



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Councillor Y Farrell**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

e-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

14th April 2023

To: Members of the Personnel Sub-Committee

Cllrs: J Carroll, C Copleston, S Goodchild and D Jones

(Copies to other Councillors for information)

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to a Meeting of the **Personnel Sub-Committee** to be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street on **24th April 2023** at **6.00pm**.

Members of the public who wish to attend the meeting may do so in person or remotely through the meeting link below.

To attend remotely through Teams please follow this link: [MEETING LINK](#)

Please follow this guidance if attending the meeting remotely [LINK](#)

THIS MEETING MAY BE FILMED/RECORDED *

Clare Evans
Town Clerk
Agenda

- 1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**
- 2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

In accordance with approved Standing Orders 1(e)-1(l) Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

The total period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes and an individual member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

**This meeting may be filmed by the Council for subsequent broadcast online and can be viewed at <http://www.houghtonregis.org.uk/minutes>*

Phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member or a member of the public. The use of images or recordings arising from this is not under the Council's control.

No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session.

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of any such interest.

Members are invited to submit any requests for Dispensations for consideration.

4. MINUTES

Pages 5 - 7

To approve the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on the 16th January 2023.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

5. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

For the period January to March, inclusive, 0 Freedom of Information request were received.

Recommendation: To note the information.

6. TOWN CLERK'S ANNUAL LEAVE, OVERTIME WORKING AND SICKNESS

Annual leave

From January to March, inclusive, the Clerk has had 5 day's leave.

The following leave is requested:

- 0.5 days leave 26th April
- 5 days leave 3rd-7th July
- 5 days leave 31st July – 4th August
- 10 days leave 23rd August – 5th September

Overtime

The Clerk has attended 12 meetings or events outside of the normal working day within the period January to March, inclusive, (compared with 13 meetings in the previous quarter).

Recommendation: To approve the Town Clerks annual leave request.

7. UK STAFF SICKNESS ABSENCE FIGURES

Pages 8 - 12

At the last Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held 16th January 2023, minute number PE256, it was requested that national sickness figures be obtained to compare the council's sickness levels with national statistics. These figures have been obtained from the Office for National Statistics and provide year on year figures from 1995.

This report is provided for information.

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Staff sickness
- Staffing matters
- Staff payments

Recommendation: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

**Personnel Sub-Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
16th January 2023 at 6.30pm**

Present: Councillors: S Goodchild Chairman
J Carroll
D Jones
C Slough Substitute

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillor: C Copleston

PE248 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Copleston (Cllr C Slough substituted).

PE249 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

PE250 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

PE251 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meetings held on 8th and 17th November 2022 for consideration.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 8th and 17th November 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

PE252 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

For the period October to December, inclusive, no Freedom of Information requests have been received.

Resolved: To note the information.

PE253 TOWN CLERK'S ANNUAL LEAVE, OVERTIME WORKING AND SICKNESS

Annual leave

From October to December the Clerk has had 4 day's leave.
The following leave requests are made:

The following leave is requested:

- 15th February to 20th February 2023 (4 days)

The Clerk has an additional 0.5 days to take prior to end of March 2023, giving a total of 5 days annual leave to be carried forward to 2023/24.

Overtime

The Clerk has attended 13 meetings or events outside of the normal working day within the period October to December (compared with 11 meetings in the previous quarter).

Resolved: To approve the Town Clerks annual leave request.

PE254 APPOINTMENT OF APPOINTED PERSON

As part of the Committees Functions one member of the Sub-Committee is to be appointed to act as contact for the clerk for day to day matters, to provide support, handle leave requests, absence from work and to feed matters to Committee where any decisions/action is needed and to undertake the Clerks appraisal. Often this position has been taken by the Chair of the Sub Committee but this is not a requirement.

Members are reminded that this item was deferred at the previous meeting.

Resolved: To appoint Cllr Jones of the Sub-Committee as an Appointed Person.

PE255 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr Goodchild, Seconded by: Cllr C Slough

A recorded vote was requested.

Members in favour: Cllr Farrell, Cllr C Slough and Cllr Goodchild

Members against: 0

Abstentions: Cllr Carroll

Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

PE256 STAFF SICKNESS

Members received a rolling twelve-month record of sickness absence for all members of staff.

It was requested that regional or national figures are sourced for comparison.

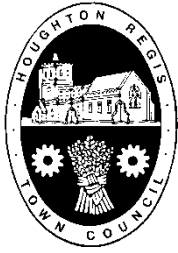
Resolved: To note the information.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.02pm

Dated this 24th day of April 2023

Chairman

DRAFT



Date:	24th April 2023
Title:	National sickness absence figures
Purpose of the Report:	To advise members of National sickness absence figures.
Contact Officer:	Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services

1. RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for information

2. BACKGROUND

At the last Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held 16th January 2023, it was requested that national sickness figures be obtained to compare the council's sickness levels with national statistics. These figures have been obtained from the Office for National Statistics and provide year on year figures from 1995.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Main points

The sickness absence rate in the UK in 2021 rose to 2.2%, from 1.8% in 2020; this is the highest it has been since 2010, when it was also 2.2%.

An estimated 149.3 million working days were lost because of sickness or injury in the UK in 2021, equivalent to 4.6 days per worker.

COVID-19 accounted for nearly one in four of all occurrences of sickness absence in 2021.

The groups with the highest rates of sickness absence in 2021 included women, older workers, those with long-term health conditions, people working part-time and people working in caring, leisure and other service occupations.

Sickness absence during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected the sickness absence data in many ways. While the virus may have led to additional sickness absence, measures such as furloughing, social distancing, shielding and increased homeworking helped to reduce other causes of absence in 2020. However, the reduction to the furlough scheme and its eventual end in September 2021, coupled with the decline in homeworking, shielding, social distancing policies, and new COVID-19 variants, led to a rise in sickness absence in 2021 to above pre-pandemic levels.

The number of people in employment shielding would normally have a higher sickness absence rate than those not shielding. If fewer from this group were present in the workplace in 2020, then they would be contributing less to the number taking days off because of sickness. This could be one explanation for the reduction in the sickness absence rate in 2020. Following this, an increase in the number of these workers returning to work in 2021 could partly explain the increase in rates in 2021.

Homeworking became more common in 2020 during the coronavirus pandemic, with 8.4 million people working at home in the reference week up from 4.0 million in 2019. This may have had an impact on sickness absences in 2020 and 2021. For example:

- homeworking may have allowed people to work when they were a little unwell; they might not have travelled to a workplace to work but felt well enough to work from home
- government restrictions requiring people to observe social distancing and self-isolate, may have led to less exposure to germs and minimised some of the usual sickness absences in 2020

The subsequent relaxation of coronavirus restrictions during periods of 2021 and less requirement to work from home, may have contributed to an increase in sickness absence in 2021.

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

Such as:

- Service delivery

- Capacity

Equalities Implications

Houghton Regis Town Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

Press Contact

- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Proactive monitoring of staff sickness absence levels will enable the placement of reasonable adjustments to support long term conditions and the supporting of staff welfare to aid mitigation of sickness absence.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: National Statistics for Sickness UK

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/sicknessabsenceintheuklabourmarket2021>

Number of days lost through sickness absence per worker (notes 6,9) 1995 to 2021 in the UK.

Source: Labour Force Survey person datasets [note3]	
Year	Days lost per worker
1995	7.2
1996	6.8
1997	6.9
1998	6.7
1999	6.8
2000	6.5
2001	6.5
2002	6.3
2003	6.3
2004	5.9
2005	5.7
2006	5.5
2007	5.6
2008	5.3
2009	5.0
2010	4.7
2011	4.5
2012	4.5
2013	4.4
2014	4.4
2015	4.4
2016	4.3
2017	4.1
2018	4.4
2019	4.2
2020 [note 4,5,8]	3.6
2021 [note 4,5,8]	4.6

Note references:

<i>note 3</i>	Quarterly datasets were used to generate annual averages.
<i>note 4</i>	The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected the sickness absence data in many ways. Government policies around furloughing, homeworking, shielding, and social distancing have had an impact on estimates in 2020 and 2021. This has greater impact on the "Total days lost" and "Days lost per worker" measures, therefore the "Sickness absence rate" is the most appropriate measure to use to ensure comparability over time.
<i>note 6</i>	A day is defined as 7 hours and 30 minutes.
<i>note 5</i>	We plan to reweight Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS) datasets that include data from March 2020 using RTI data . We intend to release the initial reweighted LFS estimates in the June Labour Market publication. These sickness absence estimates will not be reweighted until the release of 2022 estimates.
<i>note 8</i>	Caution should be taken when analysing total days lost for 2020 and 2021, because of furloughed workers and other government policies during the pandemic. See the Information tab for more information.
<i>note 9</i>	The average number of days lost to sickness per worker is calculated by dividing the total number of days lost to sickness by the total number of people aged 16 and over in employment.