



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Bae Abertawe  
Swansea Bay University  
Health Board



<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Reducing Sickness Absence and Supporting Staff Resilience</b>		
<b>Report Author</b>	Sarah Jenkins, Assistant Director WF&OD & Paul Dunning, Professional Head of Staff Health & Wellbeing		
<b>Report Sponsor</b>	Debbie Eytayo, Executive Director Workforce & OD		
<b>Presented by</b>	Debbie Eytayo, Executive Director Workforce & OD		
<b>Freedom of Information</b>	Open		
<b>Purpose of the Report</b>	To provide an update and assurance to the Board regarding interventions to aid reducing sickness absence and support for staff to promote resilience and wellbeing.		
<b>Key Issues</b>	<p>Investment in Staff Wellbeing has resulted in the sustained delivery of interventions developed during the Covid-19 pandemic and effectiveness in improving staff health and earlier return to work for sickness absentees.</p> <p>Working collaboratively across the Workforce &amp; OD function, with support from Staff Side to utilise the flexibility within the managing attendance at work policy, there is now a need to continue to focus on 'up stream' prevention and early intervention with managers to enable 'good work' that supports staff wellbeing and resilience.</p>		
<b>Specific Action Required (please choose one only)</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Assurance</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Board is asked to note this update. It is also proposed that given the nature of the programme and regular oversight via WOD & Digital board sub-committee, the frequency of reports to the Board should reduce from quarterly to twice a year.		

# Reducing Sickness Absence and Supporting Staff Resilience

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Staff wellbeing is a priority for the Health Board to ensure that we have an engaged, highly motivated and resilient workforce providing high quality and effective care for our patients and service users. It is recognised that there are challenging work and external/social; environments which are impacting staff work experience such as the recent cost of living crisis and as well as increasing service demands.

Over the past year, the Health Board invested in additional staff wellbeing resource and has also undertaken a culture audit through 'Our Big Conversation' to engage and hear staff views on priorities that impact staff experience and wellbeing

This paper outlines recent developments and interventions that support staff to build resilience and wellbeing, creating a great place to work and contributing to improved staff retention.

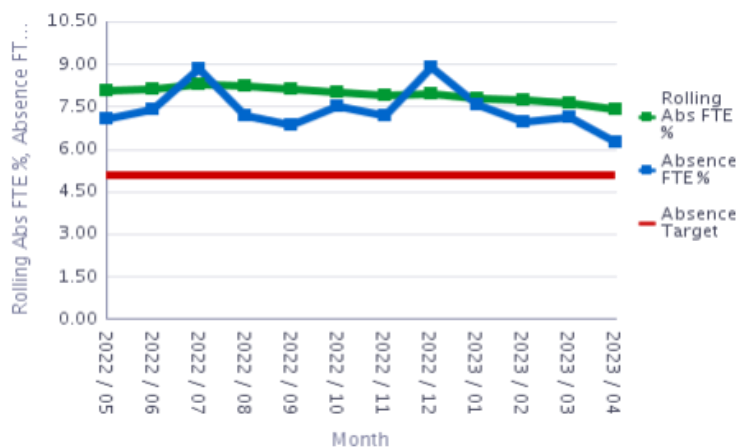
## 2. BACKGROUND

The Board will recall a stretch target to reduce Health Board sickness absence to 5.5% was set as KPI in April 2023. Sickness absence rate as at May 2023 (in month) has reduced to 5.87% in May 2023, which is significantly lower than the same period in 2022 (7.06% May 2022). This improvement can be attributed dedicated focus on the management of absence as also the interventions detailed below. Workforce turnover as at June 2023 was at 10.02% (12 month rolling period) which is also an improvement when compared with the same period last year (10.64% June 2022).

Table 1- Short and Long term absence rates May 2022-April 2023

Month	Long Term Absence FTE %	Short Term Absence FTE %	Total Absence FTE %
2022 / 05	4.96%	2.10%	7.06%
2022 / 06	4.81%	2.60%	7.40%
2022 / 07	5.13%	3.69%	8.82%
2022 / 08	5.05%	2.15%	7.19%
2022 / 09	4.72%	2.13%	6.85%
2022 / 10	4.67%	2.84%	7.51%
2022 / 11	4.71%	2.46%	7.17%
2022 / 12	5.14%	3.76%	8.90%
2023 / 01	4.93%	2.61%	7.55%
2023 / 02	4.53%	2.46%	6.99%
2023 / 03	4.02%	3.11%	7.13%
2023 / 04	3.98%	2.26%	6.24%

Table 2 – Rolling sickness absence data May 2022-April 2023



Note- Rolling absence as at May 2023 is at 7.32% (May 2022 was at 8.12%)

### 3. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING INITIATIVES

Since the last presentation to the Board in March 2023, the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service have continued to develop sustainable, fit for the future services with increases to the Wellbeing Champion Network and widened membership of the Staff Wellbeing Forum. Alongside this, Workforce teams have worked proactively with line managers and Trade union colleagues to improve the management of staff attendance.

The Workforce, OD and Digital Committee is the forum where board level assurance is provided.

#### Long Covid support

Funding has been utilised to permanently fund a Band 7 Occupational Therapist to support Occupational Health with referrals that include Long Covid, chronic fatigue and extended to cover other long-term conditions. The role includes symptom management and advice for staff plus recommendations to managers to support a return to work or support to remain in work. The post holder also undertakes sessions within the Pulmonary Rehab Service and is able to ensure that staff who require longer term rehabilitation can access this in a timely manner and can refer to the Consultant Psychologist if longer-term psychological support is indicated. The service was featured in the Society of Occupational Medicine’s Best Practice Guide related to helping staff to return to work with Long Covid - [Long COVID and Return to Work What Works.pdf \(som.org.uk\)](https://www.som.org.uk/long-covid-and-return-to-work-what-works.pdf)

The Wellbeing team have also developed resources and psychological support for staff who experience moral injury and this forms part of the Post-Covid Staff Wellbeing Strategy.

#### Focused wellbeing activities

Support for staff trauma and suicide prevention. Data related to staff disclosing suicide ideation demonstrates significant reductions in related thoughts and plans at discharge

from the Staff Wellbeing service. This has been presented as a deep dive session at a recent WOD & Digital Committee.

#### Digital improvements

Work continues to implement the new All Wales Occupational Health database (OPAS-G2), which will improve efficiencies and reduce waiting times by enabling managers to access Occupational Health reports via a secure online portal.

#### Line Management Development and Coaching

Series of training and 1:1 coaching for managers to promote and support the use of 'tailored adjustments' within the MAAW Policy to aid reducing sickness absence. This includes a recent workshop run by HEIW on 'Improving Investigation to avoid employee harm'.

#### Health promotion and Communication

Staff Health Check drop in day organised for August to provide blood pressure, weight and lifestyle advice to staff as part of the health promotion/prevention agenda.

Intranet and social media communication to highlight support with the cost of living crisis.

Sustainable travel - installation of 13 new secure cycle shelters across the Health Board. This work has been nominated for LOV 2023 award.

Plans in place to launch a Menopause Champion Network to promote awareness of managing menopause at work.

Monthly wellbeing updates through Team Brief.

The Staff Trauma Support Pathway has been shortlisted in the 'Enriching the wellbeing, capability and engagement of the health and care workforce' category for the NHS Wales Awards 2023.

#### **4. HOT SPOT AREAS**

Staff feedback from 'Our Big Conversation', internal data as well as feedback from Staff side and the Guardian Service have helped highlight hot spot areas for focused intervention and actions to address workplace culture issues perceived to have a bearing on poor staff attendance. Examples of some of the tailored initiatives introduced are as follows

##### **Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Service Group**

- Investment in a Service Group staff counsellor and additional service group resource for TRIM
- Increased visibility and back to floor visits to sites from senior team
- Guardian service walkabouts

Sickness absence levels were at 5.38% in May 2023, which is an improvement from last year's figure of 8.52% in May 2022.

## **Support Services and Estates**

- To ensure support staff recognise that their contribution is valued a Reward & Recognition week was held across all hospital sites to mark Estates & Facilities day on 21st June. To recognise long service and to say 'thank you', staff had coffee and cake, raffle prizes which were donated by local suppliers.
- Men's Health Awareness Sessions run by OH and Wellbeing
- Roll out of face to face training on the Stigma Surrounding Mental Health was rolled out across Singleton (Nov 2022), Morriston & NPT hospital sites during April and May 2023. Further dates are being arranged.
- Monthly meetings held with staff side and management to discuss any issues such as low staff morale etc.

There is still significant work to be done within Support Services and Estates as they remain areas with high sickness absence levels as follows:

Estates - 9.33% May 2023 which is a deterioration since the same period last year (6.75% May 2022) but a slight improvement since April 2023 (10.08%)

Support services - 10.30% May 2023 (10.88% May 2022)

## **Blood Sciences - Neath Port Talbot/Singleton Service Group**

- Wellbeing days across NPT and Singleton in addition wellbeing days linked to National Pathology Week.
- Managers attendance at REACT and Managing stress at work training
- Wellbeing resources plus training discussed and shared in Divisional Workforce Groups

Sickness absence levels remain significantly high in this area at 11.79% in May 2023 which is a deterioration when compared to May 2022 when it was 6.12%. There has been an improvement since April 2023 when absence levels in this area were around 15%. This continues to be a priority area of focus.

## **Theatres**

A new detailed Theatres plan is due to be developed in conjunction with the newly appointed Service Director when they commence in post. Leadership buy in will be critical to the success of many interventions for this area given the service and workforce transformation organisational change plans. In the interim work is underway to address concerns raised by staff around the availability of staff break areas.

Sickness absence levels are as follows:-

Singleton Theatres - 6.26% May 2023 which is an improvement from last year's figure of 9.50% in May 2022.

Morriston Theatres - 8.83% May 2023 which is an improvement from last year's figure of 12.83% May 2022

## **5. GOVERNANCE AND RISK ISSUES**

Potential barriers and risks related to the development of initiatives that support staff resilience continue to be monitored and managed with regular reports to the WF&OD Delivery group as well as WOD and Digital Committee.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications related to this assurance update.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

The Board is asked to note this update. It is also proposed that given the nature of the programme and regular oversight via WOD & Digital board sub-committee, the frequency of reports to the Board should reduce from quarterly to twice a year.

<b>Governance and Assurance</b>		
<b>Link to Enabling Objectives</b> <i>(please choose)</i>	<b>Supporting better health and wellbeing by actively promoting and empowering people to live well in resilient communities</b>	
	Partnerships for Improving Health and Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Co-Production and Health Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Deliver better care through excellent health and care services achieving the outcomes that matter most to people</b>	
	Best Value Outcomes and High Quality Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Partnerships for Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Excellent Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outstanding Research, Innovation, Education and Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Health and Care Standards</b>		
<i>(please choose)</i>	Staying Healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Safe Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Effective Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Dignified Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Timely Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Individual Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Staff and Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Quality, Safety and Patient Experience</b>		
Evidence demonstrates a direct correlation between staff wellbeing/experience and high quality patient care and outcomes. Supporting and enhancing staff resilience will help fulfil the goals of the Equality Strategy and contribute to improved patient safety and experience. The paper supports the Managing Attendance at Work (MAWW) policy principles and incorporates the “Healthier Wales Quadruple Aim” of supporting staff health & wellbeing.		
<b>Financial Implications</b>		
Many of the actions identified can be implemented within current resources and are behaviour related and do not have cost implications		
<b>Legal Implications (including equality and diversity assessment)</b>		
Ensures compliance with Equality Act 2010.		
<b>Long Term Implications (including the impact of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)</b>		
Actions outlined in report promote “A Healthier Wales Quadruple Aim” these being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved population health &amp; wellbeing</li> <li>• Better quality &amp; more accessible health &amp; social care services</li> <li>• Motivated &amp; sustainable health &amp; social care workforce</li> </ul>		
<b>Report History</b>	None	
<b>Appendices</b>	None	