

BRIEFING	TO:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
	DATE:	2 September 2020
	LEAD OFFICER:	Lee Mann Assistant Director HR & OD Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate 07919302445
	TITLE:	Workshop on Sickness Absence – Actions Update
1. Background		
1.1	A workshop was held in relation to the underperforming sickness absence measure in the Council Plan, which had identified as a concern by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.	
1.2	Over the last two years, the Council had struggled to achieve the corporate target of 10.3 days lost per FTE, with an outturn for 2018-19 of 11.4 days per FTE. The number of days lost had risen each month between July and November 2019 (11.87) but had reduced in December to 11.01 days and to 10.55 days by the end of March 2020.	
1.3	At the workshop Overview and Scrutiny Management Board members felt positive about the improvements made regarding this measure and made the following recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That consideration be given to developing guidance for managers around enhanced emotional support for employees during a restructure, given the links to absence through stress and anxiety.• That data be disaggregated regarding absence through anxiety, stress and depression, as these should be recorded as discrete issues and to have a better understanding of sickness absence.• That follow up work be undertaken to ensure managers proactively support staff and manage workloads across teams to prevent any potential knock on effect in terms of sickness absence as a result of staff assuming additional work to cover for an initial long-term sickness absentee.	
1.4	This briefing provides an update on progress on the recommendations made.	
2. Key Issues		
2.1	Guidance for Managers A Rotherham Leader Wellbeing Guide has been developed for managers which includes early spotting of the signs and symptoms of mental distress, support mechanisms and promoting the Five Ways to Well-Being: Be Active, Connect, Give, Keep learning and Take Notice, as the steps that can be incorporated into everyone's everyday life to help maintain good mental health.	

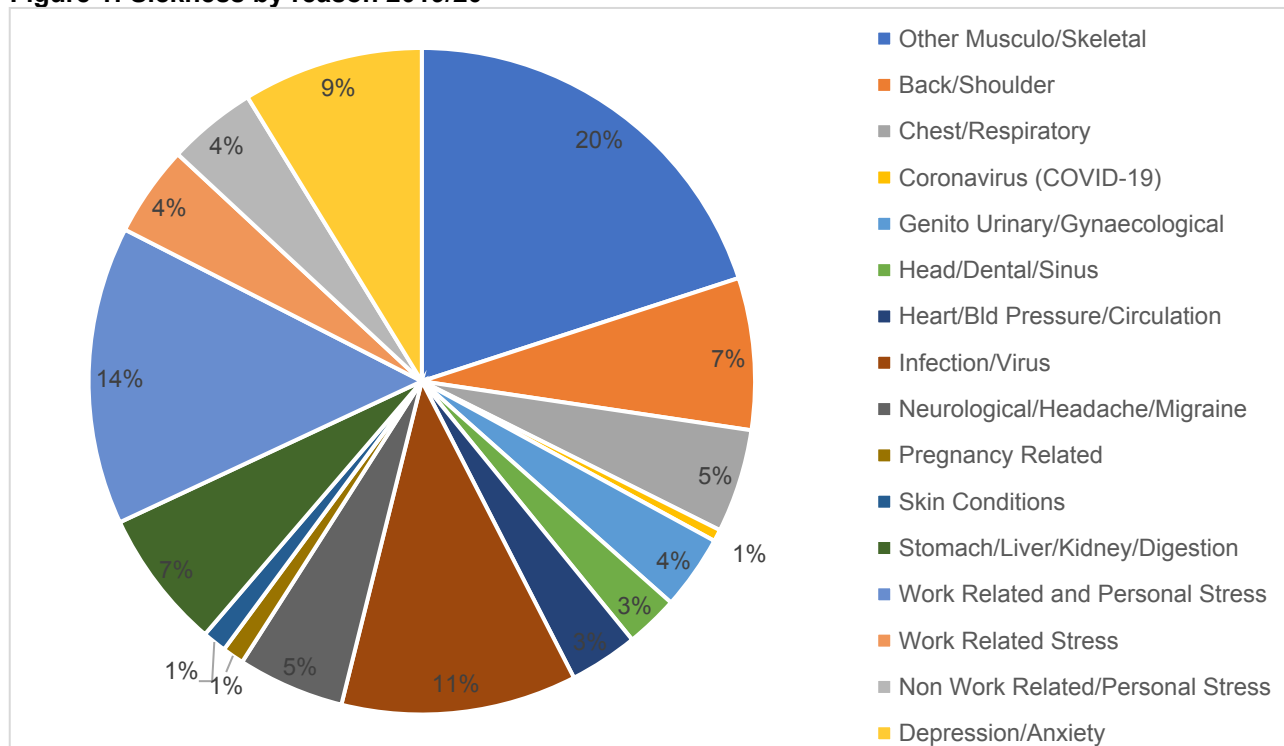
Links to the guide, currently focused on COVID 19, will be incorporated into the review of HR policies connected with restructures.

2.2 Disaggregation regarding absence through anxiety, stress and depression

The HR and Payroll system breaks down the broad anxiety, stress and depression category into work related and personal stress, work relates stress, non-work related stress and depression anxiety.

The full year break down of sickness in the last tax year is shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Sickness by reason 2019/20



2.3 Managers proactively support staff

The Council's Performance Development Review (PDR) process has been updated with managers advised to start the conversation by focusing on the well-being of the individual employee rather than going straight into performance. The PDR provides a good opportunity for managers to find out if the employee is facing any particular challenges and if there is anything further that can be done to support them.

The HR Consultancy Team continue to provide advice, guidance and support to managers in relation to long-term sickness absence.

3. Key Actions and Timelines

3.1 A review of HR policies relating to restructures is scheduled to take place during the 2020/21 tax year and will provide an opportunity to include further guidance for managers.

3.2 The PDR cycle for 2020/21 due to commence in September provides an opportunity for managers to proactively support staff.

3.3 HR support continues to be provided to managers dealing with long term absence.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Progress on recommendations is noted.