 1 – Sickness Information Pack – April 2022 to March 2023
Appendix 2 – National Fire and Rescue Service Sickness Absence Report April 2022 to March 2023

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