

HR Committee Report for Q3 2025/26

Note: As of 31 December 2025, East Herts Council employed 269.91 FTE and had a headcount of 299.

1.0 Sickness Absence

At the end of Quarter 3 (Q3), the total number of sickness days taken was 712.91 full time equivalent (FTE) days. Of these, 238.69 FTE days (33.5%) were due to short term sickness and 474.22 FTE days (67.47%) were due to long term sickness. The percentage of time lost due to short term sickness is 4% and the percentage of time lost due to long term sickness is 7.9% which equates to a total percentage lost time of 11.9%.

At the end of Q3, the number of FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 2.6 days.

Short term sickness

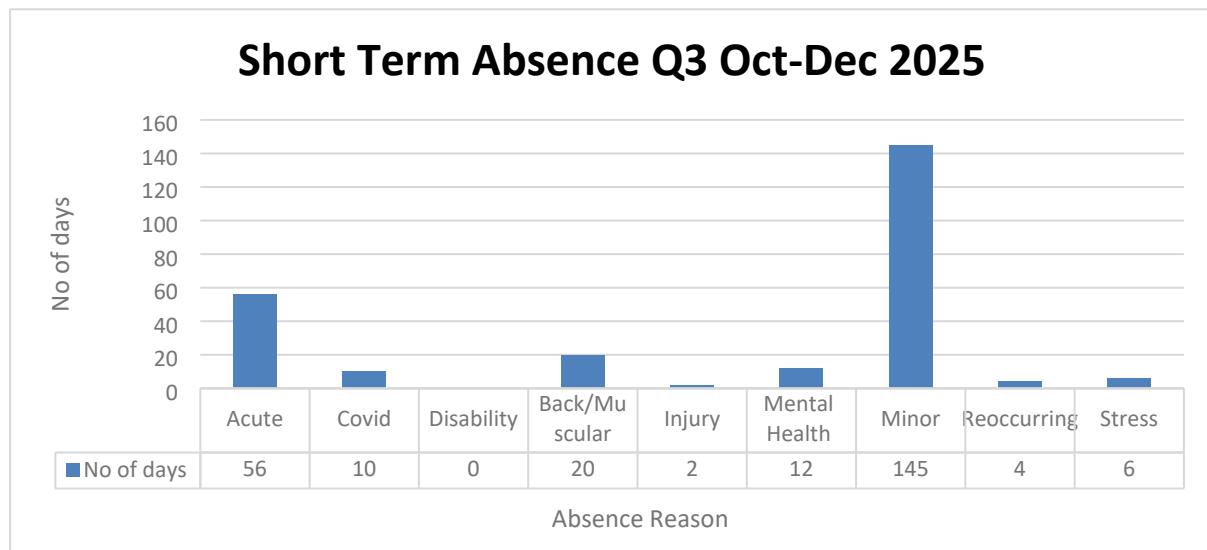
Absences of less than four weeks are considered to be short term sickness absence.

75 employees (25% of the total headcount) had short term sickness absence during Q3 totalling 238.69 FTE days.

At the end of Q3, the number of short-term FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 0.80 days.

Short term absences that meet out trigger points are handled through our Absence Management Policy processes.

See graph below that highlights the number of days recorded by absence reason:



Long term sickness

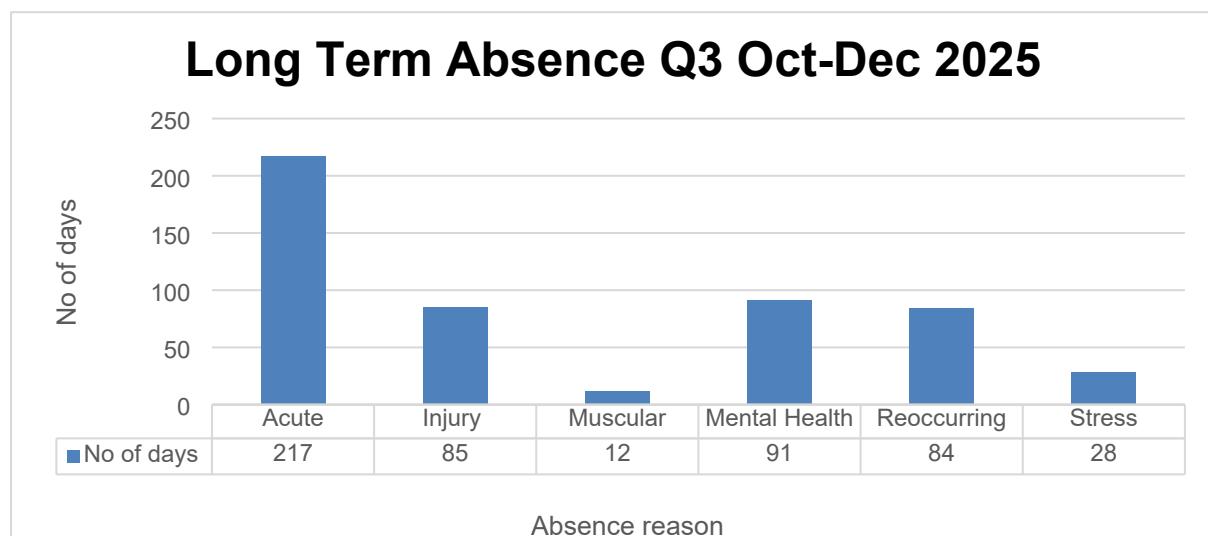
Absences in excess of 4 weeks / 28 consecutive calendar days are considered to be long term sickness absence.

17 employees (5.7% of the total headcount) had long term sickness absence during Q3 totalling 474.22 FTE days.

At the end of Q3, the number of long-term FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 1.76 days.

All long-term absence is being managed with HR staff supporting the employee and manager to help get the member of staff back to work. We use our Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme to support this process; they provide helpful guidance and recommendations to help us accommodate a return to work for the member of staff.

See graph below that highlights the number of days recorded by absence reason:



2.0 Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment

We are currently recruiting through Jobs Go Public, LinkedIn, Web Recruit (which covers online job boards such as Indeed), and the East Herts Careers page for both external and internal applicants.

There has been success with 7 new starters in quarter 3:

- 2 in Place
- 1 in Executive Support
- 2 in Regeneration, Customer and Commercial
- 2 in Human Resources

However, East Herts continues to face challenges in recruiting for hard-to-fill roles, particularly within Planning and Environmental Health.

Vacant Posts

For clarity, a vacant post is defined as any role that remains on our establishment list with hours still attributed to it. In some cases, these remaining hours may be minimal and therefore do not constitute a recruitable position. In certain cases, these hours are being utilised to fund shared services such as HR and Procurement.

As of 31 December 2025, we had 55 vacant posts unfilled for a variety of reasons. This represents 15.2% of overall posts on the establishment list.

These are the main reasons posts are vacant:

Category	Description	Number of Vacant Posts
Being held for budget savings	The post is intentionally not being filled so that the associated salary costs contribute to agreed budget savings.	3
Budget being used in a different way	Funding for the post is still in use but has been temporarily redirected (e.g., increased hours for another team member or short-term service needs).	18
Being held pending a service review	The post is not being recruited to because the service structure or staffing requirements are under review and future needs are yet to be confirmed.	8
In the process of being recruited to	Recruitment activity is underway (e.g. Job proposal, advertising, shortlisting, interviewing) but the post is not yet filled.	21
Recruitment successful	A candidate has been appointed and accepted the offer, but they have not yet started.	5
	Total	55

To ensure the effective delivery of statutory services, posts that are legally required or difficult to recruit to are covered through agency or contractor support, or via acting-up arrangements, which also provide valuable staff development opportunities.

Retention – Turnover

There were 9 leavers in Q3 giving a turnover rate for the quarter of 3%. The turnover rate predicted for the annual period 2025/26 is 22%. This is higher than our target of 14% and the national average across all sectors of 15%.

Reasons for leaving in Q3 included: To achieve promotion, retirement, changes in career, and for personal reasons.

The leavers were in the following teams:

- 1 in Place
- 3 in Communities
- 1 in Regeneration, Customer and Commercial
- 1 in Legal, Policy and Governance
- 3 in Finance, Risk and Performance

Recruitment and retention related activity planned for Quarter 4

- We are progressing towards achieving silver status in the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme, building on our current bronze award. Strengthening our support for the Armed Forces community will enhance our employer brand, helping us attract a wider talent pool and improve retention through our commitment to being an inclusive and supportive organisation.
- Disability Confident and Bronze Armed Forces Covenant logos have been added to our external recruitment page. We also plan to record additional employee testimonials to strengthen the “Working for Us” section, with a particular focus on promoting hard-to-recruit roles such as Planning and Environmental positions.
- Review and enhance Careers page to highlight benefits of working for East Hertfordshire District Council.

3.0 Learning and Development

The learning needed in our organisation is delivered by e-learning, one to one training or group-based learning remotely or in person.

HR is responsible for the corporate training budget, including professional training. We have created a training needs analysis which highlights Statutory learning, CPD requirements and skill/knowledge development which has been used to scope the annual training plan.

In Q3, we launched new training guidance on the intranet, enabling managers to review in real time which mandatory e-learning courses their direct reports still need to complete as part of the performance review process.

We have also introduced an automated email reminder function for managers. They now receive a monthly email listing any employees who are non-compliant and still required to complete their training.

To ensure that all mandatory e-learning programmes listed below remain relevant, accurate, accessible and engaging, we have asked the appropriate subject matter experts within East Hertfordshire District Council to review and update each module. We aim to complete this work by the end of January 2026. These courses include:

- Data Protection
- Fire Safety
- Office Etiquette and Email Management
- Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- The Importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Understanding the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

We are utilising the apprenticeship levy to support relevant training and development.

Apprenticeship training course	Planned start date	Planned end date	Training provider
Chartered town planner (degree), Level: 7	01/09/2020	01/03/2027	LONDON SOUTH BANKUNIVERSITY
Chartered town planner (degree), Level: 7	01/10/2024	01/09/2027	UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
Chartered town planner (degree), Level: 7	01/10/2024	01/09/2027	UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
Chartered town planner (degree), Level: 7	01/10/2025	01/09/2028	UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
Payroll administrator, Level: 3	01/10/2024	01/06/2026	MBKB LTD
Revenues and welfare benefits practitioner, Level: 4	01/06/2025	01/01/2027	THE INSTITUTE OF REVENUES, RATING AND VALUATION
Revenues and welfare benefits practitioner, Level: 4	01/11/2025	01/03/2027	THE INSTITUTE OF REVENUES, RATING AND VALUATION

In addition, we are making use of the associated employer's National Insurance (NI) relief where apprentices meet all of the following criteria:

- Are under the age of 25
- Are on an approved UK government apprenticeship standard or framework
- Are earning below the Apprentice Upper Secondary Threshold (AUST) of £4,189 per month

Employer's NI is normally charged at 15% on earnings above the secondary threshold over £417. For eligible apprentices, the organisation benefits from:

- Paying 0% employer's national insurance on employee earnings below the AUST.

This can save employers thousands per apprentice per year, depending on salary. Some training providers estimate savings of £2,000–£3,000 annually for full-time apprentices

To support managers who require temporary staff through the Matrix (Prism) system, Matrix will be delivering three online training sessions via Teams. Managers can join whichever session best fits their schedule. The sessions will provide an overview of Prism and demonstrate key processes, including:

- Order creation
- Timesheet management
- Candidate review
- Interview management
- Placement creation

The scheduled training dates are 9th of January, 28th of January and 4th of February 2026.

We recorded 38 attendees at the Domestic Abuse (DA) session, delivered as part of our programme for the global 16 Days of Activism campaign to end VAWG. The training, provided by Future Living, raised awareness among colleagues on supporting those affected by DA. It was delivered at no cost.

Prevent training was delivered by Hertfordshire County Council's Prevent Training Lead in the Council Chamber on the 10th of November. A total of 54 officers participated, representing all levels of seniority, along with one contractor from Glendale. The session provided an in-depth overview of national and local trends, supporting colleagues' understanding of Prevent and current threats, risks and vulnerabilities linked to the evolving terror landscape.

Learning and Development planned for the next quarter:

- Complete the content review for the mandatory training within Skillgate
- Support the Communications Team with the launch of the Council's initiative, funded by the Economic Development Team, to provide free access to a range of online learning and wellbeing courses via SEEDL.

4.0 Health and Safety

Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

Background Information

Accidents are classified into two categories:

Non-Reportable Accidents

These are minor accidents such as cuts, minor contact injuries e.g., walking into the corner of a desk etc, slips, trips. Staff are encouraged to report these and can use the online self-service portal My View or completing an accident report from the accident report pad. These are designated form BI510 accidents.

East Herts Council operates predominately back-office functions in a low-risk environment, the determination of low risk is based on the Health and Safety Executives definition, therefore, a high rate of accidents is not expected to occur.

Reportable Accidents

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013, often known by the acronym **RIDDOR**, is a 2013 statutory instrument of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It regulates the statutory obligation to report deaths, injuries, diseases and "dangerous occurrences".

Types of incidents that are reportable under RIDDOR?

- accidents resulting in the death of any person.
- accidents resulting in an absence from work over 7 days (excluding the day of the accident) e.g., degloving injury.
- non-fatal accidents requiring hospital treatment to non-workers. E.g., anyone not employed by the council.
- dangerous occurrences e.g., collapse, overturning or failure of any load-creating part of lifting equipment, failure of any closed vessel or associated pipework forming part of pressure systems, collapse of scaffold this is not a definitive list.

- Reportable diseases under RIDDOR are listed in regulations 8 and 9 of the regulations. Types of occupational diseases include occupational dermatitis, hand-arm vibration syndrome, occupational cancer etc.

Any reportable accident, incident or near miss arising from construction work e.g., building sites, new builds, demolition work or developments fall under the purview of the Health and Safety Executive.

Incidents and Near Miss Events

An incident is a broader term for any event, planned or unplanned, positive, or negative, that may or may not result in harm, damage, or injury. In essence, an accident is a specific type of incident that leads to a negative outcome.

Examples of incidents include, but are not limited to the effects of abusive, threatening behaviours, receiving obscene, aggressive, or threatening phone calls, correspondence, effects on the health of an individual arising from illness, health exacerbated by environmental factors e.g. excessive heat, air quality, extremes of temperature.

Colleagues are encouraged to report incidents and near misses in order to identify patterns and themes that allow the organisation to implement measures and controls to protect employee health and wellbeing. A new table has been introduced to report the number of Incident and Near Miss events occurring.

The Council also has the Employee Assistance scheme that offers confidential counselling, advice and support for any person affected by an incident, accident or near miss event.

Further support will also be available through the re-launched Mental Health First Aid provision following the successful participation in a 13-week Mental Health skills bootcamp.

Work Related Accidents

	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Target 25/26
H&S Employee Work Related Accidents (<u>Not</u> reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013)	2	4	3
H&S Employee Work Related Accidents (Reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013)	0	0	0

Work Related Incidents, Near Misses

	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Target 25/26
H&S Employee Work Related Incidents (<u>Not</u> reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013)	0	0	3
H&S Employee Work Related Incidents (Reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013)	0	0	0
H&S Employee Work Related Near Miss Events	0	0	0

Contract Management and Responsibility

The Council have outsourced a number of high-level services from waste collection and recycling, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and leisure services and employs contractors for capital projects.

However, health and safety responsibilities cannot be passed from one party to another by a contract. If something goes wrong the Council can and will be held accountable by the HSE and the Courts.

The Council therefore ensures that contractors have appropriate health and safety policies in place, monitor contractor performance and safety standards. In order to ensure that services are delivered safely the officers with contract oversite:

- Convene meetings to review performance.
- Monitor complaints received and undertake investigations.
- Undertake onsite inspections and reviews.

Heads of Service with responsibility for these functions are responsible for ensuring that effective management controls are implemented.