

## **Personnel Committee**

**Wednesday, 10 March 2021 at 10:30**

**Virtual meeting**

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### **AGENDA**

- |    |  |         |
|----|--|---------|
| 1  | Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 January 2021  | 3 - 6   |
| 2  | Apologies for Absence  |         |
| 3  | Declarations of Interests by Members and Officers:- (see note below)<br>(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests<br>(b) Private Interests (pecuniary and non-pecuniary) |         |
| 4  | Business Support Review Programme  | 7 - 14  |
| 5  | Performance Update and Changes to the Customer Services Centre Operating Model   | 15 - 28 |
| 6  | Health & Safety Six Monthly Update   | 29 - 36 |
| 7  | Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Resource in Response to Covid-19 (Coronavirus)   | 37 - 42 |
| 8  | NCC Workforce Availability, Sickness Absence Performance & Support to Maintain Employee Health & Wellbeing   | 43 - 66 |
| 9  | Employee Engagement with the Council's Workforce   | 67 - 78 |
| 10 | Work Programme   | 79 - 82 |

## **Notes**

- (1) Councillors are advised to contact their Research Officer for details of any Group Meetings which are planned for this meeting.
- (2) Members of the public wishing to inspect "Background Papers" referred to in the reports on the agenda or Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act should contact:-

Customer Services Centre 0300 500 80 80

- (3) Persons making a declaration of interest should have regard to the Code of Conduct and the Council's Procedure Rules. Those declaring must indicate the nature of their interest and the reasons for the declaration.

Councillors or Officers requiring clarification on whether to make a declaration of interest are invited to contact Sarah Ashton (Tel. 0115 977 3962) or a colleague in Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

- (4) Councillors are reminded that Committee and Sub-Committee papers, with the exception of those which contain Exempt or Confidential Information, may be recycled.
- (5) This agenda and its associated reports are available to view online via an online calendar - <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/dms/Meetings.aspx>



## Minutes

Meeting	PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
Date	Wednesday 20 January 2021 (commencing at 10.33am)

### Membership

Persons absent are marked with an 'A'

### COUNCILLORS

Neil Clarke MBE (Chairman)

A Keith Walker (Vice-Chairman)

Maureen Dobson

Errol Henry JP

John Longdon

Sheila Place

A Helen-Ann Smith

Stuart Wallace

Gordon Wheeler

Jonathan Wheeler

Yvonne Woodhead

### SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Richard Butler for Councillor Keith Walker and Councillor Rachel Madden for Councillor Helen-Ann Smith

### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Ashton	Democratic Services Officer
Marjorie Toward	Service Director – Customers, Governance and Employees
Gill Elder	Head of Human Resources
Lynsey Woolmore	Acting HR, Workforce and Organisational Development Senior Business Partner
Michelle Richardson	HR Business Partner, Senior Practitioner
Adrian McKiernan	HR Workforce and Organisational Development Business Partner
Sid Basu	NCC Graduate Trainee
Emma Branston	NCC Graduate Trainee
Megan Malloy	NCC Graduate Trainee
Aidan La Mola	NCC Graduate Trainee

### TRADE UNION IN ATTENDANCE

Adana Godden	GMB
Adrian Morgan	UNISON
Cheryl Pidgeon	Unite

## **1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2020, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The following apology for absence was received:

- Councillor Helen-Ann Smith (Medical)
- Councillor Keith Walker (other, ICT issues)

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **4. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CORPORATE EQUALITIES ACTION PLAN**

### **RESOLVED 2021/01**

- 1) That the action plan (Appendix 1 of the report) is published on the Council's intranet, be approved.
- 2) That the Committee agreed to the inclusion of new actions as and when they are identified.
- 3) That the Committee agreed to receive an update on progress including feedback from the employees' engagement meetings, and to review the status of various actions to Committee on 30 June 2021.

## **5. UPDATE REPORT ON ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE COUNCIL'S BLACK WORKFORCE**

### **RESOLVED 2021/02**

- 1) That any additional actions identified for inclusion in the Equalities (Support for Black Employees) Action Plan be approved. That the Committee agreed to receive an update on further progress made towards meeting the identified actions to Committee on 30 June 2021.

## **6. GENDER PAY GAP**

## **RESOLVED 2021/03**

- 1) That the publication of the required gender pay gap information on the public website be approved.
- 2) That the Committee agree to receive an annual update to identify ongoing actions and the impact towards closing the gender pay gap within the Council.

## **7. WORK PLACEMENTS AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE – KICKSTART PROGRAMME AND GRADUATE TRAINEE SCHEME**

### **RESOLVED 2021/04**

- 1) That the Committee agreed to the development of a Kickstart Programme to be delivery across the Council.
- 2) That the Committee agreed to Nottinghamshire County Council becoming a registered Gateway Organisation for other local employers.
- 3) That the Committee agree to receive an update report on the Kickstart Scheme in six months' time and that this would be added to the Committees Work Programme.
- 4) That the Committee agreed to congratulate all NCC Graduates and to recognise the work the graduates were undertaking on behalf of the County Council. The Committee found it rewarding to see the results and found the four presentations very stimulating and informative. The Committee would also like to thank the managerial staff who are supporting the graduates in their roles and to thank them for the time they take to develop the graduate's skills as they start out on their careers.

## **8. UPDATE ON REVIEW OF FLEXIBLE WORKING**

### **RESOLVED 2021/05**

- 1) That the Committee recognises the achievement of securing accreditation as a Timewise employer.
- 2) That the Committee agreed to the continued work to further explore how the Council can maximise the positive outcomes provided by flexible working opportunities.
- 3) That the Committee agreed to the outcome of the Timewise accreditation submission being appropriately communicated to our existing workforce and to utilise the Timewise emblem in future recruitment advertisements.

- 4) That the Committee agreed to thank and congratulate NCC employees for their continued efforts in supporting the people and communities of Nottinghamshire.

## **9. WORK PROGRAMME**

### **RESOLVED 2021/06**

That the work programme be updated according to recommendations made during this meeting. That the Health & Safety ISO45001 update and an Employment Engagement report be added to March 2021 meeting. That the work programme be approved with these additions.

The meeting closed at 12.25pm.

**CHAIRMAN**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEES**

### **BUSINESS SUPPORT REVIEW PROGRAMME**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Members about the progress of the ongoing programme to review Business Support and delivery of associated cashable efficiencies.
2. To seek approval for the revised Business Support Service Structure as set out in Appendix A, which will come into force with effect from 1 April 2021.

#### **Information**

##### **Background**

3. The Business Support Review is an established ongoing programme of efficiency which seeks to revise and re-design processes and develop new operating models for service support within a modern organisation.

##### **Savings**

4. Legacy and further committed savings can be found in the following table:

Opening Budget;		£11,107,237.00
Financial Year	FTE	Savings
2013/14	548	
2014/15	475	£911,000 Savings Delivered
2015/16	440	£895,000 Savings Delivered
2016/17	435	£534,000 Savings Delivered
2017/18	434.5	£508,000 Savings Delivered
2018/19	406	£715,000 Savings Delivered
2019/20	396.5	£300,000 Savings Delivered
2020/21	405.11	£221,000 Savings Delivered
2021/22	404.19	£97,000 Legacy MTFS Savings Subject to this Report

Overall savings from the Business Support Service, delivered by the end of 2021 will be £4,181,000.

### **Reviewing the way in which Business Support is Delivered**

5. Members are already aware that throughout the life of the programme, we have continued to liaise with operational colleagues via senior and divisional leadership forums and at a local level, where we discuss, identify requirements and revise business support arrangements.
6. The most recent examples of such collaboration include our work with all Adults Group Managers to review and realign their business support resources in response to the departmental restructure. Also our work with Childrens Social Care to review the administrative support allocated to both Youth Justice and the Family Service.
7. Our ongoing work to combine similar activities into 'Hubs' (now virtual), to multiskill our staff and to maximise the use of emerging technologies has provided the economies of scale needed to compensate for the inevitable reduction in our overall staffing establishment required to deliver the cashable efficiency savings needed.
8. What we have realised as we have adjusted during this unprecedented period, and renegotiated operational support requirements, is that the new ways of working adopted during the Coronavirus Pandemic have demonstrated that we are able to efficiently provide the vast majority of our business support activities at 'arms-length'.
9. This more adaptive and flexible model of service delivery is something which we would wish to continue and our aspiration to transition away from our existing location based managerial arrangements will enable us to explore a move toward a Business Partner Model of operation, which is very much welcomed by our operational customers.

### **Legacy MTFS Savings commitment - £97,000**

10. This is the final instalment in relation to our 5-year programme of continuous review. We have identified these savings through the rigorous review and subsequent withdrawal of posts that have become vacant throughout the year. The work associated with these posts has been re-engineered.

#### **Vacant Post Reduction Summary - Legacy MTFS;**

<b>Post Title</b>	<b>Proposed FTE Reduction</b>
Business Support Administrator Grade 4	1.00
Business Support Administrator Grade 3	0.50
Business Support Administrator Grade 2	2.34
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.84</b>

### **Supporting Digitisation - Business Systems Support Officers**

11. Our Business Systems Support Officers (BSSO) have continued to assist front line colleagues to maximise the functionality of new technologies and are actively engaged in supporting the Council's direction of travel through the new Digital Strategy.



12. They have proved to be crucial throughout the Pandemic, assisting colleagues to maximise the capabilities and effectiveness of the Office 365 suite of products and particularly our transition to using Microsoft Teams for our meetings.
13. They have also responded to pleas for assistance, supporting Mosaic changes to facilitate seven-day hospital discharges and have been on hand to assist practitioners as they have grappled with these changes. They devised, at short notice, our digital track and trace system and have held Covid secure 'pop in' sessions for staff who may have technical issues in our localities.
14. We have also been approached by ICT colleagues who wish to use this team to assist with training and implementation of Microsoft One-Drive and to assist with the roll out of Lone Worker technology.
15. Corporate Leadership Team have previously agreed that retention of these 6 posts is imperative. However, 3 of the posts had been funded corporately whilst they supported the roll out of technologies as a part of the previous Ways of Working Programme, funding which has subsequently been withdrawn.
16. We have therefore identified a number of vacancies and residual hours within the structure which can be converted to enable us to continue with these vital support roles.

## **In Summary**

17. The savings identified within this report, deliverable as a result of the Council's continual review of business support activity, can all be achieved by using vacant posts held proactively throughout the year as they have arisen.
18. Business support staff have been consulted regarding the revised structure appended to this report and there have been no concerns or comments received.

## **Other Options Considered**

19. No other options have been considered.

## **Reasons for Recommendation**

20. To update Members regarding the progress of the Business Support Review and particularly, delivery of the required efficiency savings as committed within the MTFS.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

21. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Data Protection and Information Governance**

22. There are no data protection or GDPR issues arising from this report as all the information contained is generic and cannot be attributed to individual employees.

## **Financial Implications**

23. As set out within the tables in paragraphs 4 and 10, and within the HR implications below, the deletion of 3.84 FTE vacant posts will enable the service to deliver the cashable efficiency figure required of £97,000.

## **Human Resources Implications**

24. The net impact of the efficiency measures described are illustrated within the table in paragraph 4 of the report and above.
25. These post reductions can be achieved through the deletion of vacancies.
26. Work has been re-engineered and new technology has been utilised to ensure that there is no detrimental impact for front-line colleagues.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That Members approve the revised Business Support Structure as set out in Appendix A.

**Marjorie Toward**  
**Service Director – Customers, Governance and Employees**  
**Chief Executives Department**

### **For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Julie Forster, Group Manager, Business Support, on 0115 9772302  
or [julie.forster@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:julie.forster@nottsc.gov.uk)

### **Constitutional Comments (KK 08/02/21)**

27. The recommendation contained within the report is a matter which falls to this Committee to consider in accordance with the County Council's Constitution and the scheme of delegation to the Personnel Committee.

### **Financial Comments (SES 03/02/21)**

28. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 23 of the report. As set out within the table in paragraph 4 and within the HR implications above, the deletion of 3.84 FTE vacant posts will enable the service to deliver the cashable efficiency figure required of £97,000 that have been factored into the MTFs as a budget saving to be made in 2021/22.

### **HR Comments (JP 01/02/21)**

29. Consultation has taken place with business support staff and with the recognised Trade Unions. All posts noted for disestablishment are vacant.

30. Trades Union colleagues note that to date, savings made by the business support service have been achieved through effective vacancy management and redeployment and are keen to see this approach continue.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

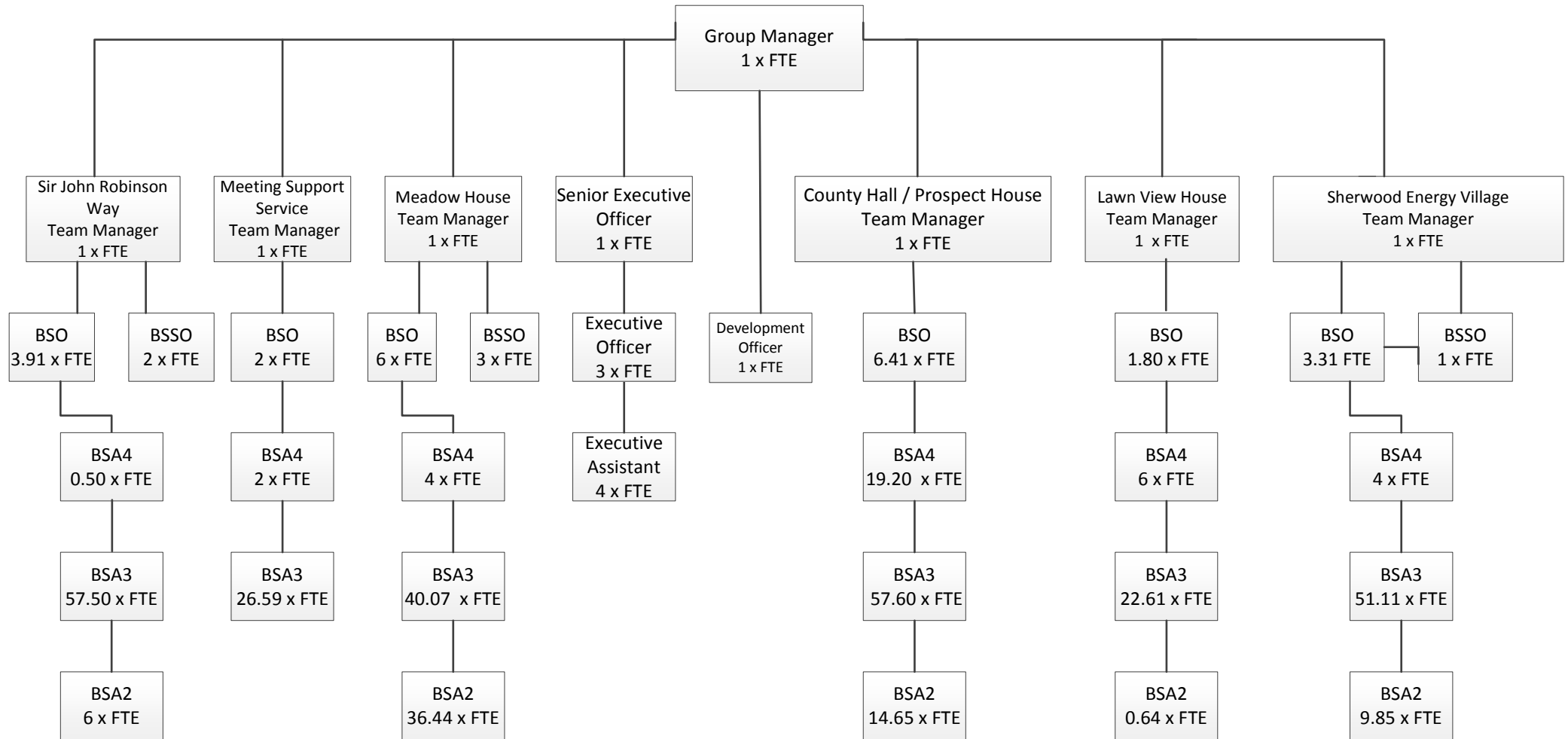
Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All







**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND  
EMPLOYEES****PERFORMANCE UPDATE AND CHANGES TO THE CUSTOMER SERVICE  
CENTRE OPERATING MODEL****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to provide Committee with:
  - a) A performance overview of the work and support provided by the Customer Service Teams to support COVID and Council services over the financial year.
  - b) Information about the lessons learned and changes that have been made to ensure that there is, and continues to be enough flexibility, resource and resilience in place to manage the continued demand on the team this year and in previous years, particularly for the most vulnerable residents.
  - c) To seek approval from members to agree the new operating model and structure and establish the changed and new posts required to ensure the team can continue to support departmental and external demands, remain flexible and have resilience in place to be able to quickly react to change and emergency situations.

**Information****Performance Information**

2. The Customer Service team has been challenged with increases in demand from departments (changes), increases in overall demand and to support development that will drive channel shift and self-service.
3. Last year, and this year, the team have also been challenged with several emergency situations relating to weather which is not a new thing. Each year the team have worked hard to balance resources and demand and manage this within budget. For the last 5 years this has been a struggle and demand from customers and departments has often outstripped resources - and this is likely to continue, putting more pressure on the team which would impact service levels and delay the technical work required to drive self-service and make us more efficient.
4. Over the last few years, the team dealt with several emergency flooding situations and associated payment requests. Other service-related demands were also supported and each year there are more and more 'emergency' situations which have required support. The team,

historically, has had some resilience in place to be able to provide the required support. However, budget reductions and demand increases have tipped that balance, with resources now so tight that the team's resilience, flexibility and ability to manage demand has reduced over time and this is now at a critical level.

5. This year the team have been faced with the most challenging year to date.
6. COVID-19 support provided by the team has been outstanding. The team pulled together (with a lot of financial support from Public Health) and continued to keep the front door open for business but have also provided extensive support for the most extremely vulnerable residents, when they needed it most.
7. The Design and Build Team have been making changes to services and processes, in real time and as the organisational needs developed. They reacted to service requests and changes to service delivery with speed and expertise, enabling seamless service delivery.
8. The team have always been open to change and agile to react however the last 3 years have been particularly challenging.
9. A snapshot of the volumes and performance is provided below (See Appendix 1 CSC Performance and Lessons Learned for full details):

VOLUME	TYPE	CONTEXT
>67,000 calls	Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV)	Inbound and outbound calls to the vulnerable to offer support during the pandemic (1 <sup>st</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> lockdowns) and during recent flooding. Arranging food, support and medication for those shielding.
>2500 hours	Overtime	Working additional hours, weekends and bank holidays to ensure no-one was left without support.
>4000 calls	Test and Trace	Since October the team have been supporting the government to collate contact information and to trace those who have been in contact with positive test cases. More recently the team have also picked up support for Lateral Flow Tests being completed across Nottinghamshire.
>4100 Social Media responses	All things COVID related	Responding to and supporting requests and questions that came in via Facebook and Twitter.
>4800 change requests	Process and systems changes	The Design and Build team supported the development of many



		new processes as services changed their offers during the pandemic. These included changes to call routing, development of the Volunteer Support hub and the design and build of many new online forms and processes.
>10,000	NHS vaccination enquiries support via phone and email (forecast year-end)	The team began supporting the NHS in the last week of January, with 1700 calls and emails in the first 3 days. Feedback on the support provided has been exceptional with >88% being resolved within the first call.
>4600	Supporting vaccination appointments for care staff	Vaccination calls and booking appointments for: care staff working in commissioned service delivery; foster parents; Carers, Personal assistants and other essential frontline workers.
>667,000 contacts	Overall enquiries, across all channels (forecast year-end)	Significantly higher than in previous years.

## Lessons Learned

10. Some key lessons have been learned from previous years and from 2020/21 which has been an exceptional year:

- a) There was a need to react quickly and to break down barriers ***and this happened.***
- b) When everyone puts their mind to it and have a common goal, we can achieve magnificent things.
- c) The Customer Service team have been outstanding and are very passionate about the work they do and work as one team.
- d) The team can be relied upon to deliver whatever has been asked of them.
- e) The pandemic has enabled the team to review processes and structures and implement an operating model that works well and can flex to emergency situations quickly and efficiently.
- f) Everyone has been committed, tolerant, supportive and understanding of each other's needs, putting their own personal circumstances aside to simply get on with the job. They are also very proud of their achievements throughout the pandemic.
- g) Recruitment and training had to be changed and delivered in a more flexible and interactive way – this is now working well. This now needs to be built upon by the new Training team and embedded into the way the team now work.
- h) The management team have provided invaluable support to staff to ensure they were kept updated regularly, fully briefed and had some time out when everything became too much. They increased 1-2-1 support, kept in touch regularly and ensured all the team needs have

been met in terms of working at home equipment. The team and their wellbeing are very important to the management team – they are the lifeblood of the centre.

## **Rationale for change**

11. A number of points have fed into the changes to the operating model and structure:

- a) The Customer Service Centre (CSC) has been open 12 years with volumes and demand continuing to increase each year. The centre's enquiry levels have grown from 250,000 to 606,000 last year (121% increase in demand).
- b) Since 2010 the customer service budget has reduced by over 50%.
- c) This year demand has been even higher due to COVID-19 support requests with a forecast of over 667,000 enquiries.
- d) Service redesign and change requests continue to be required and technical staff.
- e) Complaints and Information requests are now part of the overall Customer Service team.

12. The CSC budget has been overspent for the past 3 years which has meant delays in change being delivered and a push back on some requests which has not been ideal. This is due to the following:

- a) Increases in demand and the work the team are being asked to support in emergency situations (flooding, legislation changes, weather related and flood support grants).
- b) A 10% increase each year in adult social care work along with an increase in the last 2 years of >3 minutes in the overall call duration (CSC take over 120,000 calls for Adults).
- c) The team are carrying out far more complex work and triage has increased for ASCH (adoption of strengths-based approach and 3-conversation model). This has meant that more requests for support have been resolved at the first point of contact for social care from 67% to 80% (Note: 120,000 calls p.a. with 3 additional minutes each equates to 6 FTE over a 12-month period).
- d) Additional work has also been absorbed to support children's social care.
- e) There has also been increases in transactional call volumes for Schools and Registration.
- f) Additional pressures and demand have meant that our Design and Build team have not spent the amount of time they needed on 'progress' and driving self-service.
- g) Changes to legislation in 2018 increased the number of Blue Badge enquiries received and their complexity (hidden disability applications).

13. Along with Customer Service volumes the Design and Build team are being asked to support council-wide with technical support to:

- a) Develop and redesign new processes (online and at the CSC).
- b) Design and build new online forms and solutions to drive self-service.
- c) Manage web changes and support with Accessibility project work.
- d) Develop and support the new Community Hub and COVIZ (Public Health system to support, log and provide data relating to Test and Trace) with improvements and changes.
- e) Develop, design and build a Members hub to support members to access important information quickly and easily (work underway).
- f) Manage and co-ordinate text solutions (used extensively across COVID contacts and being adopted more and more to support service delivery).

## New Operating Model and Structure

14. In October members sanctioned additional funding for the CSC (£300k) to provide the CSC with the additional resources required to balance resources, flexibility against being able to manage demand. It is effective from April 2021. This will ensure the team have sufficient enough funding in place to build upon what is already a very solid foundation. It will provide:
  - a) Resources to be able to plan effectively and drive self-service.
  - b) Technical expertise and resources in place to provide a timely response to development requests and process changes.
  - c) A team who can continue to provide exceptional support to residents and internal departments/services.
  - d) The ability and resources in place to be able to flex quickly to support emergency situations.
15. During 2020 the team implemented a new temporary Operating Model that ensured there were sufficient resources to have the right people in the right roles to be able to respond quickly to the many changes and challenges faced.
16. This new model consists of two teams:
  - a) **Operational Delivery** – Frontline workers responsible for frontline service delivery, this includes support for social care, transactional enquiries and complaints and information requests – across all channels (phone, social media, email, SMS).
  - b) **Design Build and Support team** - This team is responsible for all change requests, process redesign, call centre systems, My NottsApp, Staff training, development and induction, basically everything to ensure operational delivery happens.
17. The model works well (as shown in the performance over the last 12 months) and delivers the resilience to support demand and change, along with the ability to respond quickly and effectively to any emergency situations in the future. It also provides sufficient frontline delivery staff and ensures customer satisfaction remains high (See Appendix 2 - Structure).
18. Changes being made within the new base budget from April 2021 will enable teams to implement the new internal operating model and establish new posts. This new model will:
  - Rationalise the support functions by merging the Design and Build team, the Training and Development team and Customer Support team under one manager to maximise support for the centre and to develop and enhance the technical capabilities within these teams.
  - Establish 8 new advisor and 1 Team Leader post to support demand and to ensure there is continued support and resilience in place to quickly respond to emergencies.
  - Create and implement the internal Training and Development team to train and develop new and existing staff. They will continue to establish creative new ways to train, induct and coach staff virtually and (safely) in-house. This team will also scope training programmes to support the ongoing development of the Customer Service team. This team played a key role this year to ensure staff are knowledgeable, customer focussed and have the right information available in order to provide timely and accurate advice and guidance.
  - Establish an additional post within the Design and Build team, Lead Technical Officer, who will be responsible for the support and development of the team technically, drive the self-

service agenda, manage priorities and resource availability and ensure technical projects are kept on track.

<b>Role and number</b>	<b>Salary</b>
Lead Technical Specialist x 1 (Band B)	£32,234
Team Leader x 1 (Band A)	£27,741
Level 2 Social Care Advisors x 6 (Grade 4)	£21,748 ( <b>Total £130,488</b> )
Level 3 Transactional Advisors x 2 (Grade 3)	£19,312 ( <b>Total £38,624</b> )
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£229,087</b>

## Other Options Considered

19. The Pre-Covid model was considered, however reverting to this model would not allow the flexibility and speed of delivery that is required within the 'new world' and the way the organisation is likely to continue to work in the future. This would be a backward step and would not build on the learning, great work and solutions put in place during the pandemic.

## Reasons for Recommendation

20. The Customer Service Team pride themselves on the service they provide and wish to continue to provide an improved service for the people of Nottinghamshire. Over the years the team have always strived to ensure this is done in the most cost-effective way possible.
21. The additional advisor capacity that the proposed changes would create will enable customer service to manage increased volumes effectively across all areas, ASCH, Blue Badges, Registration Services and School Admissions (where volumes continue to rise).
22. Merging the Design and Build team and support functions under one manager and the addition of other resources will give more resilience and support for process changes, driving self-service and digitalisation, supporting the new accessibility legislation and developing and improving technical solutions (e.g. System integration, Online support hub, Webchat and the roll out of text solutions).

## Statutory and Policy Implications

23. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## Data Protection and Information Governance

24. There are no data protection or GDPR issues arising from this report as all the information contained is generic and cannot be attributed to individual employees.

## **Financial Implications**

25. The changes are in line with the Customer Service Budget (including additional agreed budget sanctioned for ongoing resilience, stability and flexibility) for 2021/22.

## **Human Resources Implications**

26. The new model will create opportunities for permanent and temporary staff at the CSC. There are no adverse impacts on staffing.

## **Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications**

27. There will be more capacity available to take and manage these enquiries, particularly to support Public Health, Adults and Children's social care.

## **Implications for Service Users**

28. Current customer satisfaction levels will be maintained and potentially increased as there will be more capacity to manage seasonal peaks, emergency situations and increased demand during 2021/22.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1) That members agree to approve the new posts, revised structure and operating model, as set out in Appendix 2 effective from April 2021.

**Marjorie Toward**

**Service Director – Customers, Governance and Employees**  
**Chief Executives Department**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Marie Rowney, Group Manager – Customers, Complaints and Information  
[marie.rowney@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:marie.rowney@nottsc.gov.uk)

## **Constitutional Comments (GR 04/02/21)**

29. Pursuant to the Nottinghamshire County Council constitution, this Committee has the delegated authority to consider the content of this report and to make the recommendations contained within it – subject to all appropriate consultation having taken place in accordance with the Employment Procedure rules where applicable.

### **Financial Comments (SES 05/02/21)**

30. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 25 of the report. The changes are in line with the Customer Service Budget (including the additional budget for pressures and resilience of £300,000) for 2021/22.

### **Human Resources Comments (JP 08/02/21)**

31. The revised structure and any new posts have been subject to review by the Job Evaluation Team. Recruitment to additional posts will follow the Authority's Recruitment and HR procedures.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All

# CORONAVIRUS – OUR ONGOING RESPONSE - Appendix 1



- Worked with colleagues in ICT to enable all CSC Advisors 70+ as lync users, allowing us to configure Rostrvm and physical phone lines. Replacing the busy 'call floor' with working from home solution to keep staff safe



- Online and Advisor process builds support Community Hub , T&T, PPE support and infection control service
- Virtual sessions for families to attend Parenting Agenda support sessions
- Created HWRC bookings to enable social distancing at sites
- Arranged for the display of the 0300 number for outbound calls (removing 'number unknown')
- Regular IVR changes
- SMS solution development to support COVID-19 efforts overall



- >67,000 EVP outbound safe and well checks / >26,000 inbound calls relating to Covid/ >4000 T&T calls/>5000 NHS calls / >4000 calls taken to book care staff vaccinations
- / >4100 Social Media enquiries handled/ >2500 hours in overtime
- Opened at weekends from March to end of May AND all Bank Holidays and Saturdays during Oct/Nov
- All teams 'dug in' to support the contacting the vulnerable in initial outbreak
- Staff engagement activities; fun stuff; more face time and check ins to support wellbeing & good mental health



- New virtual recruitment using MS teams implemented, includes training over 50 displaced staff and brand new candidates, resulting in over 8,500 hours of training and induction time



- Re-opened MH and worked with Health and Safety to ensure offices were COVID safe
- Risk assessments completed for all staff who are in the office to be able to deliver blended training



# CORONAVIRUS – OUR ONGOING RESPONSE



Quickly re-engineered and transformed internal processes allowing frontline service delivery to continue.  
Teams ability to recognise cross skills within teams and adapting to support service delivery



- Process changes applied to Schools, Registrars ,Early years and childcare, Highways , school transport and Waste services (multiple times throughout the year as in/out of lockdown service delivery changed)



- HPAS - Sourced new equipment store following store closures, enabled traders to access materials required
- Supported increased hospital discharge demands providing weekend and out of hours cover



- Maintained a level of provision across all frontline and key services during the pandemic, including, but not limited to supporting: services with changes to service delivery models
- Maintaining BAU service delivery for all NCC services



- Changes made to Blue Badge assessment processes to prevent delays in badge provision



- Development and support of Volunteer/Covid support hub
- Design & Build of new flows on call routing system - prioritising urgent services e.g. School National offer day
- Supermarket slots – worked to improve accessibility of these and support customer access
- Form building to allow care homes to access funding from local authorities
- Process/form build for: Home testing solutions / Test and Trace support and other COVID related support



- >3500 CEV contacts in 2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown with food deliveries and food signposting
- >500 calls to CEV to offer support with access to provisions in flooded areas



# CORONAVIRUS -LESSONS LEARNED – *WE CAN DO THINGS QUICKLY!*

## CUSTOMER SERVICE, COMPLAINTS AND INFORMATION



- Committed, resilient, flexible, cross skilled team who are very proud
- Positivity and response to urgent work has been exceptional
- The team pull together in a crisis well - always
- Good operational leadership across the management team



- Continue to use Microsoft teams to effectively collaborate with colleagues across departments on projects such as Test & Trace
- Continue to use breakout sessions in Microsoft teams to enable large groups to participate in workshops and training



- Developed systems quickly to manage COVID contact data removing 'clunky' spreadsheets and allowing advisors to manage contact effectively.



- Top down comms meetings to keep in touch with strategic meeting about the pandemic and provided the ability to input on key processes and systems
- Team expertise in all things technical was utilised well – a lot of work was completed by the D&B team in terms of Community Hub Development and other COVID related systems



- Introduction of Team apps (Office 365) – very efficient roll out
- Production of standards and processes to improve communication
- Planned quickly to enhance home working ,virtual training /recruitment
- Implementation of virtual recruitment techniques
- Virtual support and coaching implementation



- COVID – call outs were well received by vulnerable residents – they were pleased and grateful for the contact – all three times!
- Ongoing contact for those who were most vulnerable was welcome
- Review of the way letters were used and changed this for next time – caused many spikes in calls and there was a lot of duplication of letters which confused residents. Improved each time



- Blue Badge customers will use online facilities if we provide them with suitable information and easy to use processes - more development is now underway to make this happen



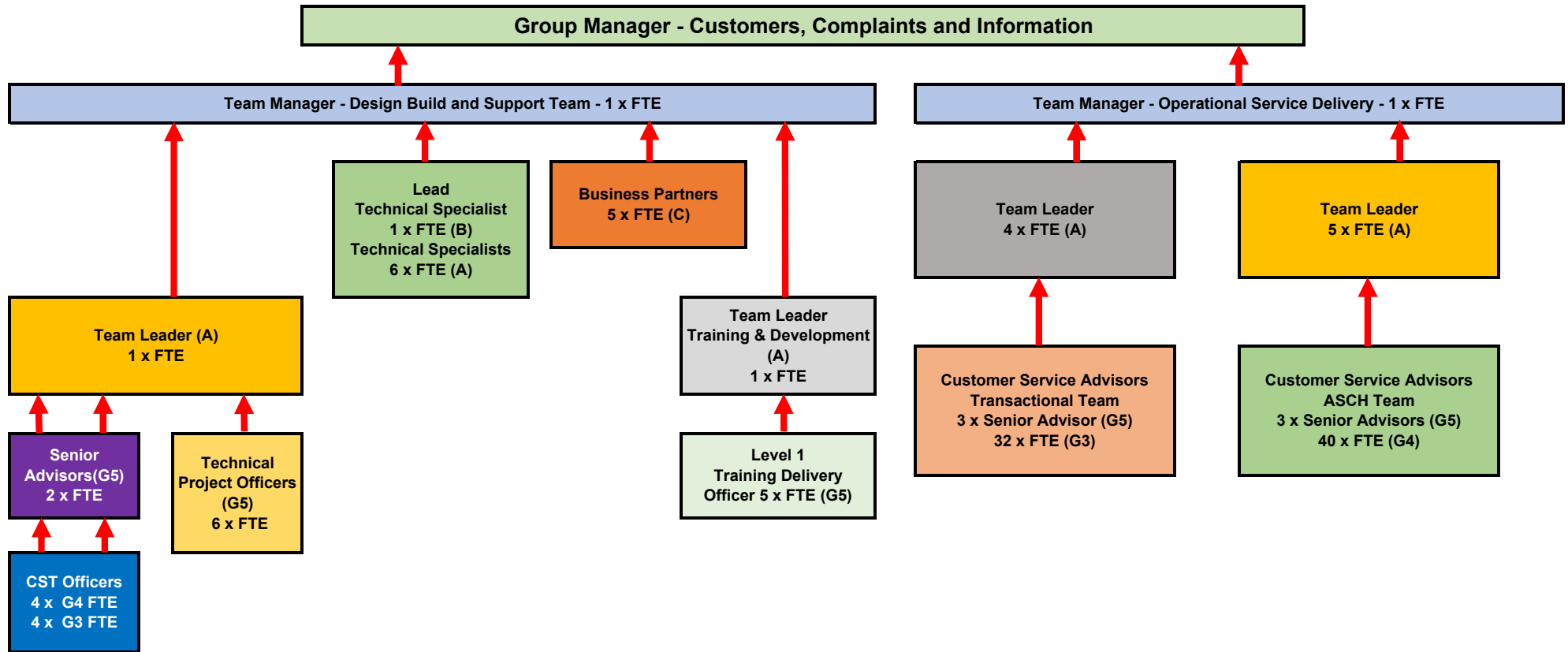
- IVR changes – skills transfer to other members of staff to provide more resilience for future change requests. Review of Rostrvm training to do this virtually
- Rostrvm & Mosaic upgrade to Cloud underway to help with this. Now part of priorities for D&B



- Our virtual recruitment rounds provided a relaxing environment for both panel and interviewees
- Virtual inductions pushed us to design and provide inductees with materials and tools to be hands on through training while document their own progress.



## Operating Model and Team Structure 2021 - 2022 - Effective 1st April 2021 - Appendix 2



4 G3



**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR - CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND  
EMPLOYEES****HEALTH AND SAFETY SIX MONTHLY UPDATE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform members of the Council's achievement in gaining ISO 45001:2018 accreditation.
2. To update Members on ongoing health and safety support and development.

**Information****ISO 45001 Accreditation**

3. The Council received a positive recommendation for the award of ISO 45001 certification following an external audit by British Standards Institute (BSI) on 12 -14 January 2021. A copy of the certificate is attached as appendix A.
4. The planned date to attain ISO 45001 was September 2021 however this has been achieved earlier by demonstrating over 80% compliance against the management standard, the audit concluding that the objectives had been achieved and the Council does fulfil the ISO 45001 standard and audit criteria.
5. The audit examined the existing management system and focussed in detail on how this had been adapted to safely manage the risks posed by COVID19, the provision of a COVID19 secure workplace and a site visit to the Council's personal protective equipment (PPE) distribution facility.
6. The remaining elements of the standard or recommended actions have been planned for audit at the next continuing assessment visit on 1 July 2021, examples being further defining the organisational context and needs of other interested parties, awareness and communication of risk assessment outcomes and further developing an internal audit programme.
7. ISO 45001 places more emphasis on safety leadership, worker participation, opportunity for improvement and associated health and safety culture and broadens the scope looking at the needs of interested parties external to the organisation.

8. Whilst the former BS18001 certification covered key high-risk elements of the Council's activities focussing on physical injury, the new ISO 45001 standard will bring the whole Council within scope.
9. Adult Social Care will be assessed as a second phase due to not having former BSI 18001 accreditation. Note, this is shown as an exclusion on the ISO 45001 certificate.
10. Positive comments received related to the new corporate homeworking tool (best and most comprehensive seen by the auditor), consultation and participation including Trade Union representatives in the audit process, the new procurement tool kit and risk management in relation to COVID19.
11. The health and safety team now will focus on embedding ISO 45001 in the organisation by communication of its requirements and development of a toolkit like that used by procurement which will provide links to ISO 45001 standards documents, training resources, self-assessment tools and the safety manual.
12. The cost of maintaining the ongoing external audit programme by BSI and ISO 45001 certification based on 2020-2021 costs is approximately £9000 per annum. This is a 50% reduction on the former BS18001 management system.

### **Ongoing Support and Development**

13. Work continues to support PPE distribution and safe use, approximately 350 face fit tests for higher level respiratory protection have been undertaken, with an increased demand from private sector care providers and direct payment recipients.
14. Support is being provided to partners providing the Community Asymptomatic (lateral flow) Testing Programme. Health and Safety are providing risk management advice, risk assessment development and weekly compliance monitoring across the established sites.
15. Initial safety planning is underway to support the County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner election process. Venues including schools are being visited, PPE needs assessed and the practical aspects of COVID19 safe voting environments put in place. This work extends to the electoral counting process and results announcement. Lessons learned from the larger community testing sites with high footfall throughput are being applied.
16. The home working interactive arrangements tool has received 2866 completed returns since its launch in October. This enables key issues to be identified with broad responses put in place, for example out of date portable appliance test for Council electrical equipment used at home. From February this year, 2000 slots have been made available on an appointment basis in Council office receptions and means for those who remain shielding to receive newly tested replacements.
17. Individual safety concerns are equally addressed with fire safety, trip hazards and the homework environment being the more common issues raised.
18. A three year contract with 'Peoplesafe' providers of a lone working system has been approved by Corporate Leadership Team. 3,000 staff across 118 teams and Elected

Members will be in scope to receive lone worker protection systems. This will primarily be based on a mobile phone App. 50 engagement meetings have taken place with team and service managers across all four departments as well as liaison with trade unions at the Central JCNP.

19. Detailed implementation planning is taking place with 'Peoplesafe' to provide timescales for the rollout plan over the next couple of months.
20. Ongoing work with schools and academies centres on the provision of a COVID19 secure environment and maintaining education for key workers' children including supporting lateral flow testing arrangements.
21. A programme of compliance inspections as part of the schools and academies planned audit programme restarted in February, this will capture broader property and reoccupation requirements together with elements of the school's health and safety training programme now being delivered.

### **Other Options Considered**

22. No other options have been considered.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

23. Elected members require visibility of health and safety performance, compliance and risk control measures in place to make informed decisions affecting the Council's health and safety risks.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

24. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Data Protection and Information Governance**

25. There are no implications arising directly from this report as no individual or personal data or information is used.

### **Financial Implications**

26. The cost of the BSI external audit programme and maintenance of the ISO 45001:2018 standard will be approximately £9000 per annum.

## **Human Resources Implications**

27. These are outlined in the body of the report. The health and safety support provided in line with government guidance aims to ensure the continued health safety and wellbeing of staff.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty Implications**

28. The proposals in this report meet the Council's existing commitment to meeting, and where possible exceeding, the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **It is recommended that Members:**

- 1) Congratulate the Health and Safety Team on achievement of ISO 45001:2018 and agree to publicise this significant achievement.
- 2) Receive a further Health and Safety update report in six months.

**Marjorie Toward**

**Service Director - Customers, Governance and Employees**

**Chief Executive's Department**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

John Nilan, Team Manager – Health & Safety [john.nilan@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:john.nilan@nottsc.gov.uk) or 0115 8040380

## **Constitutional Comments (KK 16/02/21)**

29. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

## **Financial Comments (SES 23/02/21)**

30. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 26 of the report. The cost of the BSI external audit programme and maintenance of the ISO 45001:2018 standard will be approximately £9,000 per annum and will be met from existing budgetary provision.

## **HR Comments (JP 24/02/21)**

31. The Council has an ongoing commitment to managing Health and Safety. Planning and performance review are key requirements of the Health and Safety Management System.



### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All





# Certificate of Registration

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - ISO 45001:2018

This is to certify that:

Nottinghamshire County Council  
County Hall  
West Bridgford  
Nottingham  
NG2 7QP  
United Kingdom

Holds Certificate Number:

OHS 548629

and operates an Occupational Health and Safety Management System which complies with the requirements of ISO 45001:2018 for the following scope:

**The provision and management of the corporate health and safety management system to Nottinghamshire County Council, including Chief Executives Department, Children and Families and Place. Excluding Adult Social Care and Health.**

**[Previously certified to BS OHSAS 18001:2007 since 2010-10-07]**

For and on behalf of BSI:

Andrew Launn, EMEA Systems Certification Director

Original Registration Date: 2021-02-11

Effective Date: 2021-02-11

Latest Revision Date: 2021-02-11

Expiry Date: 2022-10-07



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**10 March 2021****Agenda Item: 7****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND  
EMPLOYEES****PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) – RESOURCE IN RESPONSE  
TO COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with an update on the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus). To establish the resource required to continue with a sustainable operating model until the end of March 2022.

**Information**

2. This report provides an update on the PPE activity as part of the emergency response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.
3. The County Council continues to provide PPE to social care, health, education, and other settings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with Government guidance. To date, the PPE Team have dealt with 3,151 requests and distributed over 2,242,743 items across the County since March 2020.
4. In July 2020, Personnel Committee approved the establishment of staffing resource to support the Council's ongoing requirements to fulfil PPE provision. This resource was established until May 2021, on the basis that from May 2021 PPE support could be stepped-down and there would be a return to routine supply arrangements. However, while the issues experienced around supply chains in the early stages of the pandemic have now largely been resolved, and demand has stabilised, due to the continued prevalence of COVID-19 there is an ongoing requirement for the provision of PPE. It is currently understood that despite the size and scale of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, PPE will continue to be required at the same levels for some time.
5. The County Council has an established secure PPE supply route, with regular monthly drops of free PPE to meet our demand. On 12 January 2021, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) confirmed that this provision of free PPE to the health and social care sector has now been extended to 30 June 2021 and that a review will be conducted in April 2021 to inform plans for post-June 2021.

6. External social care providers are able to access the Government PPE Portal for their COVID-19 PPE requirements. As a result, the majority of requests received by the County Council are now from internal services and Direct Payment (DP) recipients / Personal Assistants (PAs), who are not eligible for the Government Portal. However, if an emergency situation arises and they are unable to access PPE through this route, external providers can access PPE through the County Council.
7. The County Council is working with Nottingham City Council, who are leading the procurement of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) contract for ongoing PPE supplies. This will provide resilience to Government supplies, including PPE for non-COVID-19 related uses. This is due to go live in spring/summer 2021 and will be available on a call-off basis to regional partners.
8. The County Council PPE warehouse is managed by an Operations Team, comprising the County Council Facilities Team, supported by redeployed colleagues from Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) and the Parking Enforcement Team. Core activities include receipt of stock, storage, stock management and distribution of all PPE items.
9. PPE stock is delivered to social care, health, education, and other settings on a request basis. Orders are processed through an open source software stock management system (NOP Commerce). Typical delivery following approval by the PPE Project Team is 1–3 working days.
10. The PPE Team are also now providing logistical support for the Asymptomatic Rapid Lateral Flow Testing Programme (Community, Vulnerable Groups, and Frontline Workforce). This includes; ordering of lateral flow testing kits (LFTs) and associated PPE from the DHSC, and receipt, storage and distribution of all items at the central warehouse.

## **Governance and Reporting**

11. The County Council PPE operations have a robust governance route to ensure that all areas of the authority have continuous oversight of activities. PPE Operations are governed through reports to the Corporate Leadership Team and the COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee. The Risk Safety and Emergency Management Board (RSEMB) is also utilised to discuss PPE issues as required.
12. The Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Logistics Cell meets on a monthly basis and is supported by a fortnightly planning meeting. The Logistics Cell reports into the Tactical Coordination Group (TCG).

## **Resources**

13. The following resourcing is proposed to continue operations until the end of March 2022:

Table 1 – Proposed Resource:

<b>Area</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Indicative Costs (per annum)</b>
Project Management and associated administrative support	2.15	£96,000
Operational warehouse and delivery staff	5.5	£162,500

14. Additionally, there will continue to be a requirement for indirect staffing support from colleagues in Public Health, Procurement, Health and Safety, Quality and Market Management, and Communications. This is not costed above and will be met from existing role capacity.

### **Other Options Considered**

15. As outlined above, it was originally anticipated that PPE operations would be stepped down from May 2021, but because of the continued prevalence of COVID-19 and the likelihood that the need and demand for PPE will be ongoing, it has been necessary to reconsider options for the provision of PPE.
16. Other options considered included ending the centralised supply of PPE; supplying PPE only to internal services; and supplying PPE to internal services and DP recipients, but not external providers.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

17. Due to the continued prevalence of COVID-19 and the likelihood that the need and demand for PPE will be ongoing but stable, it is recommended that the County Council continue to supply PPE to all existing users. Retaining centralised provision will ensure that PPE is readily available, quality assured, and used in the correct capacity. This approach will also minimise disruption to our service users (internal and external) and LRF partners. Furthermore, the systems, processes and resources required to continue the PPE provision are already in place.
18. Further periodic reviews of PPE provision will be undertaken throughout 2021/22, including a further review of supply in line with the DHSC planned review of PPE provision in April 2021.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

19. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Financial Implications**

20. The cost of the staffing resource for a 12-month period is outlined in Table 1. This is the maximum cost bearing in mind that some of the required resource may be met from existing capacity / allocations.

### **Human Resources Implications**

21. The fulfilment of the posts included in Table 1 will be through a combination of resource allocations and recruitment as required. Where recruitment is required it will be undertaken in line with Council HR policy.

## **Implications for Service Users**

22. The continuation of these posts will enable the Council to continue to source, supply and distribute PPE for COVID related use to internal adults' and children's care services; and DP recipients / their PAs<sup>1</sup> in line with national guidance. The County Council will also support external settings where they are not able to fulfil an urgent need.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members agree to:

- 1) The continuation of the posts listed in Table 1 until 31 March 2022.
- 2) Periodic reviews of PPE provision throughout 2021/22, including a further review of supply in line with the DHSC planned review of PPE provision in April 2021.
- 3) Further reports being submitted to Personnel Committee if staffing requirements are impacted by changes to PPE provision.

**Marjorie Toward**

**Service Director – Customers, Governance and Employees**  
**Chief Executive's Department**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Kaj Ghattaora, Group Manager Procurement, [kaj.ghattaora@nottsccl.gov.uk](mailto:kaj.ghattaora@nottsccl.gov.uk) or 0115 9773267

### **Constitutional Comments (KK 16/02/21)**

23. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

### **Financial Comments (SES 23/02/21)**

24. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 20 of the report.

25. The cost of the staffing resource for a 12-month period is outlined in Table 1. This is the maximum cost bearing in mind that some of the required resource may be met from existing capacity/allocations. The balance of funding required will be met from the Central Government COVID grant allocation for 2021/22.

### **HR Comments (JP 24/02/21)**

26. The posts within Table 1 will be extended to 31.3.22. Any recruitment that may be required will be subject to the Authority's recruitment policies and procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> These groups are currently not eligible to access the Government PPE Portal for their PPE.



### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None.

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All



**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEES****NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL WORKFORCE AVAILABILITY, SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE AND SUPPORT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Elected Members of the current position of workforce availability and sickness absence for quarter 3 2020/21 and to seek approval for the ongoing actions contained in the Employee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and any new actions identified as part of the Workforce Resilience and Recovery work stream.

**Information**

2. Members received a report at November's Committee which demonstrated that the level of workforce availability throughout the Covid-19 pandemic had remained relatively stable and comparable with four randomly selected dates prior to the outbreak. The level of availability fluctuated between 85 and 89% of the workforce and took into account people unavailable to work due to sickness absence, annual leave or for any other approved reason. This figure has dipped during this further lockdown period partly due to employees being encouraged to take more of their annual leave allowance but also because there are increased numbers of people self isolating. However, more positively, the figures are not reflective of the traditionally higher levels of sickness absence during the winter months when Covid related sickness absence is extracted. The average figure for workforce availability has dropped below 80% since the Christmas holiday period but it fluctuates daily. Managers have been reminded to ensure information is kept up to date on the Council's BMS system to ensure the accuracy of daily reports to Corporate Leadership Team to enable areas causing concern to be identified and relevant action be taken to address any shortfall in essential resourcing requirements.
3. The current situation continues to have an impact on people's mental and physical wellbeing and monitoring of this is ongoing. The Workforce Resilience and Recovery Group, chaired by Marje Toward, Service Director - Customers, Governance and Employees, has an identified workstream on employee health and wellbeing. This is being led by a manager from Children and Families department with input from colleagues from across the Council. This model of distributive leadership provides fresh perspective and an opportunity to bring together ideas which may previously have only operated within discrete areas of the workforce. An example of this would be adapting the social work Organisational Resilience Diagnostic (SWORD) which incorporates a survey element and

will take place probably in April as part of national programme. Our intention is to tailor the survey to cover the whole Council so gain maximum benefit from our involvement in the programme.

4. Further developments through this workstream include the wellbeing information available to employees being re-positioned to make it more visible from the front page of the intranet and therefore more accessible. There is revised guidance and template documents for supervision which have been adapted and consulted upon by the group which are ready for approval and communicating and these will link directly to relevant training content on My Learning, My Career. A presentation was made to Central Joint Consultative and negotiating Panel on 28 January 2021 and trade union colleagues were supportive of the measures under consideration as part of the wider offer. Although these changes described above seem relatively minor, it is intended that they will add to the incremental improvement of the overall health and wellbeing support offer to our workforce.
5. Information contained in Appendices A to D indicate the annual 12 month rolling picture regarding sickness absence. The figure for **quarter 3 2020/21** is **9.02 days** a slight increase from **8.96 days** for quarter 2. The previous report highlighted that this did not reflect the overall improved attendance during the Covid outbreak due to the number of days absence being calculated as a 12 month rolling figure. The average figure with Covid related sickness absence removed reduced from **8.3** in quarter 1 to **7.82** days in quarter 2. Quarter 3 has seen a further improvement standing at **7.40 days** which places us closer to our stretch target of 7 days per annum per employee. The figures at the end of Q4 will allow for further analysis and present a full 12 month period where Covid related absence has been a significant factor influencing employee attendance.
6. Casework arising from the application of the Council's various employment procedures continues and there have been 2 dismissals under the Attendance Management procedure and 30 ill health retirements in quarter 3. Work continues with managers to ensure the focus on improving attendance is not diminished whilst attention is concentrated on the response to the pandemic and HR surgeries continue to be offered to managers virtually.
7. As reported to January's committee, the Council has received Timewise accreditation in recognition of the work on developing flexible working practices which meet both service need and individual aspirations for a positive work/life balance. We continue to work to fully understand the link between flexible working and attendance to enable us to utilise this information to improve sickness absence overall. Although the workforce availability figure, as mentioned above, has dropped during the second wave of the pandemic to under 80 per cent across all departments, we have developed a better understanding of the nature and duration of all absences as a result of the more detailed analysis undertaken. The unavailable for work figure includes sickness absence but also approved absence for annual leave and all aspects of paid and unpaid special leave. We continue to investigate different ways of viewing sickness absence levels not only looking at the days lost but also the reasons for this, the split between long and short term absence, the percentage of employees with no recorded absence and those whose absences would be considered to be long term, that is, over 28 days.
8. Members have previously expressed a particular interest in the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce. We are in the process of reviewing the number of contacts received by the trained mental health first aiders to understand the level of need and where

this arises, notwithstanding the need to maintain confidentiality. There have been some complex issues for the mental health first aiders to deal with and there is a need to ensure they receive the appropriate level of support themselves in fulfilling this voluntary role. Promotion of the package of support available to all employees continues on a regular basis.

9. In February for example, we promoted Time to Talk Day with a programme of events as outlined in the News article below;

*“Join us for Time to Talk Day this Thursday 4 February 2021*

*This year’s Time to Talk Day is Thursday 4 February and the theme is ‘The Power of Small - a small conversation about mental health has the power to make a big difference’.*

*Time to Talk Day is special because it encourages everyone to be more open about mental health – to talk, to listen and to change lives and just having a small conversation about mental health has the power to make a BIG difference. We know that the more conversations we have, the more myths we can bust and barriers we can break down, helping to end the isolation, shame and worthlessness that too many of us with mental health problems are made to feel. Time to Talk Day is the day that we get the nation talking about mental health and although this year’s event might look a little different, at times like this, open conversations about mental health are more important than ever.*

*It’s more difficult to have our usual face to face conversations this year but there are many other ways to get involved with Time to Talk Day remotely and we have organised some fantastic online events for everyone to get involved with!*

#### **PROGRAMME OF EVENTS**

##### **9am - 5pm Mental Health First Aiders**

*Our Mental Health First Aiders will be available all day if you wish to drop-in for an informal chat. Just click on this Teams meeting link to drop-in any time of the day.*

##### **10.30am - 10.55am Yoga at your desk with Suzanne**

*Take a pause from your day and join qualified yoga teacher Suzanne for a 15 minute seated yoga session which you can do at your desk! Yoga can help to relieve the tensions and stresses of life and is a great way to look after your physical and mental wellbeing so why not take some time out of your busy day to pause and to do some breathing exercises and gentle stretches together. Please note that this session has a maximum capacity of 30 people so please book your place.*

##### **11am - 12pm Mental Health and Wellbeing At Work and Beyond (a Microsoft Teams event)**

*Join us for an interactive presentation on mental health and wellbeing at work, and beyond. Intended to educate about mental health and focus on how we can all maintain good mental health whilst at work, this session will be presented by one of our Mental Health First Aiders Lucy Fox.*

##### **2pm - 2.25pm Yoga Session at your desk with Suzanne**

*Take a pause from your day and join qualified yoga teacher Suzanne for a 15 minute seated yoga session which you can do at your desk! Yoga can help to relieve the tensions and stresses of life and is a great way to look after your physical and mental wellbeing so why not take some time out of your busy day to pause and to do some breathing exercises and gentle stretches together. Please note that this session has a maximum capacity of 30 people so please book your place.*

### **2pm to 4pm Workplace Chaplaincy Service**

*The Reverend Jo Tatum is a trained, trustworthy confidant with the time and willingness to listen and Reverend Jo will be joining us if you would like to talk to someone - about anything you like! This service is for all people whatever their beliefs and circumstances so if you have any issues on your mind or you are affected by the current pandemic or are feeling socially isolated then why not drop in for a chat as your chaplain is here to offer friendship and to listen. Their support is unconditional, non-judgmental, independent and confidential.*

*Feeling stressed? Need some time out to unwind? Why not try your hand (or mouse!) at this online jigsaw of Green's Mill, Sneinton on a lovely sunny day (Spring is on its way – honest!).*

*Here are some other useful links to some articles and courses we have for you in My Learning My Career which is available to all staff and includes a Career Development Portal to help you build your personal and career development:*

- *Mental Health Interactive Course is a great introduction to understanding mental health and its importance in the workplace.*
- *How exercise can impact your performance at work is a short article on the benefits of exercise and the impact this can have on your performance at work.*
- *Coping with the pressure of work is a short course which helps to break down the causes of pressure at work and gives practical advice on how to manage it.*

*If you would like any more information on how Nottinghamshire County Council supports Mental Health and Wellbeing, you can find details on our Mental Health First Aiders, our employee counselling service and other links to external sources for practical advice and support on our Mental Health and Wellbeing intranet page. (Links deleted for the purpose of publishing this report)”.*

10. The work mentioned at Committee in November 2020 with Loughborough University has been further developed. This is a research study to investigate what employees need to assist an early return to work. The Council has been selected to be part of this pilot and is the largest local employer to be involved. This return to work support project has been launched to managers and their teams at the end of January with further communications published early February, seeking employees who fit the criteria, participation and engagement in the pilot exercise. A copy of the information supporting this programme of work with the associated communication published in February's Team Talk can be found in Appendix F. We will continue to refresh the information about the pilot on a monthly basis and information on the findings of this six month exercise will be brought to this Committee at a later date as the detail emerges.
11. The Employee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, previously approved by Members, forms the basis of the work stream in the Workforce Resilience and Recovery Group with a view

to further refreshing the offer. Discussions are continuing with the recognised Trades Unions and the various self-managed groups to ensure our support package meets the needs of all, any gaps in provision can be identified and the action plan retains its currency. An update on the action plan will be brought to the next Personnel Committee along with quarter 4 sickness absence performance information.

### **Other Options Considered**

12. The Council continues to recognise that its workforce is its most valuable asset and needs to be prepared and protected during the current emergency and beyond through the range of activities identified here. We continue to build on the existing guidance, toolkits and risk assessments available to assist managers to support their team members. The Council's employee wellbeing offer is kept under constant review and has been extended throughout the pandemic as new needs are identified and fresh resources become available.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

13. The Council seeks to maximise the attendance and contribution of each employee to ensure it has the capacity to continue providing essential services to its most vulnerable citizens as the pandemic extends into 2021. The provision of an extensive support package for employees is one way to ensure the workforce remains engaged and continues to work effectively to meet the aims and objectives outlined in the Council Plan and various departmental strategies. It is also recognised as a positive recruitment and retention tool.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Data Protection and Information Governance**

15. There are no data protection or GDPR issues arising from this report as all the information contained is generic and cannot be attributed to individual employees.

### **Financial Implications**

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from the content of this report. However, there is clearly a cost to the measures put in place to support and protect the workforce during the current situation. Developing a comprehensive package of support has contributed to making employees feel valued and ultimately will have a positive impact on turnover and recruitment.

### **Human Resources Implications**



17. The Council recognises that its most valuable asset is its employees and it would have been unable to deliver and continue to provide services to its most vulnerable citizens without their invaluable and continuing contribution. The range of activities outlined in this report in terms of support and protection has enabled every individual to make their own contribution and ensured their positive engagement throughout. The work commissioned through the Workforce Resilience and Recovery Group is identifying what the future of work will look like and what tools are required to successfully deliver this. The health and wellbeing of our employees is essential to assist the workforce move forward in a flexible and supported way, to take on new responsibilities, be enabled to utilise technology and to maximise the organisational and individual benefits of agile working.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty Implications**

18. Work has been undertaken to understand the potential additional risk factors presented by Covid-19 to specific groups of employees including Black and Minority Ethnic employees and those with relevant disabilities and long-term health conditions. Targeted actions have been identified to address these specific issues most recently the promotion of Vaccination Conversation Events arranged by health partners to dispel concerns regarding the vaccines to people from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities. We continue to engage with the recognised Trade Unions and Council's self-managed groups and support networks to ensure we take full account of the concerns and needs of the entire workforce.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 1) Agree to the continuing work to deliver the identified actions in the Employee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and to the inclusion of any additions arising from the relevant workstream of the Workforce Resilience and Recovery Group.
- 2) Agree to receive a further report in April 2021 which provides information on 2020/21 quarter 4 absence figures and workforce availability.
- 3) Agree to receive information regarding the Return to Work research project as this work develops at June's Committee.

**Marjorie Toward**  
**Service Director – Customers, Governance and Employees**  
**Chief Executives Department**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Gill Elder, Head of Human Resources, on [gill.elder@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:gill.elder@nottsc.gov.uk) or 0115 9773867

### **Constitutional Comments (KK 16/02/21)**

19. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Personnel Committee.



### **Financial Comments (SES 23/02/21)**

20. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **HR Comments (JP 24/02/21)**

21. The human resources implications are set out in the body of the report. Significant activity has been undertaken to develop support and initiatives to maximise employee attendance.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

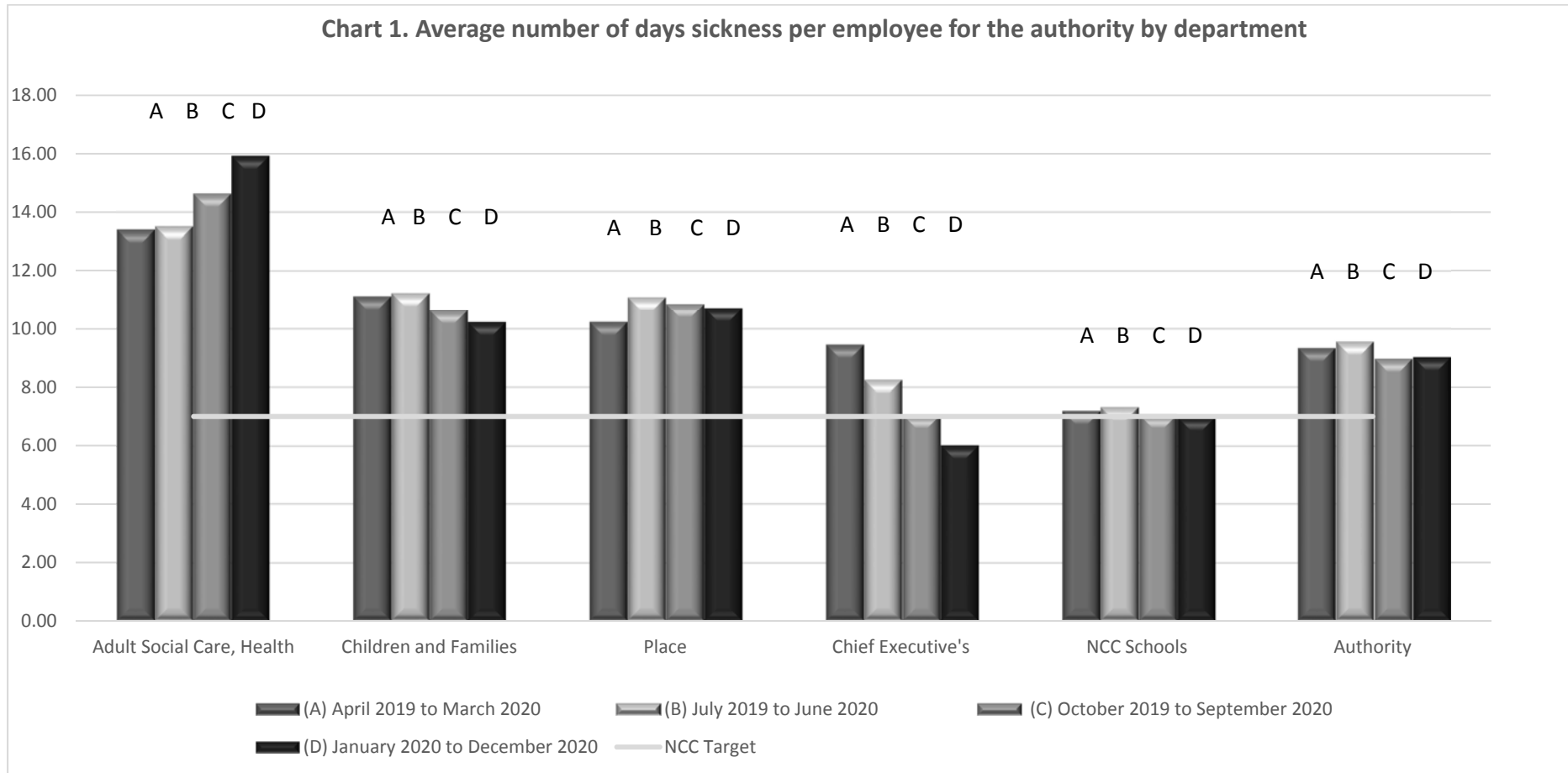
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### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

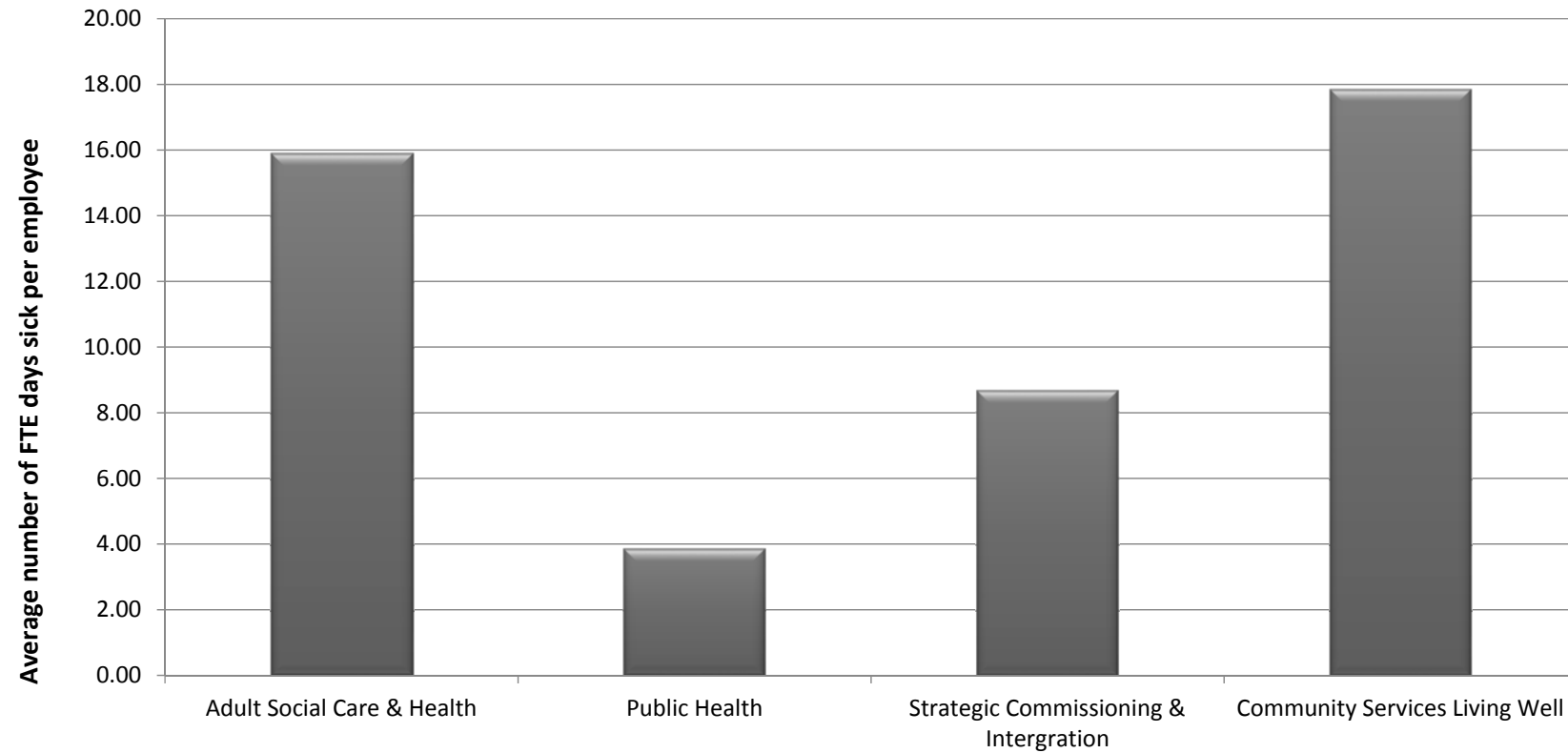
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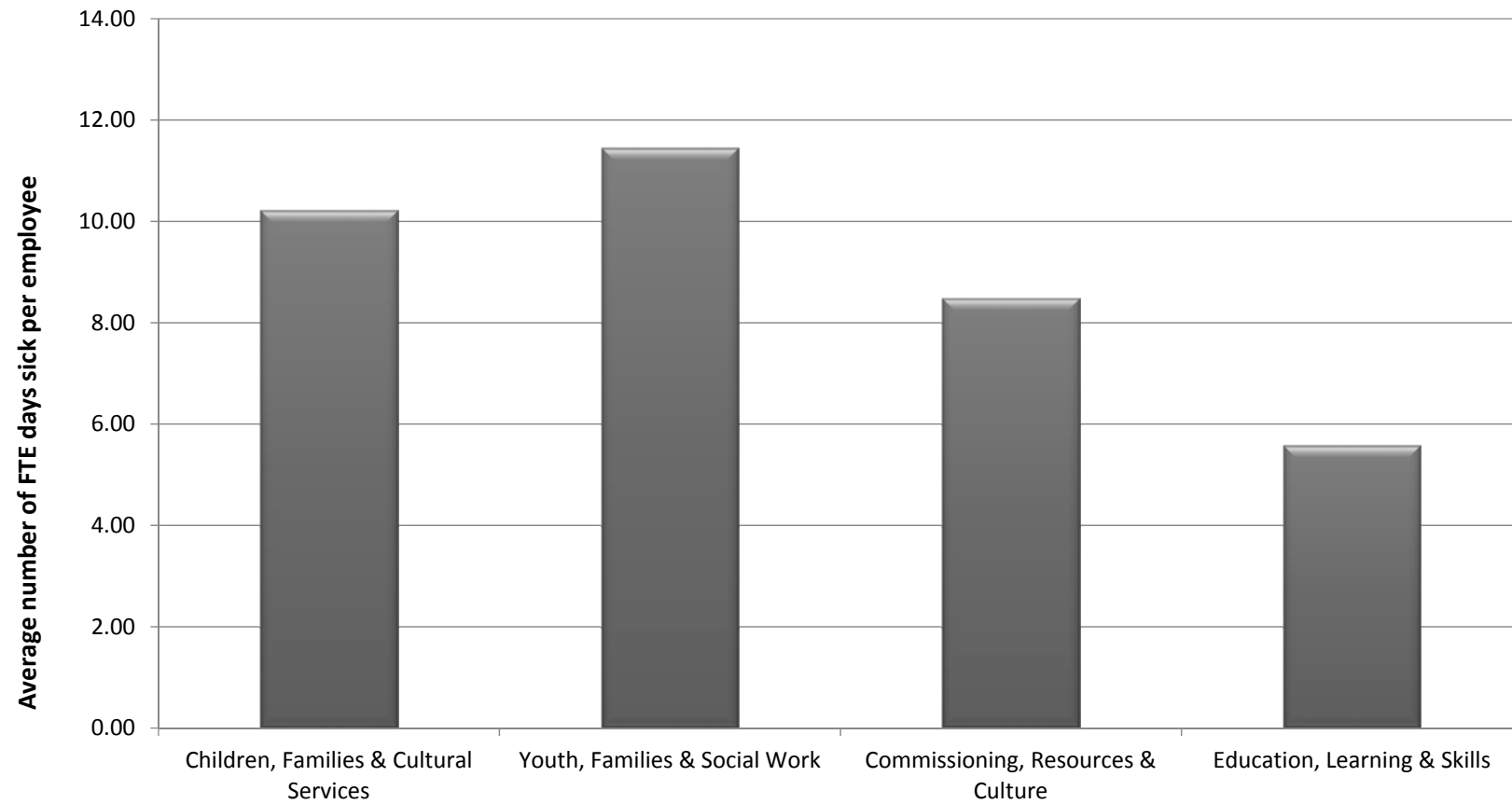
## Appendix A



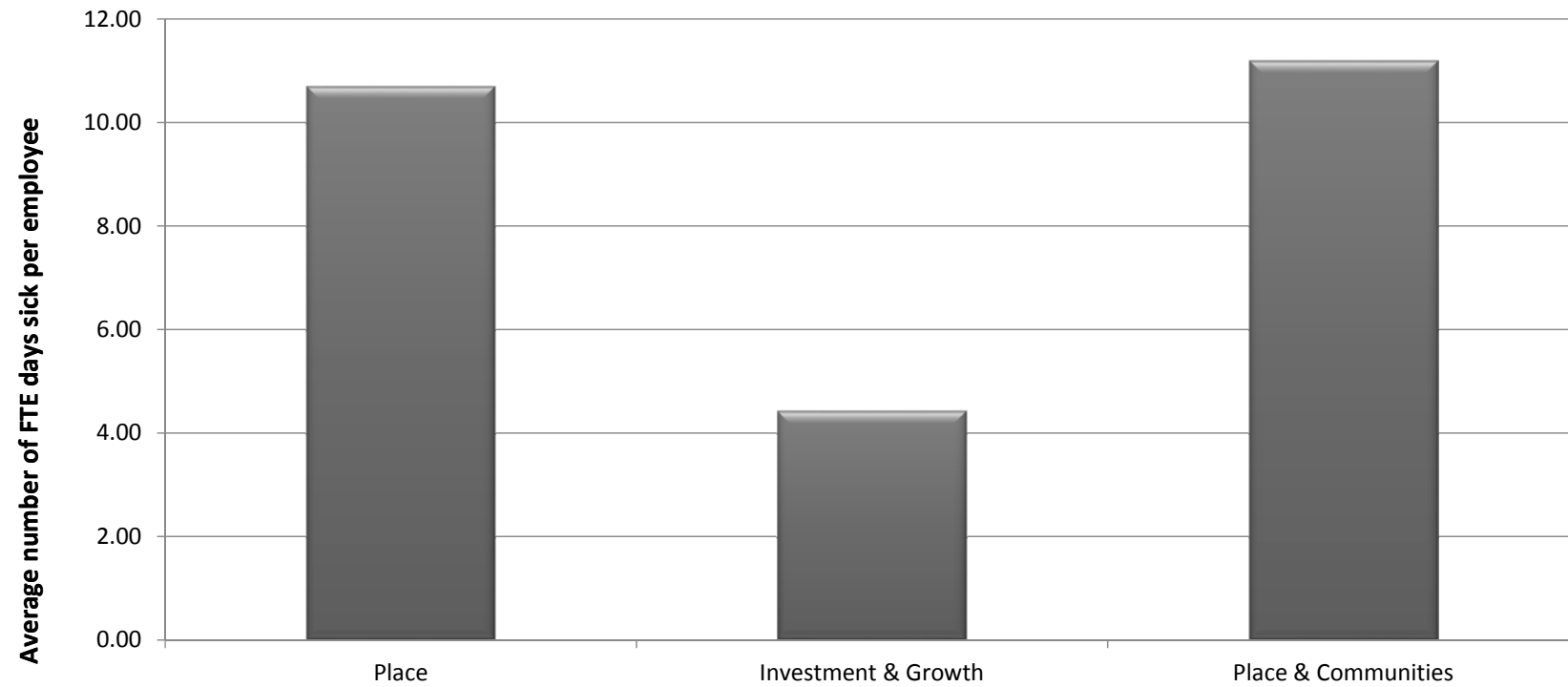
**Chart 2 ASCH January 2020 to December 2020**



**Chart 3 Children and Families January 2020 to December 2020**



**Chart 4 Place January 2020 to December 2020**



**Chart 5 Chief Executive's January 2020 to December 2020**

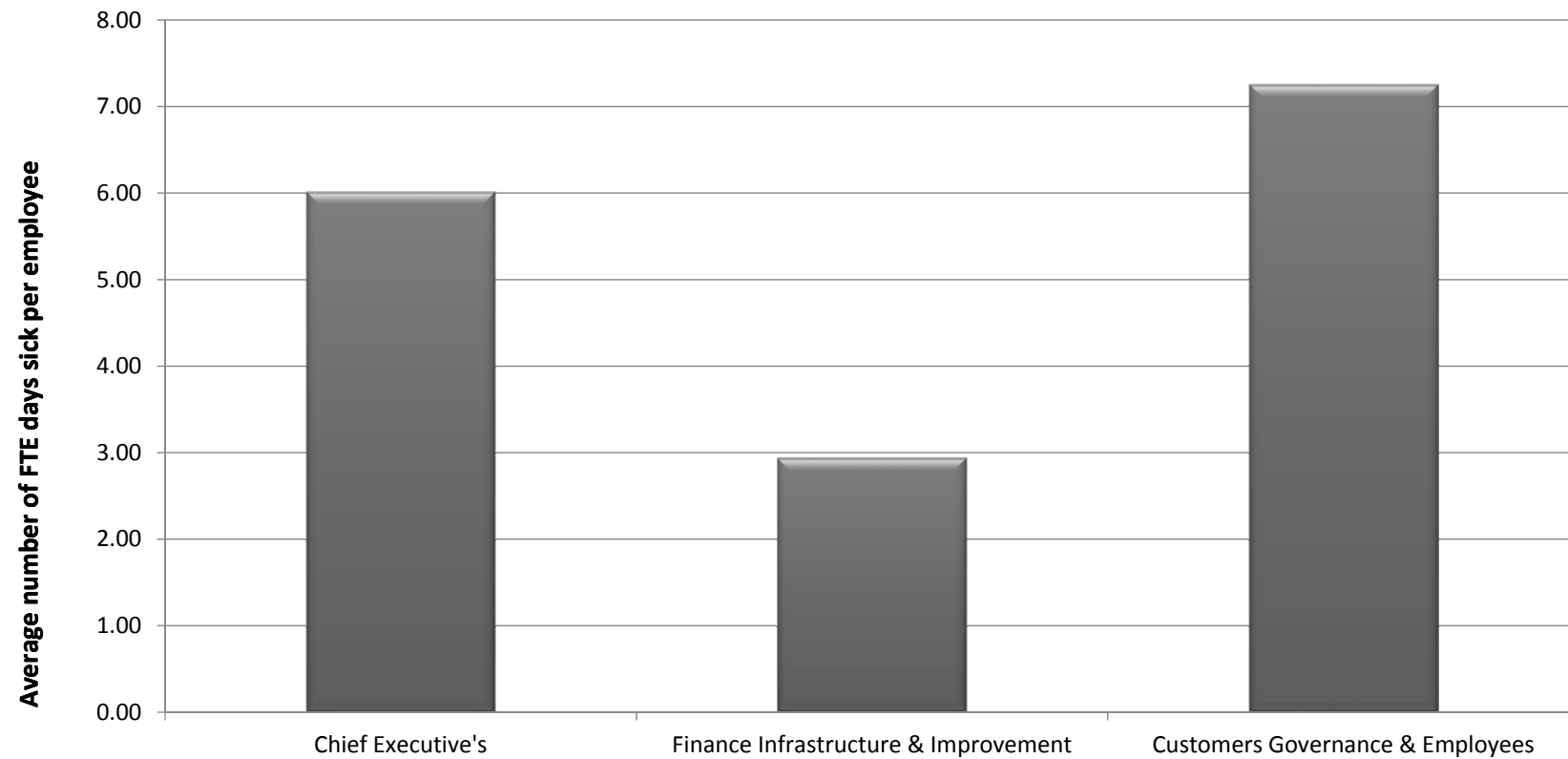


Table 1. Sickness Levels over rolling 12 month basis by Department (Includes Covid related absences)

	(A) April 2019 to March 2020	(B) July 2019 to June 2020	(C) October 2019 to September 2020	(D) January 2020 to December 2020
<b>Adult Social Care, Health</b>	13.40	13.51	14.62	15.91
<b>Children and Families Place</b>	11.13	11.23	10.63	10.22
<b>Chief Executive's</b>	10.24	11.09	10.85	10.71
<b>NCC Schools</b>	9.46	8.25	7.06	6.02
<b>Authority</b>	7.22	7.33	7.07	6.99
	9.34	9.55	8.96	9.02

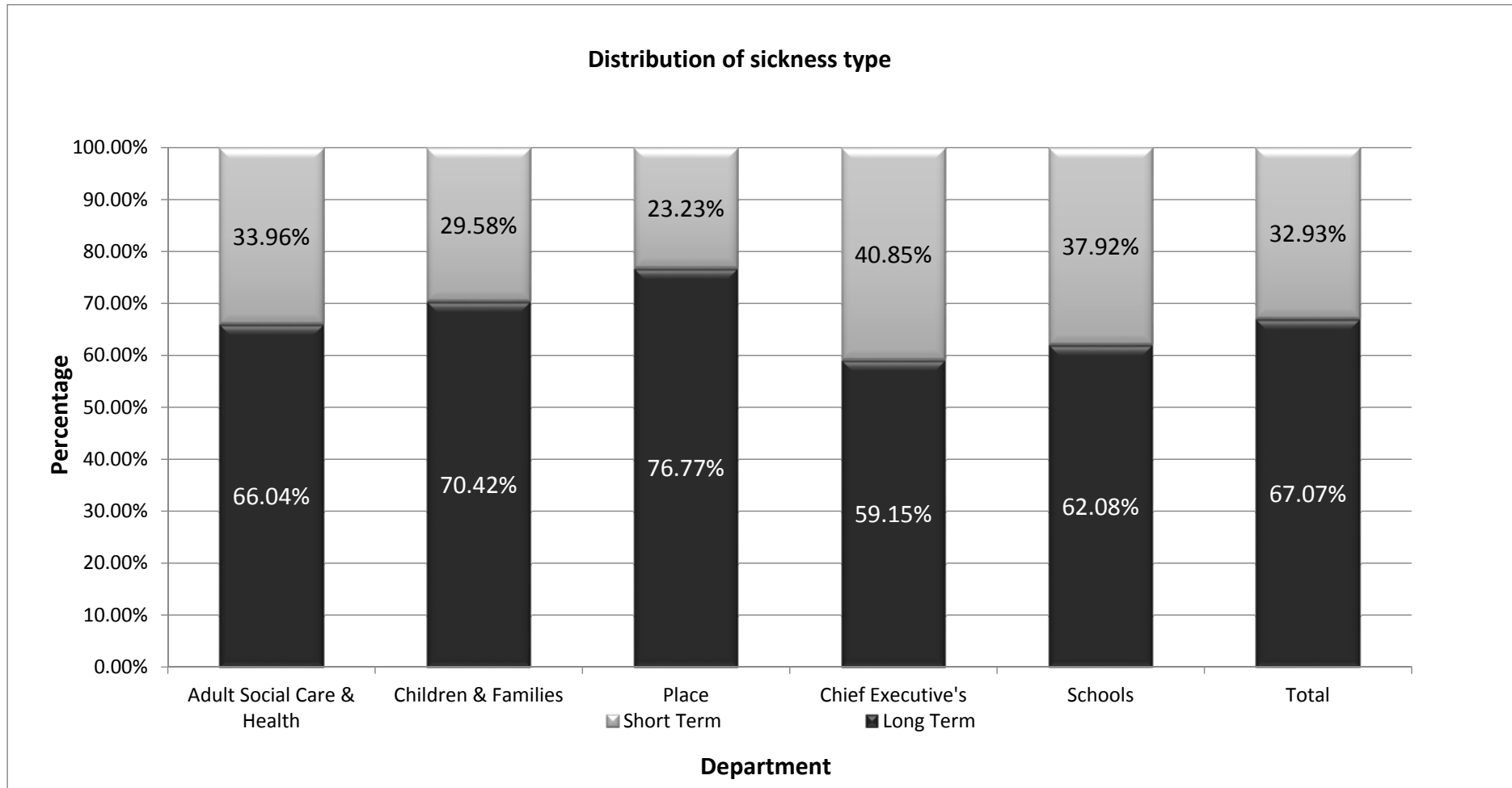


## Appendix B

	Back Problems	Cold/Flu/Sore Throat	Corona virus	Headache/Migraine	Heart/Circulation	Infection	Muscular/Skeletal	Op/Post Op Recovery	Other	Pregnancy Related	Respiratory	Skin Disorder	Stomach/Digestion	Stress/Depression	Terminal Illness	Not assigned
ASCH & Public Protection	3.16%	4.23%	15.59%	1.62%	1.68%	2.72%	10.96%	10.51%	12.46%	0.17%	2.96%	0.33%	3.19%	27.59%	0.00%	2.84%
Children and Families	3.96%	5.08%	13.79%	2.80%	1.66%	2.93%	5.62%	6.12%	11.86%	1.52%	2.10%	0.10%	3.43%	37.03%	0.78%	1.22%
Place	5.29%	3.06%	8.99%	1.35%	4.87%	3.05%	18.96%	10.79%	15.87%	0.30%	3.05%	0.02%	4.22%	16.90%	0.00%	3.29%
Chief Executive's	2.33%	7.36%	3.84%	3.50%	2.17%	3.63%	6.14%	21.88%	12.06%	0.60%	3.43%	0.82%	7.63%	23.89%	0.00%	0.71%
Schools	3.37%	5.80%	32.75%	1.67%	0.68%	2.42%	5.86%	9.57%	10.37%	0.88%	3.33%	0.23%	5.07%	17.72%	0.17%	0.11%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3.92%</b>	<b>4.55%</b>	<b>11.62%</b>	<b>2.15%</b>	<b>2.66%</b>	<b>3.00%</b>	<b>11.02%</b>	<b>10.67%</b>	<b>13.21%</b>	<b>0.68%</b>	<b>2.78%</b>	<b>0.23%</b>	<b>4.13%</b>	<b>26.94%</b>	<b>0.24%</b>	<b>2.20%</b>

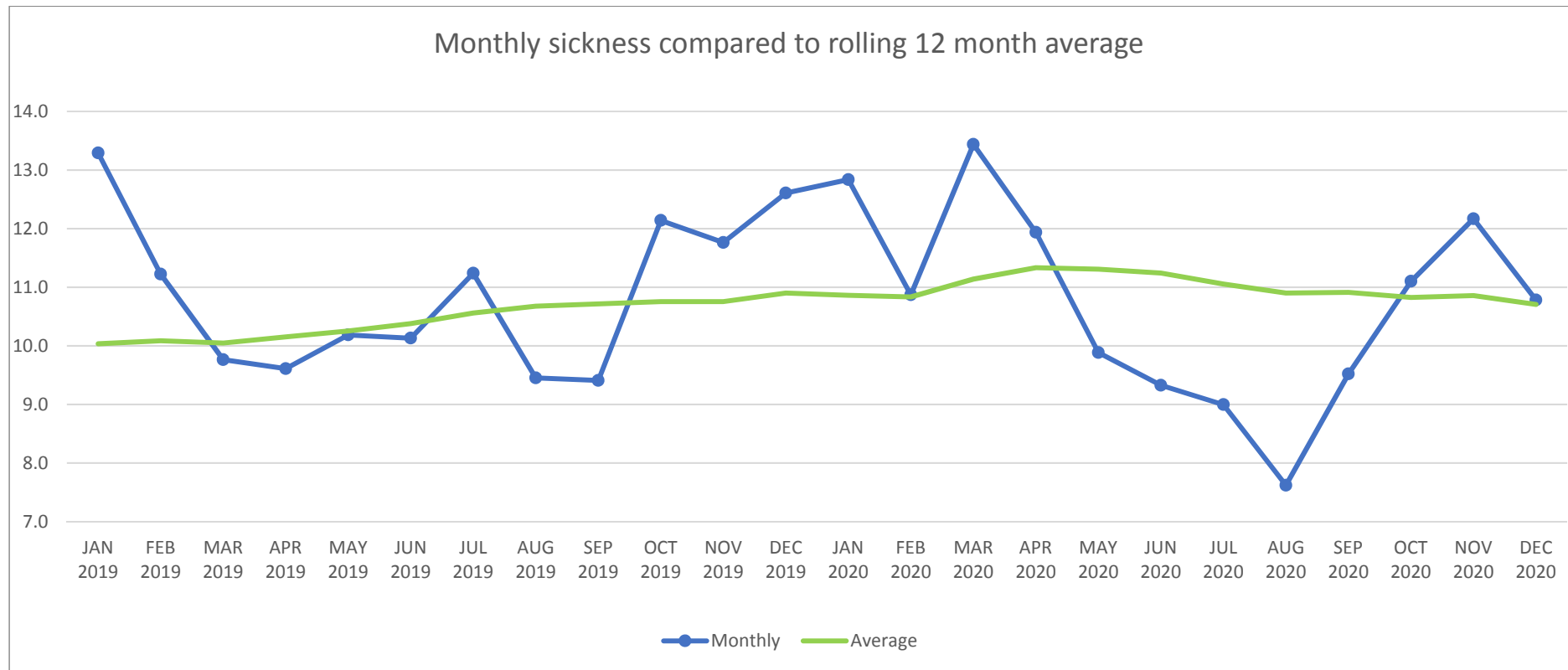


## Appendix C: Long and Short Term Sickness





## Appendix D





## Employees and number of days absent

	<b>0 Days</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>28+</b>
Adult Social Care & Health	703	75	99	53	53	58	31	29	37	15		358
Chief Executive's	740	92	67	45	38	33	24	21	12	7		85
Children & Families	1383	119	98	80	51	41	34	42	20	15		303
Place	1555	107	128	62	51	63	35	33	26	15		276
Total	4381	393	392	240	193	195	124	125	95	52		1022

	<b>Percent with no sickness</b>	<b>4 weeks or more</b>
NCC	55.1%	12.9%
Adult Social Care & Health	40.4%	20.6%
Chief Executive's	59.1%	6.8%
Children & Families	57.7%	12.6%
Place	60.8%	10.8%

	<b>Dismissal Capability</b>	<b>Retirement III Health</b>
Adult Social Care and Health	0	10
Chief Executive's	1	4
Children and Families	0	6
Place	1	10
	2	30





## Return to work pilot (PROWORK)

Your organisation has signed up to take part in a study where researchers from Loughborough University are trialling an online return-to-work toolkit for employees to use whilst they are on long-term sick leave. Managers will also be asked to trial a similar toolkit to support the employee on sick leave. You can find out more about the study here: <https://institutemh.org.uk/mhpp/about-the-pilot-study>

### Who is running the study?

This study is being led by researchers in the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences at Loughborough University. The employer and employee return to work toolkit pilot is part of the Midlands Engine's Mental Health and Productivity Pilot (MHPP), which aims to support employers across the Midlands to improve the future of workplace mental health and wellbeing.

### What is the purpose of the study?

- To provide employees on sick leave of 8-30 days with early and positive workplace communication that support the employee's wellbeing whilst on sick leave and when returning to work
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the toolkits

### Who will be able to participate?

Over the next few months, employees on sick leave between 8-30 days will be asked by their managers if are willing to participate in the university, by using the new online toolkit as part of their sickness absence and return-to work process as well as receiving support from the research team. Managers will receive a separate toolkit if they wish to participate in the study.

## Taking part in the research

### ***Employee on sick leave between 8-30 days***

#### **What does participation involve?**

- Three online surveys
- Access and use the Return to Work toolkit for 6 months
- Three telephone coaching sessions
- An end of study telephone interview

### ***Manager***

#### **What does participation involve?**

- Two online surveys
- Access and use the Return to Work toolkit for 6 months
- An end of study telephone interview

#### **How long do I have to take part for?**

- If you agree to take part, you will be asked to participate for six months
- You are under no obligation to take part and you are under no pressure from your employer or the research team to participate

#### **Benefits of participating:**

- Receive practical tips and tailored support to help you/your employee have a healthy & happy return to work
- Support in engaging in early and positive workplace communication

#### **Next steps if I want to take part**

- If you would like to take part, please either contact your manager or the HR Duty Desk on 0115 977 4433, email [hrrdutydesk@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:hrrdutydesk@nottsc.gov.uk)
- Or you can contact a member of research team – Kate Godfree – [k.godfree@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:k.godfree@lboro.ac.uk)

**10 March 2021****Agenda Item: 9****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR - CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND  
EMPLOYEES****EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Members of the range of communication and engagement activities being undertaken to ensure the Council's workforce is prepared and enabled to deliver the Council's published priorities and to fully understand their roles in doing so as set out in a range of corporate and departmental strategies and action plans. In addition, the report seeks Members' approval to progress with the development of an Employee Communications and Engagement Strategy and action plan to further encourage the flow of information ideas and feedback from employees across the Council.

**Information**

2. Members have previously expressed interest in the level of communication and engagement with the workforce during the Covid pandemic and how their ongoing contribution is being recognised. This has included raising concerns for the physical and mental well-being of the workforce during the ongoing emergency and the various actions taken in respect of this have been considered and addressed in previous reports to Personnel Committee.
3. The work undertaken as part of the various priority workstreams of the Workforce Resilience and Recovery Group, chaired by the Service Director - Customers, Governance and Employees, focuses on a range of activities which seek to maintain and build on levels of existing employee engagement and commitment. This report seeks to update Members on some of the actions taken to date and seeks approval for the further development of work in this area. To support this aim, we are currently developing an over-arching Employee Communications and Engagement Strategy, with an associated action plan, to enable us to understand the employee experience and the culture of the organisation.
4. Employee engagement is a workplace approach resulting in the right conditions for all members of the Council to give of their best each day, committed to the Council's goals and values, motivated to contribute to our overall success, with an enhanced sense of personal well-being. It is important for the Council to understand how its employees view their employer as an "engaged employee" is defined as one who is fully absorbed by and enthusiastic about their work and so takes positive action to further the Council's reputation and interests.

5. The Council has adopted a range of measures to try to ensure it has an engaged workforce and continues to seek employees' views on service development and delivery to shape future work, rather than relying on a top down, directive approach. Members may recall the challenging negotiations around proposed changes to terms and conditions in 2018 where these were paused to enter into a direct conversation with the workforce. Employees had the opportunity to email their views confidentially or to attend a series of workshops led by the Corporate Leadership Team. This exercise provided invaluable insight into how people were feeling, how they felt about the Council as their employer and helped senior officers understand what people valued in the employment package. This feedback helped reshape the package of measures which were eventually accepted and implemented from 1 April 2019 as a collective agreement.
6. The Covid pandemic has presented many challenges in how key workforce messages are communicated to different audiences. Some, such as the initial directive to work from home in March 2020, were necessarily instructive. However, over the course of the last twelve months, there have been opportunities to engage more collaboratively with our workforce and seek their views which has helped shape our response and will further inform the future of work as we edge towards recovery and beyond.
7. The Council undertook an employee well-being survey in May 2020 to gauge how people were feeling and asking them to identify what further support they required to continue delivering services during the Covid emergency. We had a large response with over 2,400 employees responding. The responses were overwhelmingly positive and colleagues shared their renewed sense of pride in delivering public services and also told us how well they thought this Council had been led in its response to the pandemic. It is likely that we will undertake further surveys in future which may be more targeted and also seek to utilise the technology people have become more familiar with over the course of the last twelve months. Whatever tools we use in future, and it is unlikely that there will be a "one size fits all" solution, these must be accessible to all to ensure the views of the whole workforce are heard. This includes frontline colleagues with limited access to workplace technology but also for people with issues accessing and responding to information due to a disability.
8. Having effective communication and engagement with our employees creates a better understanding of what motivates people, which in turn assists with maximising their performance, these include:
  - employees feeling properly supported by their managers and colleagues.
  - being given timely and constructive feedback.
  - being empowered to take responsibility for their job is very important. This includes having work autonomy – for example, being able to make decisions about how and at what pace they work – and having the right skills and the confidence to do a good job.
  - Employees must not feel overwhelmed by the demands of their job.
  - Employees' motivations are shaped by individual factors. These include how we identify as people, personally and professionally, and our ability to 'self-regulate' or manage our behavior and not be distracted from our goals.
9. Since the start of the pandemic, there has been regular engagement with the recognised trade unions and the self-managed groups to share information and to provide a forum where issues can be raised and addressed collaboratively. This approach has been very positive and well received and has facilitated joint problem solving when issues have arisen. The intention is

also to continue to engage with all sections of the workforce to gain their views on a range of issues.

10. A series of Question and Answer sessions have been instigated where the Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team members engage in conversations with employees virtually, with the option of emailing questions prior to the event, to be answered in the course of the discussion. To date, two events have taken place, one with an invited audience drawn from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees to address specific issues and the second was an open event to discuss the culture of the organisation and to understand our employees' experiences of what it is like to work for Nottinghamshire County Council. These events are ongoing and future subjects will include recognition, development and engagement.
11. The feedback from these events has been positive and employees have welcomed the opportunity to discuss key issues with senior leaders of the organisation. The topics covered can be broadly summarised under the following headings:
  - Communication and employee engagement
  - Smarter working
  - Induction
  - Shared best practice with other organisations on how we will work in future
  - How to maintain a sense of "team" whilst working remotely
  - Leadership development and career progression
  - The Green estate.
12. Those who participated felt it was a valuable session and a good opportunity to share and receive information with colleagues from across the Council who they may not have any contact with in their day to day roles. In some cases, it highlighted the need to ensure information has been widely shared rather than assuming this to be the case. Below are a sample of some of the comments received at the end of the most recent Q&A briefing:

"Really good session, very informative and exciting thoughts for the future. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to partake in this session"

"NCC still a good organisation to work for!"

"I've been with NCC since 2003....great employer hence that I'm still here! Still areas for development though to make us even better"

"Please don't forgot the people that are doing informal care for an elderly relative 24:7, trying to keep them safe as well as working full time at home."

"Would love to get more involved in working groups where possible"

"Really useful and engaging - will be feeding back to the team"

"Great to have a forum for open, honest and constructive discussion. Thanks"

"Thank you - great session, really useful to hear all the info from the speakers and views and experiences of colleagues. Definitely would like to do it again. Thanks for your time in putting it together."

“I'd like to share/update my team and encourage them to attend if there is another in the future.”

13. One of the exercises undertaken as part of the latest session was a Menti survey. This provides a snapshot of how people were feeling at that time in the form of a word cloud (appendix 1). This exercise was initially undertaken with the Extended Leadership Team and will be repeated with different groups to provide a snapshot giving valuable insight into the overarching mood and experiences of the workforce at different stages of the pandemic.
14. The Q&A sessions are designed to encourage a dialogue between employees and senior officers to create a greater understanding of employee experience and the feedback has been encouraging as to how people have welcomed the opportunity to engage directly with members of the Corporate Leadership Team. Further sessions with the Corporate Leadership Team are being planned to continue this two-way dialogue.
15. Next steps include understanding what drives, or hinders, commitment or motivation and identifying effective channels to give employees' their voice and to listen carefully to their concerns and aspirations. As mentioned above, we have conducted employee attitude surveys, and are now introducing more qualitative methods of engagement such as focus groups, adopting a mixed approach as different methods have varying benefits. Employee surveys give a representative view of experiences across the organisation at a particular time. On the other hand, qualitative methods provide a richer understanding of employee experiences in their own words and can give deeper insight into why people are happy or unhappy. Research indicates that the key enablers of employee engagement include:
  - Leadership that gives a 'strong strategic narrative about the organisation'.
  - Line managers who motivate, empower and support their employees.
  - Employee voice throughout the organisation, to involve employees in decision making.
  - **Organisational integrity** that stated values are reflected in the actual organisational culture; that is, what we say is what we do.
16. It is important for the Council to develop an effective Employee Communications and Engagement Strategy because when workplace engagement is successful, it can massively help in better employee productivity, organisational growth, and workplace wellness. The most common benefits of having an engaged workplace are higher customer or client satisfaction; enhanced employee productivity; lower turnover rates; reduced absenteeism; enhanced workplace culture; better employee health and wellness.
17. The work to develop an Employee Communications and Engagement Strategy has started and a draft version with an associated action plan will be brought to a future Personnel Committee for consideration and approval.

## Other Options Considered

18. The Council will adopt a range of tools to engage its workforce in developing its response to the ongoing pandemic and the future of work beyond the current situation. There is not one single initiative or response which will deliver this, so a multi-faceted, blended approach is the recommended way forward, using new technologies where appropriate, to ensure the Council's workforce is fully involved in the delivery, development and ongoing improvement of

our services. The development of the strategy and action plan will involve consideration of the most effective mechanisms for delivering these ambitions so other options may be included as the strategy develops and evolves.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

19. Members have been greatly interested in the contribution of the Council's workforce during the Covid pandemic and how they have been engaged and communicated with during this period where many are working in a different way. Members have also received information in a number of reports which highlight our aspiration to be an employer of choice in a very competitive job market. Understanding what perspective existing employees want in terms of engagement, recognition and reward, flexible working, personal and professional development, support and a range of other issues is critical to ensure we have a workforce which can transform and deliver the services required by the residents of Nottinghamshire. Employees have clearly stated how much they value being engaged in discussions about the future of work and how services will be delivered.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Data Protection and Information Governance**

21. There is no personal information about named individuals contained within the body of the report.

## **Financial Implications**

22. There are no costs associated with the content of this report. The Council seeks to have a fully engaged workforce which it is recognised leads to reduced turnover and therefore avoids the associated costs of additional recruitment.

## **Human Resources Implications**

23. Employee communication and engagement are key tools to ensuring the Council has a committed, energetic and healthy workforce. The opportunity to have direct discussions with employees as well as through their representatives and self-managed groups, provides invaluable insight into what the workforce feels about the Council as an employer and allows us to target resource and effort into addressing any emerging issues.



## **Smarter Working Implications**

24. There are no direct smarter working implications although the provision of flexible working opportunities in itself provides a valuable platform to engage with employees on how the benefits of this can be maximised both for individuals and the organisation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members agree:

- 1) To the development of an Employee Communication and Engagement Strategy and action plan for consideration at a future Committee.
- 2) To commend the positive engagement continues to enable the ongoing positive contribution of the workforce.

**Marjorie Toward**

**Service Director – Customers, Governance and Employees**

**Chief Executive's Department**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Gill Elder – Head of Human Resources 0115 9773867 or [gill.elder@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:gill.elder@nottscc.gov.uk)

### **Constitutional Comments (KK 17/02/21)**

25. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

### **Financial Comments (SES 23/02/21)**

26. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **HR Comments (JP 24/02/21)**

27. Any HR implications are set out in the report. Engagement with the workforce and the recognised trade unions will continue to assist with this programme of work.



### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

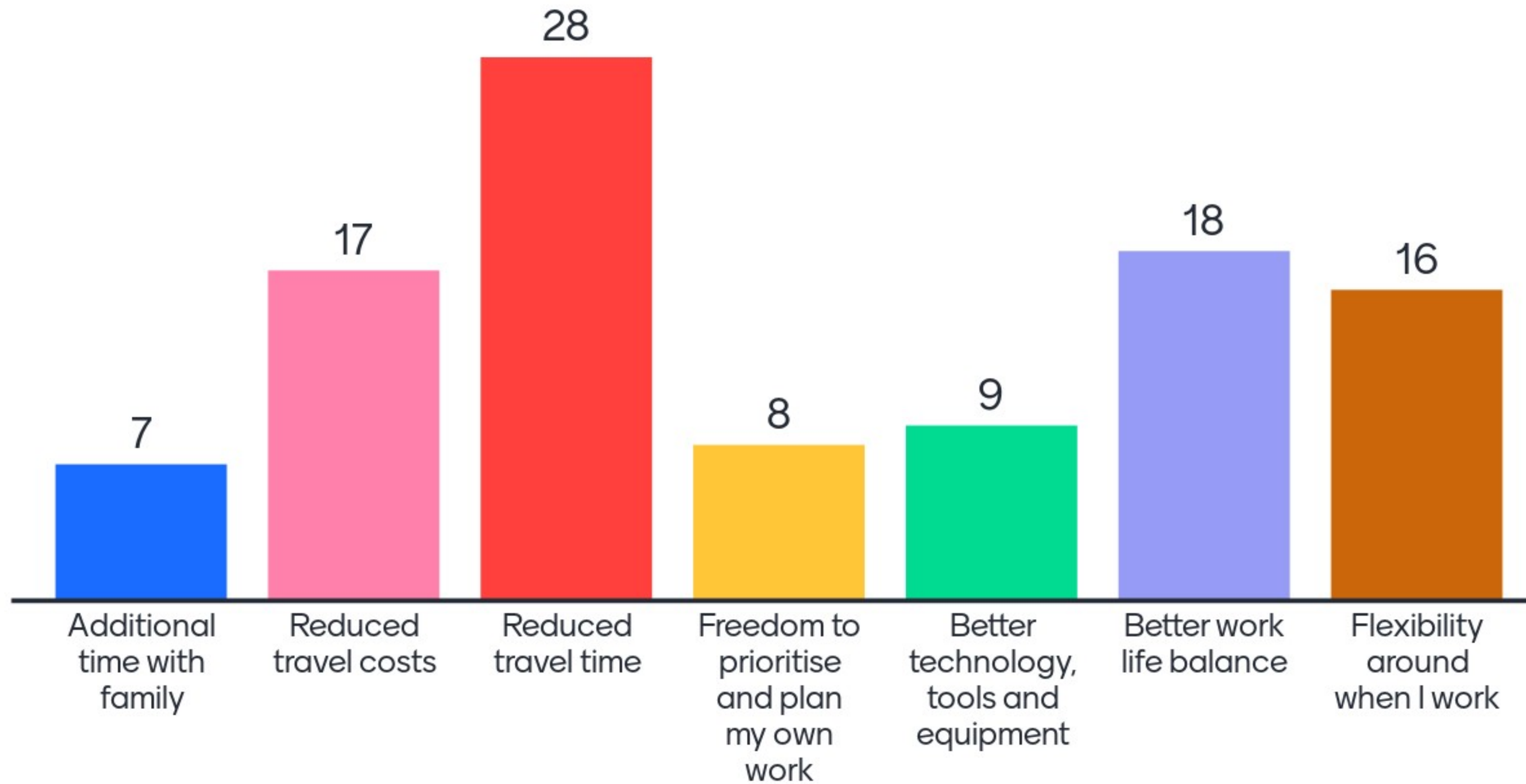
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# How do you feel as an NCC employee at the start of 2021?

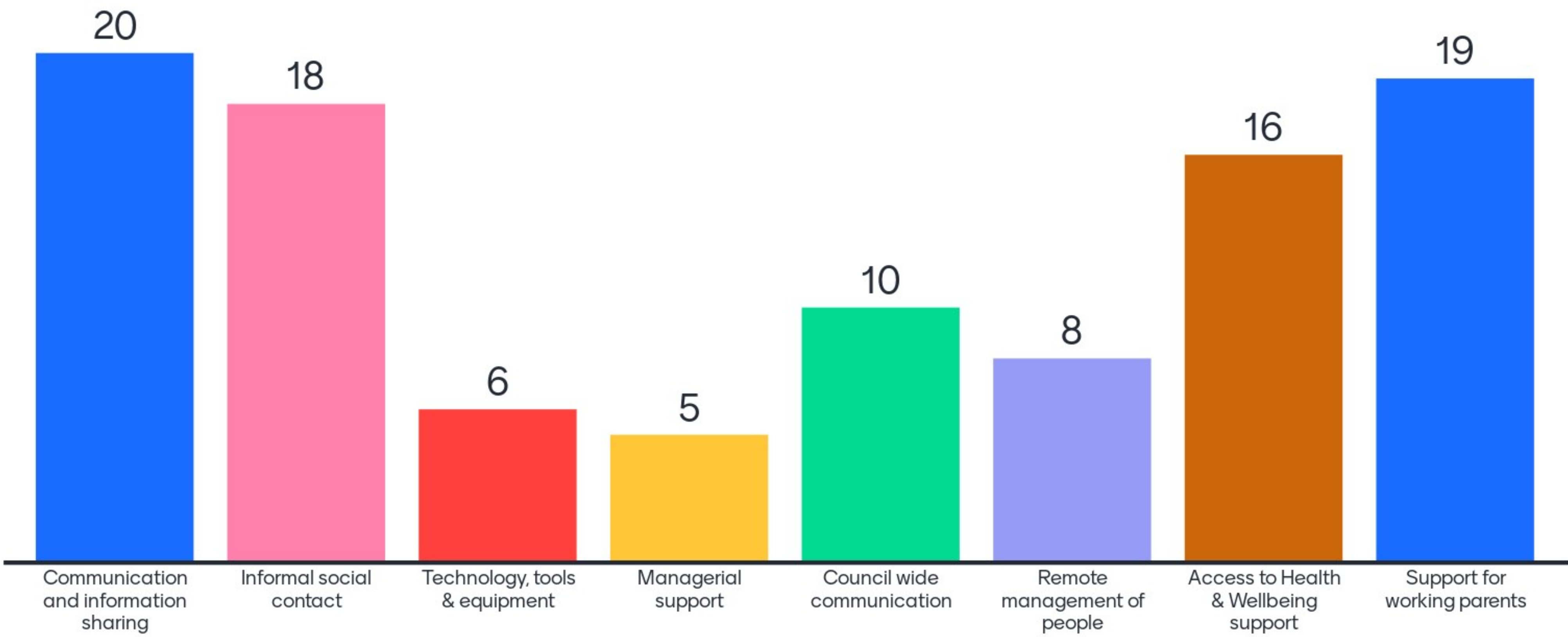


# What have you found most important during the Covid pandemic?





# What could be improved?



# What would you like to see in a flexible working package for the future?





**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR - CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND  
EMPLOYEES****WORK PROGRAMME****Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider the Committee's work programme for 2021.

**Information**

2. The County Council requires each committee to maintain a work programme. The work programme will assist the management of the committee's agenda, the scheduling of the committee's business and forward planning. The work programme will be updated and reviewed at each pre-agenda meeting and committee meeting. Any member of the committee is able to suggest items for possible inclusion.
3. The attached work programme has been drafted in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and includes items which can be anticipated at the present time. (meeting dates and agenda items are subject to review in light of the ongoing COVID-19 period). Other items will be added to the programme as they are identified,
4. As part of the transparency introduced by the new committee arrangements, committees are expected to review day to day operational decisions made by officers using their delegated powers. It is anticipated that the committee will wish to commission periodic reports on such decisions. The committee is therefore requested to identify activities on which it would like to receive reports for inclusion in the work programme.

**Other Options Considered**

5. None.

**Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

6. To assist the committee in preparing its work programme.

**Statutory and Policy Implications**

7. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and

the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That the Committee considers whether any amendments are required to the Work Programme.

**Marjorie Toward**  
**Service Director – Customers, Governance and Employees**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**  
**Sarah Ashton, Democratic Services Officer, Tel: 0115 977 3962**

## **Constitutional Comments (HD)**

8. The Committee has authority to consider the matters set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

## **Financial Comments (NS)**

9. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **Background Papers**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All



## Personnel Committee Work Programme

Title	Brief Summary of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Report Author
<b>21 April 2021</b>			
Workforce Resilience and Recovery Strategy and Action Plan – Update	Update on progress	Marje Toward	Gill Elder
Disability Confident Leader Accreditation – Update	Update on progress	Marje Toward	Gill Elder
NCC Workforce Availability, Sickness Absence Performance and Support to Maintain Employee Health and Wellbeing (Quarter 4 - 2020/21)	Quarterly update, review of target and approval of annual action plan	Marje Toward	Gill Elder
<b>30 June 2021</b>			
Workforce Profile Information 2021	Annual update report	Marje Toward	Gill Elder
Return to Work Research Project - Update	Update on progress	Marje Toward	Gill Elder
Apprenticeships update	Update on the Council's Apprenticeship Programme	Marje Toward	Gill Elder

