

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: 15 September 2021

Report by: Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Report title: Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April - June 2021)

Ward(s) affected: None

RECOMMENDATION FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

(a) To consider the Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April - June 2021) and provide any comments to the HR Officer/Head of HR and OD.

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 Members are invited to consider the Human Resources (HR) Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April - June 2021).

2.0 Background

2.1 This report outlines the current performance against the annual HR targets as approved by the HR Committee and available benchmarking data.

3.0 Report

3.1 Vacancy Data and Recruitment

3.1.1 There were 29 vacancies at the end of Quarter 1 (30 June 2021).

This is higher than the same period last year (23 vacancies at the end of Quarter 1 in 2020/21).

3.1.2 At the end of Quarter 1, recruitment had progressed¹ for 8 out of the 29 vacancies (28%).

3.1.3 During Quarter 1, nine posts were advertised. Five of the 29 posts (17%) have resulted in appointments. Four of the posts had not been successful. Three of the four posts are being re-advertised to try to attract recent graduates leaving university. For the remaining post further options are being considered.

3.1.4 Twenty-one of the 29 posts (72%) were on hold. 9 posts are in Planning, 4 in Communications, Strategy and Policy, 2 in Strategic Finance and Property, 4 in Housing and Health, 1 in Operations, and 1 in Executive Support. The posts are being held due to reviews of the service structure as part of the transformation project and potential savings and are being covered by agency staff where required.

3.2 Employee Turnover

3.2.1 There were 12 leavers in Quarter 1 (April – June 2021) giving a turnover rate for the quarter of 3.6%. Based on the number of leavers so far in Quarter 1, it is estimated that the turnover rate for the annual period 2021/22 will be **14.5%**. This is higher than the projections in the same quarter in the previous year (4.8% in Quarter 1 in 2020/21) and it is higher than the local government average (14% for 2018/19 for Local Authority districts in the UK). With the exception of 2020/21, historically turnover in Quarter 1 every year has been high (26.3% in 2018/19, 16.4% in 2019/20) and then it gradually decreases throughout the rest of the year. It is anticipated that turnover for 2021/22 will follow the same pattern.

¹ Posts were either out to advert, at shortlisting, interview or pre-employment check stages, or an unconditional offer had been made but the candidate has not yet started.

3.2.2 It should also be noted that during the pandemic in 2020/21, resignations stalled and a number of redundancies were made at Hertford Theatre as a result of the latter’s closure. Please see Figure 1 below. The table shows that in Quarter 3 of 2020/21 the turnover rate was 1.5% and it increased in Quarter 4 2020/21 to 3.9% (annual turnover was 8.4%) as resignations were delayed. The 13 leavers in Q4 included 5 redundancies from Hertford Theatre.

Figure 1 - Leavers and Turnover throughout 2020/21

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of Leavers	4	6	5	13
Turnover rate	1.2%	1.8%	1.5%	3.9%

3.2.3 In terms of Quarter 1 in this year 2021/22 there were 12 leavers, this included 4 retirements and 3 staff leaving due to personal reasons (including relocation), which had clearly been affected by the pandemic, the leavers also included 1 dismissal. Good progress is however, being made to replace staff especially in Planning where most of the retirements were. You will note the number of positions on hold in Planning (all of which are being covered) have reduced this period by 1 and will be reduced further by next quarter’s report as they begin to develop the structure and convert agency staff to permanent staff where achievable. As stated in 3.2.1 turnover is expected to reduce and is unlikely to hit the 14.5% predicted.

3.3 Sickness Absence

ALL absence

ALL Absence – Quarter 1

3.3.1 At the end of Quarter 1, the total number of sickness days taken was 450.70 full time equivalent (FTE) days. Of these, 196.29 FTE days (44%) were due to short term sickness and 254.41 FTE

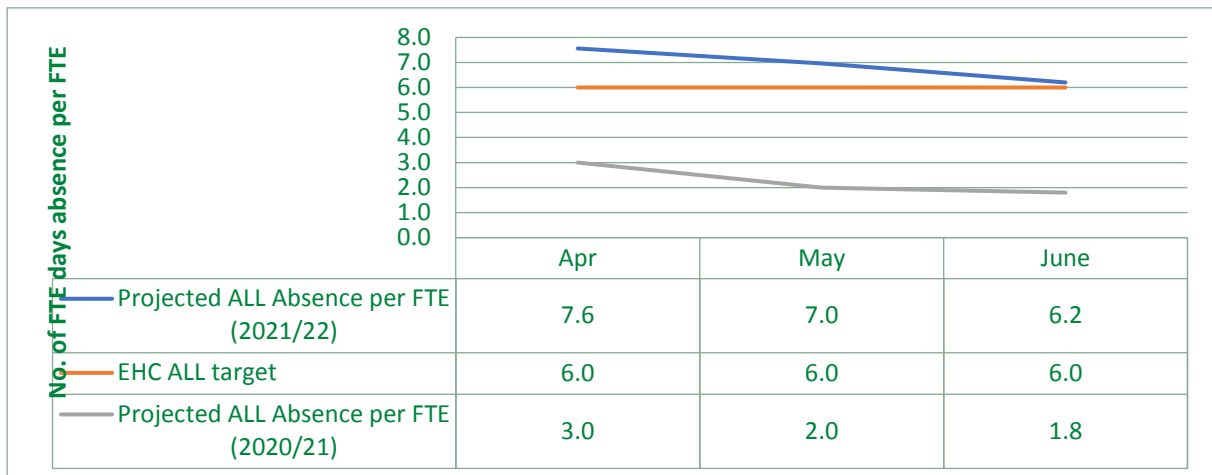
days (56%) were due to long term sickness. The percentage of time lost due to short term sickness is 1.1% and the percentage of time lost due to long term sickness is 1.4% which equates to a total percentage lost time of 2.5%.

3.3.2 At the end of Quarter 1, the number of FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 1.55 days.

ALL Absence - Annual period 2021/22

3.3.3 Figure 2 below shows that, based on absences for the year so far (i.e. absences as at the end of June 2021), projected sickness absence for the annual period 2021/22 is estimated to be **6.2 days per FTE**. This is slightly above the council's annual target of 6 days. The increases in Quarter 3-4 last year and Q1 this year have been impacted by COVID (both COVID itself and reactions to the vaccination). It is considerably higher than the projected annual level for the same period last year (1.8 days per FTE in Quarter 1 in 2020/21) although absences in 2020/21 (Quarter 1-2) were unusually low due to Covid-19 and the fact that almost all staff were working from home and were more willing to work whilst not feeling fully well as they didn't need to commute and could manage breaks/rest more easily. When comparing with the same period the year before Covid the figure is lower (projected annual absence at the end of Quarter 1 in 2019/20 was 7.2 days per FTE). Of note however is that there is a downward trajectory during this Quarter as more staff have had the vaccine with projected annual absences falling each month (7.6 days in April, 7.0 days in May and 6.2 days in June).

Figure 2 – Projected annual absence for 2021/22



Short term absence

3.3.4 Absences of less than four weeks are considered to be short term sickness absence.

Short term absence - Quarter 1

3.3.5 Thirty Seven employees (11.2% of the total headcount) had short term sickness absence during Quarter 1 totalling 196.29 FTE days. This represents a percentage lost time rate of 1.1%.

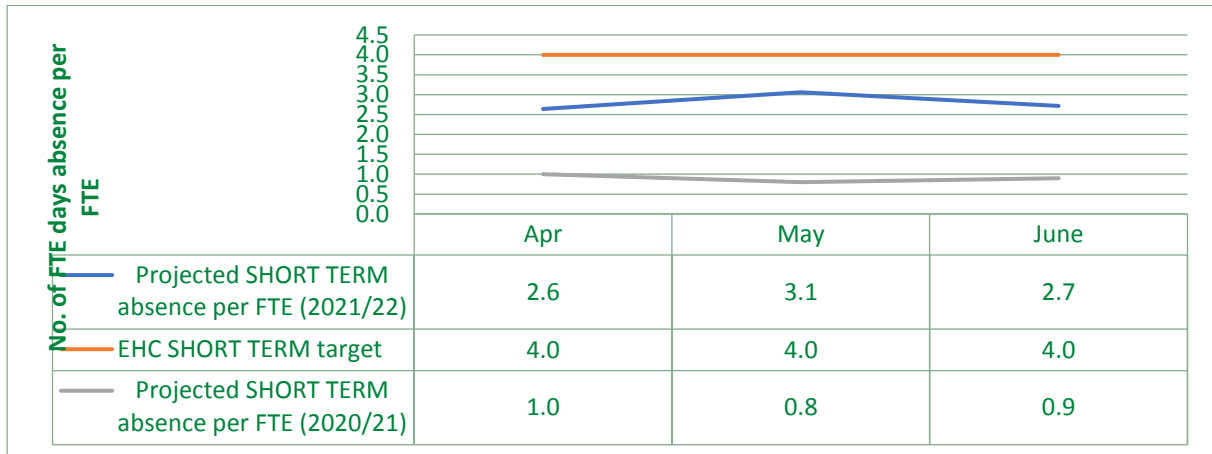
3.3.6 At the end of Quarter 1, the number of short term FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 0.68 days.

Short term absence - Annual period 2021/22

3.3.7 Figure 3 below shows that, based on short term absences for the year so far (as at the end of June 2021), it is estimated that short term sickness absence for the annual period 2020/21 will be **2.7 days per FTE**. This is below the council's short term target of 4 days. It is considerably higher than the projected annual level for the same period last year (0.9 days in Quarter 1 in 2020/21) although short term absences in 2020/21 were unusually low due to Covid-19 and for the reasons explained in 3.3.3 above. When comparing with the same period the year

before Covid the figure is lower (projected annual short term absence at the end of Quarter 1 in 2019/20 was 4 days per FTE).

Figure 3 – Projected annual SHORT TERM absence for 2021/22



Long Term absence

3.3.8 Absences in excess of 4 weeks/28 consecutive calendar days are considered to be long term sickness absence.

Long term absence – Quarter 1

3.3.9 Nine employees (2.7% of the total headcount) had long term sickness absence during Quarter 1 totalling 254.41 FTE days. This represents a percentage time lost rate of 1.4%.

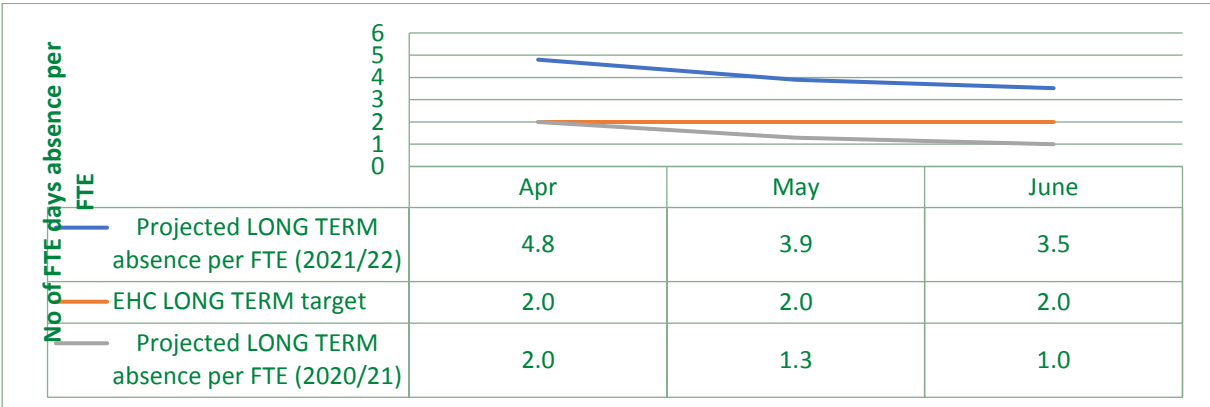
3.3.10 The nine employees have been offered support through referrals to Occupational Health/taking medical advice from Specialists where appropriate. The reasons for long term absence were for injuries (3 employees), mental health (2 employees), acute medical conditions (1 employee), reoccurring medical conditions (1 employee), stress (1 employee) and Covid (1 employee). Five employees have now returned to work. One employee has left the council. The 3 employees who remain absent are being supported by their manager and HR under the Absence Management Policy.

3.3.11 At the end of Quarter 1, the number of long term FTE days absent per FTE was 0.88 days.

LONG TERM absence - Annual period 2021/22

3.3.12 Figure 4 below shows that, based on long term absences for the year so far (i.e. as at the end of June 2021), it is estimated that long term sickness absence for the annual period 2021/22 will be **3.5 days per FTE**. This is above the council’s long term target of 2 days and higher than the projected annual level for the same period last year (1 day per FTE in Quarter 1 in 2020/21). Of note however is that there is a downward trajectory during the Quarter with projected annual absences falling each month (4.8 days in April, 3.9 days in May and 3.5 days in June).

Figure 4 Projected annual LONG TERM absence for 2021/22



3.4 Learning and Development

3.4.1 In Quarter 1, four in-house corporate learning and development events were held over twelve sessions and ninety-six employees participated. Please note these figures do not include the in-house e-learning courses delivered through the Skills Build platform. These will be included in the Annual Learning and Development report.

3.4.2 The roll out of the in-house Corporate Sustainability and Climate Change Training continued. David Thorogood, Environmental Sustainability Co-Ordinator, led the presentations supported by the OD & HR Co-Ordinator. In Quarter 1, nine sessions were delivered virtually through Zoom and seventy seven employees attended the events.

3.4.3 Nick Phipps, Service Manager for Community Wellbeing and Partnerships, delivered a Safeguarding event to nine participants. This was the first of four face-to-face/virtual sessions. A further three events will be delivered in September 2021, November 2021 and March 2022. The roll out of the training continues to ensure staff are aware of the revised policy and the changes whilst ensuring good practice.

3.4.4 One Corporate Induction took place in June 2021. The event was delivered virtually through Zoom and included revised and updated content and new presenters as the OD & HR Co-Ordinator continues to refresh the content for each event.

3.4.5 The employment Policy Training for Managers pilot event took place in June. The training will be delivered to managers in bitesize virtual sessions advising them of the policy changes they need to be aware of to ensure the policies are implemented consistently across the council.

3.4.6 Employees continue to complete the annual mandatory training programme through SkillsBuild, the council's e-learning platform. The following courses are still available for employees to complete:

- Safeguarding 2020/21
- Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace 20/21
- Annual Health & Safety Refresher 2020/21
- Data Protection Briefing
- Lone Working (mandatory for lone working officers)

3.4.7 The Data Protection course has been revised to include all the appropriate updates and changes made by the new Information Governance and Data Protection Manager. The new Data Protection e-learning course went live in June.

3.4.8 The OD & HR Officer supported the Elections Team in delivering training for the May 2021 Elections. In partnership with Luton Council and CLS (the council's e-learning platform provider) a new e-learning course was designed and implemented for the Poll Clerks. 223 people participated in the on-line training and this approach was deemed a success. The e-learning was delivered via the Council's e-learning platform SkillsBuild.

3.4.9 The OD and HR Officer delivered virtual sessions via Zoom to 114 Presiding Officers and Inspectors. These events received positive feedback from the delegates and the blended approach will be replicated at the next election.

3.4.10 The following learning and development events are planned to be delivered in Quarter 2:

- Menopause Training
- Employment Policy Training for Managers
- Time Management
- Study Skills (Apprentices and Trainees)

3.4.11 The OD and HR Co-ordinator continues to work with our training providers to ensure key training is delivered in a safe way.

3.4.12 The following is a summary of the learning and development events that were held in Quarter 1:

Event/Course	No of participants	Number of sessions held
Corporate Sustainability and Climate Change Training	77	9
Safeguarding	9	1
Corporate Induction	8	1
Employment Policy Training	2	1
Total	96	12

3.5 Equalities Monitoring Indicators

3.5.1 The table below shows a summary of employee equalities data at the end of Quarter 1 (i.e. 30 June 2021).

3.5.2 Employees were asked to update their personal details on MyView in March 2021 and therefore the data below will reflect this.

	Comparison to population data	EHC Percentage
Disability		
Leadership Team with a disability	5% CENSUS 2011	0.0%
Employees with a disability	5% CENSUS 2011	4.1%
Ethnicity		
Leadership Team members from BAME groups	4.5% CENSUS 2011	10%
Employees from BAME groups	4.5% CENSUS 2011	7.6%

Gender		
Leadership Team members who are female	51% NOMIS 2019	40%
Employees who are female	51% NOMIS 2019	73.9%
Sexual Orientation		
Leadership Team	2.1% ONS 2018	20%
Employees	2.1% ONS 2018	1.6%

The Leadership Team comprises the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and all Heads of Service.

4.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

As detailed in the report

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

5.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

None

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