

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 29TH JULY, 2019

REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 27TH JUNE, 2019

“104 SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT 2018/19 (REF) -

Cabinet had, on 17th June, 2019, referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for its consideration with a request that any comments be referred back to Cabinet.

The sickness absence report set out the sickness absence figures for the 12 month period 1st April, 2018 to 31st March, 2019 which was part of the agreed performance management arrangements.

The Operational Manager for Employee Services, in presenting the report, advised that there had been a significant decrease in absence levels during 2018/19 compared with the same period for the previous financial year.

The absence rates were set out in paragraph 4.1 and showed a decrease from 10.14 days lost per FTE or 9.12 days over the period. The target for the year being 9.3 FTE days lost.

It was noted that the decrease in absence was largely due to the improved management of long term sickness cases. There had also been an increase in the level of scrutiny of absence cases which now took place on a monthly basis between the HR Business Partnerships and Occupational Health Teams. Absence had also discussed at Directorate Management Teams as part of their service based action plans.

The detailed absence breakdown in each service area was included at Appendix A to the report.

In considering the report, the following discussion took place:

Question	Officer Response
There appeared to be more stress level issues listed for home rather than work. How is this controlled?	Discussions had been held at the beginning of the process as to how the work and home stress levels should be reported with it subsequently being agreed that whatever the reason that was presented in the first instance, would be the appropriate reason to record.
In noting that stress was associated with all different forms of mental health issues	Depression was recorded under the Stress Category which were the

reference was made to how the issue of depression was recorded	categories prescribed by Welsh Government.
Could the Committee have the private sector figures as referred to in the CIPD Survey to future meetings?	The Operational Manager agreed to look into the feasibility and email Members accordingly and would arrange for the information to be recorded in future reports.
In referring to “other musculoskeletal” reasons for absence, a Member queried how many could be related to the carrying of green waste bags by the refuse collectors and raised concern as to the increasing number of residents who were overfilling the bags which could have an impact on waste collection. A Member also commented that Welsh Government should be approached to promote awareness of composting to assist / support Local Authorities in relation to absence levels by staff.	The HR officer agreed to discuss the concern with the relevant Department.
In referring to the gender difference between men and women who reported mental health issues, a Member queried what more the Council could do to support men.	In response, the Operational Manager stated that historically men did not come forward as much as women but it was something the Department could pursue and promote awareness of.
Paragraph 4.15 referred to Mental Health Champions. Members requested more detail in relation to who they were, whether they were male or female, ages, etc. and could often have a breakdown in the future. It was further suggested that the Council should also encourage a culture where people can confide in others.	The information could be reported if available and the HR officer agreed to undertake the research and report back to Committee.

Having considered the report in detail, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet -

- (1) T H A T a future in-depth report be presented to the Committee in relation to the category “other musculoskeletal” detailing the issues involved and training required.
- (2) T H A T Welsh Government be approached in relation to the promotion of composting.
- (3) T H A T the private sector data in respect of absence levels be presented to Members and included in future reports to Committee.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To apprise Members.
- (2) In order to seek Welsh Government support for its promotion in view of the impact on sickness absence in Waste Collection Services.
- (3) To apprise Members.”