

Agenda

Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Thursday, 27 July 2023 at 6.00 pm
In the Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

3 Minutes 5 - 12

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2023 as a correct record.

4 Additional Items of Business

To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.

5 Sickness Absence Outturn 2022-23 13 - 46

To consider and comment upon the employee sickness absence outturn for 2022-2023.

6 Customer Journey Progress Update 47 - 102

To consider and comment upon the Customer



Journey Progress to date.

- 7 **Centre for Governance and Scrutiny – The use of call-in: guidance for English authorities** 103 - 110

To consider and comment upon the key points arising from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny Publication – the use of call-in: guidance for English authorities.

- 8 **Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme 2023-24** 111 - 118

To approve the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme for 2023-24

- 9 **Cabinet Forward Plan** 119 - 124

Standing item to consider items on the Cabinet Forward Plan.

- 10 **Tracking and Monitoring of Scrutiny Recommendations** 125 - 136

To monitor progress on the Board's recommendations.

Shokat Lal

Chief Executive

Sandwell Council House

Freeth Street

Oldbury

West Midlands

Distribution

Councillor Moore (Chair)

Councillors Fenton, Anandou, Chambers, Fisher, E M Giles, Hinchliff, Lewis, Taylor, Tipper and Owen

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Minutes of Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Thursday 29 June 2023 at 6.01 pm
In the Council Chamber at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor Moore (Chair);
Councillors Fenton, Fisher, E Giles, Lewis, Owen and Taylor.

In attendance: Councillor Piper;

Simone Hines (Director of Finance – Section 151 Officer),
Surjit Tour (Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring
Officer), Rebecca Maher (Head of Finance), Suky Suthi-
Nagra (Democratic Services Manager, Statutory Scrutiny
Officer), Alexander Goddard (Scrutiny Lead Officer) and
Anthony Lloyd (Democratic Services Officer).

41/23 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Anandou, Hinchliff,
Owen and Tipper.

42/23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.



43/23

Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

44/23

Additional Items of Business

There were no additional items of business.

45/23

Oracle Fusion Implementation Progress

The Board received a presentation on the progress made towards the implementation of the Oracle Fusion Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The Oracle Fusion implementation was a key corporate project and would fundamentally change the way the Council's Finance, Procurement, HR and Payroll services would operate.

A benefit exercise had been undertaken to identify what was needed from the new system and what would be the surrounding design principals. The following design principals were identified:-

- Adopt, not adapt. This was to ensure that the Council utilised Oracle Fusion's functionality as fully as possible rather than trying to amend the system to fit with historic ways of working.
- Maximising self-service and empowerment.
- Paper-free.
- No offline processes.
- Automation where possible.
- Oracle Fusion first to help remove un-needed satellite systems or to instead integrate them where possible.
- One source of truth.

It was stated that many benefits would be reaped as a result of these design principles:

- Empowerment for employees;
- Easier and streamlined processes;
- Innovation;
- Better use of money and value for money;

- Informed decision making as the current system used did not support real-time decision making.

In 2021, Cabinet agreed to pause the project following termination of the contract with the support provider. Grant Thornton, the Council's external Auditor also highlighted issues around the governance and programme management of the contract at the time. The implementation of Oracle was re-commenced in Autumn 2022 following the appointment of a new support provider. The finalisation of what the Council sought from the programme occurred in February 2023 and the "modelling phase" was about to conclude. The original completion target date for the modelling phase was set for the end of May 2023 however, this phase had been extended for the Payroll workstream due to slippage and delays; a recovery plan was in place to ensure timelines were met.

Once the modelling stage had been completed, the development stage would begin to commence testing of the system – finance and procurement were undergoing this phase.

In total, the running costs of the new system amounted to £2.8m over a 10-year period with an additional cost of £9.7m for implementation. Infosys, the Council's system integration partner for the Oracle Fusion project, had regular contractual meetings with the Council to ensure that needs were being considered and met

The new system would see a wholesale change in how the Council operated. A change summary heatmap was provided to the Board. The heatmap would ensure that every potential user or team of users were aware of the new changes how they needed to proceed in order to accommodate the arrival of the system. One key feature of the new system was the ability to automatically scan invoices; this would significantly reduce manual input and therefore, save the Council time and money. Regarding procurement, suppliers would be given access to a self-service portal to submit invoices and update details where necessary. Doing so would enable the Council to shift responsibility to suppliers to manage their own accounts.

Key risks that had been identified were relayed to the Board. Delays in the progress regarding HR and Payroll were concerns however, members were advised that they would not impact the go-live date of April 2024. Officers were reviewing the risks of the project every fortnight to ensure that the project was on track.

It was also highlighted that Birmingham City Council's implementation had been studied and a lesson learned log had been collated. Birmingham City Council's main issue was that a back-up option was not in place when the roll out of the new system was not successful. In addition, they had attempted to change the Oracle system to adapt to their processes as opposed to amending their processes to meet the specifications of the system which had led to further investment being required. It was confirmed that Sandwell Council would be sure to run both the new and old system so that any issues could be resolved if the new system encountered problems. Additional assurance was to be provided by Grant Thornton, the Council's auditor, who was reviewing the project. Additionally, Swansea Council had recently launched the service with a successful implementation and officers from Sandwell Council were monitoring its roll-out in that authority.

Governance arrangements were in place consisting of a programme board, technical design authority, business readiness group and an implementation board. Additional working groups were also in place including HR, Finance, Payroll and IT groups.

Additionally, it was also confirmed that a Learning and Development plan was in place to train users on the Oracle system 3 months before the system was planned to go live. This was to ensure officers were familiar with the system. An investment in the Oracle guidance module had been made and demonstrations and drop-in training sessions would also be available to help provide for all learning styles.

Following questions from members, the following points were made:-

- well documented policy procedures were in place to ensure continuity in the event of staff turnover;
- other authorities implementing the system were being watched closely to analyse the launch of the system;
- servers for Oracle Fusion were cloud-based and therefore, the old physical services in the Council House would become redundant;
- Infosys were the implementation and integration partner for the project;
- a benefit case had assumed that over £1m in annual savings would be made;

- restructures had already occurred in some areas in preparation of the implementation of the system.

Following further discussions, it was agreed that a further report would be considered by the Committee to review progress against the implementation of Oracle Fusion.

Officers were thanked for their attendance.

Resolved that a further update on progress of the Oracle Fusion Implementation be brought to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board in September 2023.

46/23

2022/23 Financial Outturn

The overall outturn position for the General Fund was an underspend of approximately £1.9m. High inflation and an unexpectedly high pay award to Council staff had also been experienced with an extra £8m added to the outturn as a result. Overspend was also due the increasing costs of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport although directorate underspend in other areas helped offset these costs.

Members noted that although General Fund earmarked reserves and during the year balances had reduced by £33.818m, £30.499m of this related to the use of Section 31 grants which funded reduced Business Rates income due to COVID. The net movement of reserves excluding this was a reduction of £3.319m.

In response to questions and queries from the Board, the following responses were provided:-

- an increase of children with Education, Health and Care Plans, and an increase in the levels of complexity of needs identified, had contributed to the increase in out of borough placements costs due to little provision within Sandwell. Work was in place to investigate if that provision could be provided by Sandwell;
- SEND Transport costs were being reviewed and alternative options such as personal budgets for parents and collective pick-ups/drop-offs were being considered;
- debt restructures referred to profiling a debt repayment in a different way. Costs would remain the same, however,

payments would be smaller in the first years to create savings in the early years;

- unexpected dilapidation costs to the Court House had arisen. The Council were required to maintain and bring the property back to the original standard;
- further detail would be provided at a later date in relation to green spaces revenue regeneration.

Officers were thanked for the report.

47/23

Scrutiny Review – Customer Journey

In 2022, the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board agreed to investigate the experience of Sandwell residents when accessing or requesting Council services following the inclusion of the customer journey as an area of priority within the Council's Improvement Plan. Subsequently, a Scrutiny Review was conducted via the establishment of a working group which carried out the review to ascertain an understanding of the customer journey.

Several recommendations were identified as a result of the review. Members agreed that customer services was not to the standard expected as a local authority, however, positive work already achieved was recognised. Weaknesses in responding and ensuring that enquiries reached the correct back-office staff were the main concerns highlighted during the Review.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources welcomed the report and thanked the working group for the work undertaken to identify recommendations that would be extremely useful.

Resolved that Cabinet be requested to approve the following recommendations arising from the Customer Journey Scrutiny Review:-

- (1) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, be authorised to agree a customer care standards/charter, and staff responsibilities in relation to those standards to ensure;

- a) that “back-office” staff take ownership and accountability of customer requests received via Contact Centre Agents;
 - b) a standard approach is taken to making officer contact numbers available on Outlook and to customers to prevent additional calls being made to the Contact Centre;
 - c) a standard approach to the complaints process and deadlines for responding to complaints are clear and accessible across all Council services;
 - d) that key contacts are identified within each service area to aid Customer Service Agents in their enquiries;
 - e) that residents are regularly updated and informed about the current process of their request/query.
- (2) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive be authorised to commission/develop a customer training package that incorporates the following topics:-
- a) The completeness of response letters
 - b) Methods to manage customer expectations and awareness around the Council’s remit and responsibilities.
- (3) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive ensure that all members of staff undertake training around customer care standards as identified in (2) and that staff performance against these standards be incorporated within the appraisal process;
- (4) that mandatory corporate customer service training be included as part of the induction process for all staff;
- (5) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Finance, investigate options for procuring a single joint Customer Relations System across the Council;

- (6) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive considers the introduction of automated feedback surveys and that regular feedback on Council enquires/complaints are analysed and shared with Directorates;
- (7) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive introduces corporate guidelines in relation to the use of Council contact numbers to ensure that all officers are contactable and that contact details are updated regularly;
- (8) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive considers the feasibility of amalgamating the current three contact centres (Corporate Contact Centre, Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre and Adult Social Care Care) into a single contact centre number with staff specialising in various areas;
- (9) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, as part of the refresh of the Council's website, ensures the Council continues to promote the use of Sandwell Digital First and the Council's website as the first point for accessing information and raising an issue/request;
- (10) that as part of the customer journey review being undertaken, the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive reviews current timescales for responding to enquiries and consider a reduction, wherever possible, including member enquiries being reduced from 10 working days to 3-5 days.
- (11) that a further report be submitted to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, within 2 months' time, on the decision of Cabinet.

Meeting ended at 7.17pm.

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

Report to Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

27 July 2023

Subject:	Sickness Absence Outturn 2022-23
Director:	Shokat Lal, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development, Victoria Lee Victoria_Lee@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the employee sickness absence outturn for 2022-23

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Sickness absence is a key measure of organisational health, and has been increasing over the last two years, above levels seen prior to the pandemic.
- 2.2 The impact of sickness absence on individuals and teams, and ultimately on service delivery, can be significant.
- 2.3 It is important that we analyse reasons for sickness absence across our services, and put in place measures to address any issues highlighted through that analysis where possible and appropriate.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

Employee attendance impacts on the council's ability to deliver against our Corporate Plan in every area where absence is pronounced. Absence management is a responsibility of every service. Supporting



and enabling policies, procedures, guidance, and health and wellbeing services sit within HR Services as a core element of One Council One Team.

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Sickness absence rates for the last financial year (2022-23) were 10.81 days per employee. This equates to 4.87% working days lost to sickness absence, compared to a national average¹ of 2.6% for the UK overall and 3.6% across the public sector.
- 4.2 Sickness absence rates were higher for every quarter in 2022-23 compared to the previous year; representing an overall increase of 0.5 days per person compared to 2021-22. The increase was evenly spread across the year.
- 4.3 Rates of absence have increased each year since 2018-19, with the exception of 2019-20 and 2020-21. The reduction in sickness absence for the years including the height of the pandemic are unsurprising and reflect temporary changes to roles and ways of working, as well as restrictions to social mixing and a corresponding reduction in usual seasonal illness patterns.
- 4.4 Most directorates saw a marginal increase in sickness absence between 2021-22 and 2022-23, though Borough Economy, Regeneration and Growth, and Finance saw reductions. Adult Social care and Housing had the most sickness absence, following the trend from the previous year.
- 4.5 Stress/depression/mental health is the main reason for sickness absence. It accounts for 29% of all absence and increased by 14% on the previous year. Infections (including colds and influenza) account for the second highest reason for sickness absence (21%). Muscular-skeletal related absence accounts for 17% of absence, and increased by 24.9% compared to the previous year.
- 4.6 Further analysis of stress/depression/mental health related absence demonstrates that this was due to more incidents compared to the previous year, rather than longer episodes of absence for those affected. 27% of this absence is reported as work-related, but most is not. It is not easy to separate contributing factors to someone's absence for reasons

¹ ONS data for 2022



related to mental health, with the possible exception of absence related to a bereavement (19% of absence for stress/depression/mental health). With regard to bereavement, the age profile of the workforce does increase the probability of this type of absence (elderly parents, even partners) – 51% of the workforce is aged over 50, with 15% aged over 60.

- 4.7 Women are more likely than men to have time off for reasons related to mental health. Ethnic minority employees are less likely to be off sick with reasons related to mental health, but have slightly more time off for these reasons. Looking at the age profile of the workforce there is little difference in the amount of time lost to mental ill health with the exception of the youngest and oldest employees. Mental health related sickness absence increases dramatically amongst the workforce group aged over 65. Stress-related sickness absence is highest for employees at higher grades/pay bands.
- 4.8 Detailed analysis of sickness data and relationship between this and job roles and other issues at service level is undertaken by Directorate Management Teams, with the support of HR Services through the provision of more detailed data.
- 4.9 The Board made reference to some specific areas of interest in respect of sickness absence:
- a) Lone working - Complementing the analysis of sickness absence data, Directorates receive quarterly Health and Safety reports, providing information on accidents and incidents; details of any regulatory interventions or health and safety audits undertaken during the period; health and safety learning report; and any other highlight issues related to health and safety. This includes a report on numbers of violent and aggressive incidents reported by employees. Most violent and aggressive incidents that do occur do not concern lone workers. Team managers are responsible for developing and implementing health and safety risk assessments for lone working where applicable (based upon the council's Lone working Safety Management Procedure). This should be reviewed after any incident. Our corporate Health and Safety audit programme will include review of these risk assessments.
 - b) Impact of organisation structures and change on sickness absence – Our corporate data does not demonstrate any immediate high-level



correlation between absence levels and organisation change at Directorate level. However, DMT's would be expected to follow up any sickness absence trends showing any potential correlation, through the detailed service-by-service long and short-term sickness absence data provided.

- c) Impact or correlation between different workstyles and sickness – We do not currently measure this and do not presently record workstyles (fixed worker, hybrid, homeworker etc.) in our HR system. However, Service level breakdown data does illustrate highest levels of absence exist generally amongst front-line services working directly in the community, with back-office desk-based services generally reporting lower levels of sickness absence. This is to be expected given the often more physically demanding nature of the work (e.g. lifting and handling); the increase in exposure to infection; and the limited ability to work remotely through minor illness such as coughs and colds.
- d) Learning and development: providing the tools and skills for people to do their jobs and avoid illness – We will be running our Employee Engagement Survey in September, including the following questions supporting analysis of this concern:
- The learning and development I have received is helping me to develop my career
 - I have received the job essential and business critical training and development identified by my manager (1 to 1 and or appraisals) to improve my skills in the last 12 months
 - I feel a personal responsibility to seek out ways to develop myself at work
 - During the appraisal process job essential and business critical training and development opportunities were agreed

4.10 HR are currently reviewing the council's sickness absence management (SAM) processes with particular attention being applied to directorate and service-level absence review process; discretion within the SAM policy; and SAM Policy, Guidance and Process (with focus on language, documentation, and the move to self-service with Oracle Fusion). Workshops have been carried out with colleagues within HR and managers across the council who frequently apply the SAM policy,



alongside ongoing discussions with our trade union representatives, in the updating of arrangements.

4.11 Our Occupational Health & Wellbeing service helps support and prevent sickness absence by offering a range of interventions and support to employees:

- First line advice from a registered nurse (occupational health advisor) available through our sickness referral service for proactive advice and guidance.
- Signposting to our confidential Employee Assistance & Counselling Service or a self-referral to our physiotherapist for MSD issues.
- Referral service with an occupational health advisor, physician or physiotherapist for a one to one consultation to provide individual tailored advice around an employee's mental or physical health; to help support employees back into work; providing advice on adjustments; support ongoing health issues; and helping in the management of sickness absence.

Through our employee wellbeing promotion we deliver initiatives in line with national campaigns in which both physical and mental needs are recognised. We provide confidential one to one sessions with a mental health professional (Talking Life); access to MHFA's, Wellbeing Champions; and Menstruation-2-Menopause Champions. We also provide Physiotherapist wellbeing sessions to promote postural stretching and exercises if working in the office or at home.

Statistics for 2022/23 include:

- Employee Assistance & Counselling Service usage was 9.73% against a benchmark average of is between 6% - 10%
- 87% take up for the Talking Life sessions
- 252 employees signed up to the Physiotherapist wellbeing sessions
- 120 physiotherapy self-referral appointments



5 Implications

Resources:	Sickness absence incurs direct and indirect costs to the council, including temporary staff cover costs, delays in service delivery, or postponement of service improvement activity. Absence impacts on colleagues required to cover all or parts of an absent employee's responsibilities.
Legal and Governance:	Increased pressure on statutory services suffering staff absence. We have legal and ethical responsibility to treat all staff fairly, including those suffering ill health, through adoption of proportionate sickness absence management policy.
Risk:	Service Directors and Assistant Directors receive regular reports on staff sickness and support from HR Services in the management of sickness absence. Sickness absence and Health and Safety reports are provided to Leadership Team and DMT's quarterly for discussion, consideration, and action where necessary.
Equality:	A review of sickness data against diversity characteristics has not identified any disproportionate issues or impacts, though there is a correlation between sickness absence and age. The Council has particular duties in relation to support of employees who have a disability.
Health and Wellbeing:	Sickness absence is fundamentally about the health and wellbeing of our workforce. We offer robust health and wellbeing support, including an in-house Occupational Health service, with physiotherapy provision, and a strong well-being offer, including access for all employees to an employee assistance programme, including counselling support.
Social Value:	N/A
Climate Change:	N/A
Corporate Parenting:	N/A



6 Appendices

Appendix 1 - SMBC Sickness Absence Outturn 2022-23

Appendix 2 - Sickness Outturn 2022-23 Presentation

7. Background Papers

N/A



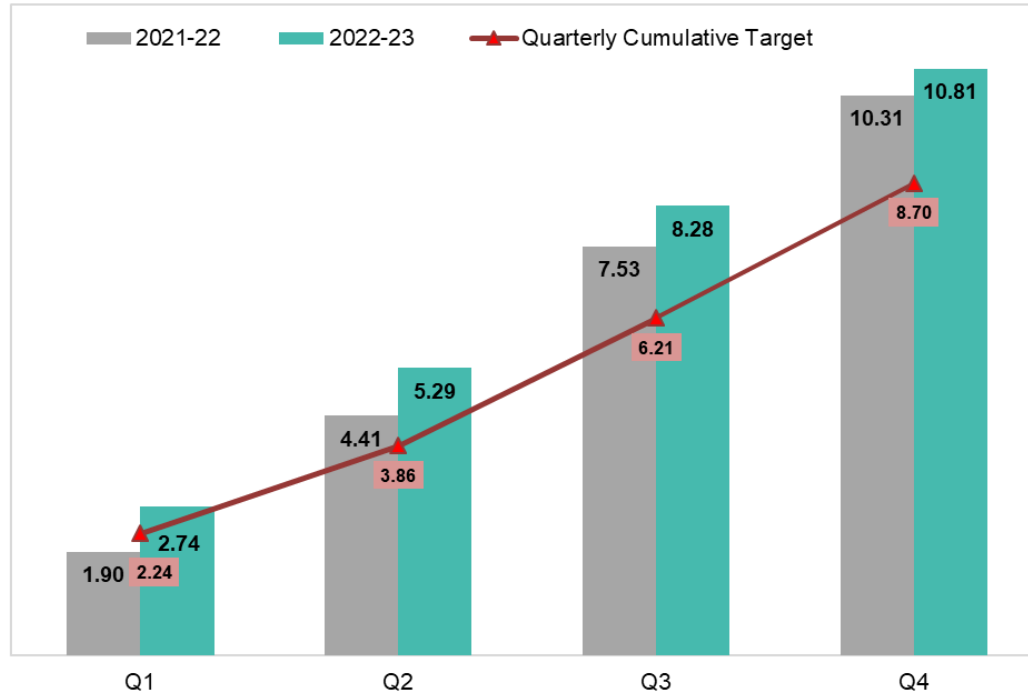
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Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board - 27 July 2023

Appendix to report

SMBC Sickness Absence Outturn
2022-23

Average Working Days Lost Due to Sickness

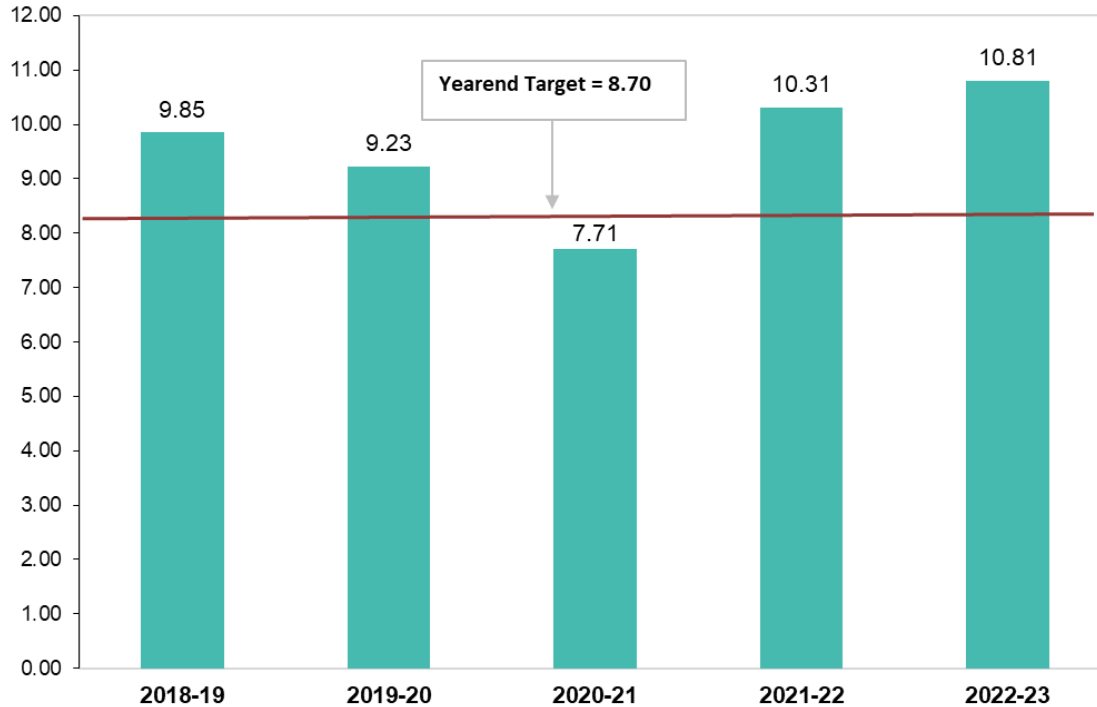


Average days lost per employee due to sickness this year was 10.81 compared to 10.31 days last year, which is an increase of 0.5 days.

Performance was missing the target at the end of each consecutive quarter and 2.1 days at yearend.

The quarterly cumulative target of 8.7 days is ongoing from 2017-18 and was set to be inline with the 2016 CIPD public sector average.

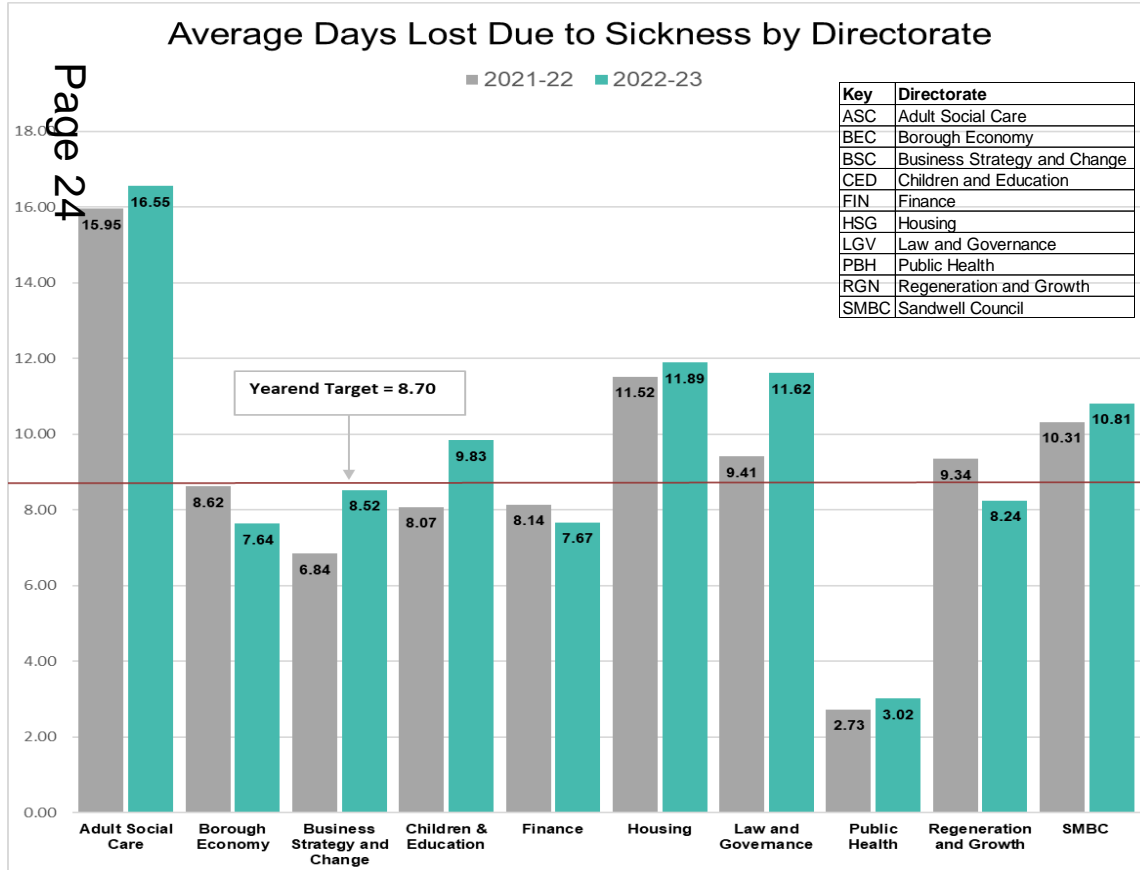
Average Working Days Lost Due to Sickness 5 Year Trend



Sickness levels have increased for the last two consecutive years since the coronavirus pandemic began in 2020-21.

During the first year of the coronavirus pandemic, strict lockdown measures were in place. As a result sickness outturn was much lower, compared to the pre-pandemic years.

Sickness Levels by Directorate



Borough Economy; Finance and Regeneration and Growth have achieved a reduction in sickness compared to last year.

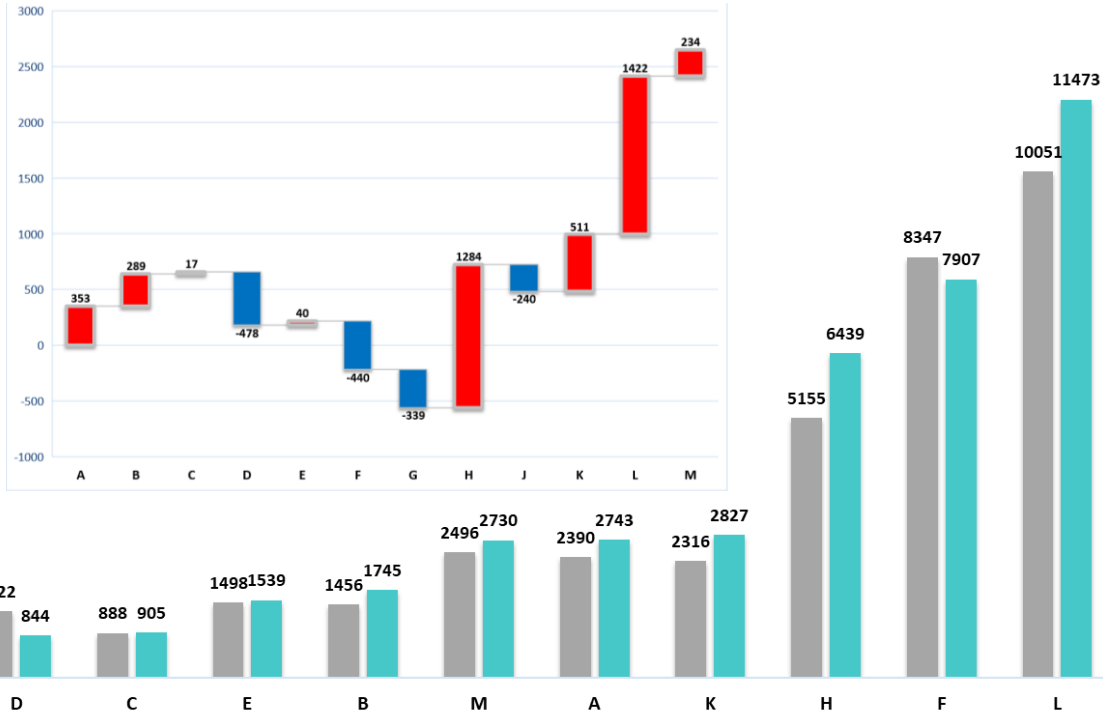
All other directorates have seen an increase and the highest increase was for Law and Governance.

Directorate	2021-22	2022-23	Compared to last year
ASC	15.95	16.55	0.60
BEC	8.62	7.64	-0.98
BSC	6.84	8.52	1.68
CED	8.07	9.83	1.77
FIN	8.14	7.67	-0.47
HSG	11.52	11.89	0.37
LGV	9.41	11.62	2.20
PBH	2.73	3.02	0.29
RGN	9.34	8.24	-1.10
SMBC	10.31	10.81	0.49

Working Days Lost by Causes of Sickness

■ 2022-23 (40,227) ■ 2021-22 (37,575)

- A Back & neck problems
- B Chest & Respiratory
- C Eye, ear, nose, mouth & dental
- D Genito-urinary/gynaecological
- E Heart, blood pressure & circulation
- F Infections
- G Neurological
- H Other muscular-skeletal problems
- J Pregnancy related
- K Stomach, liver, kidney & digestion
- L Stress, depression, mental health
- M Other

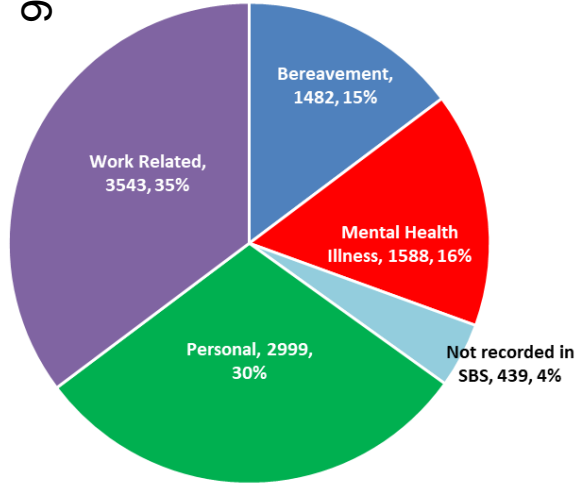


With the exception of category F (infections), working days lost for the five of the six leading causes of sickness L to M have increased compared to the previous year.

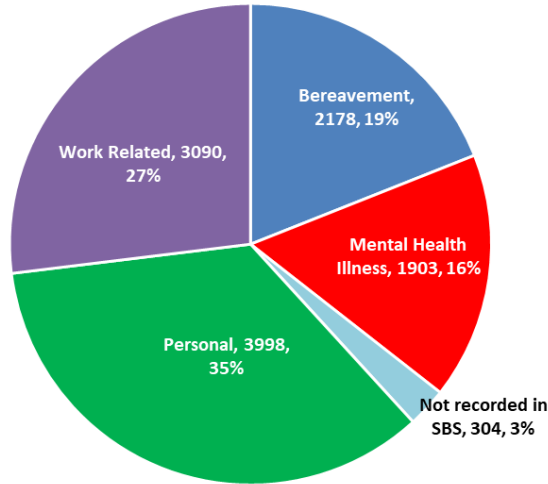
The most significant increase is for stress related sickness (+1,422) and other muscular skeletal problems (1,284).

Stress, depression, mental health

Stress, depression, mental health
2021-22
(WDL = 10,051)



L: Stress, depression, mental health
2022-23
(WDL = 11,473)



Stress related sickness increased by 1,422 working days (+14.1%) compared to the previous year and the main causes of this increase were:

- bereavement (+696)
- mental health (+314)
- personal reasons (+999)

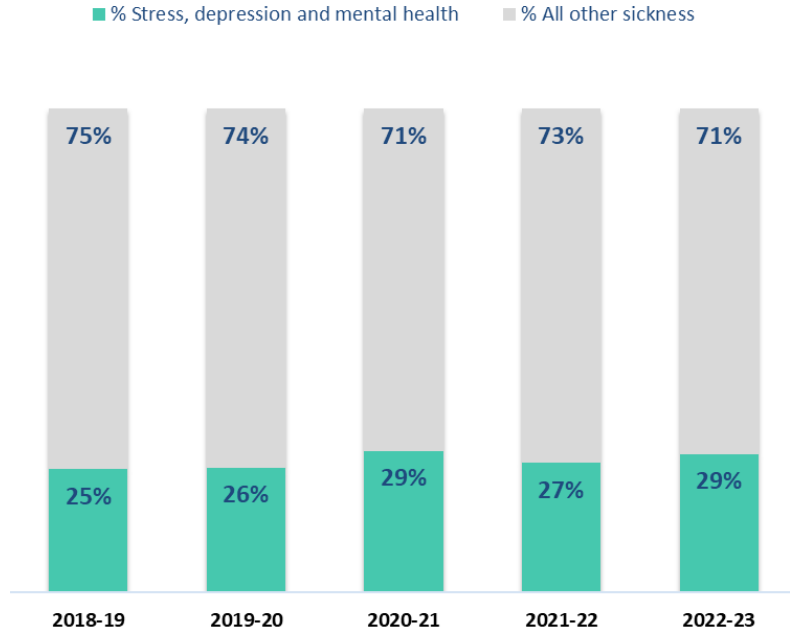
Working days lost due to work related stress decreased by 453 days compared the previous year.

The number of occurrences of stress, depression, mental health for this year was 407. This is an increase of 61 upon last year. The average per occurrence was 28 days this year compared to 29 days last year.

2022-23	Bereavement	Mental Health Illness	Not recorded in SBS	Personal	Work Related	L: Stress, depression, mental health
Working Days Lost	2178	1903	304	3998	3090	11473
Occurrences	87	61	9	150	100	407
Average Working Days Lost	25.0	31.2	33.7	26.7	30.9	28.2

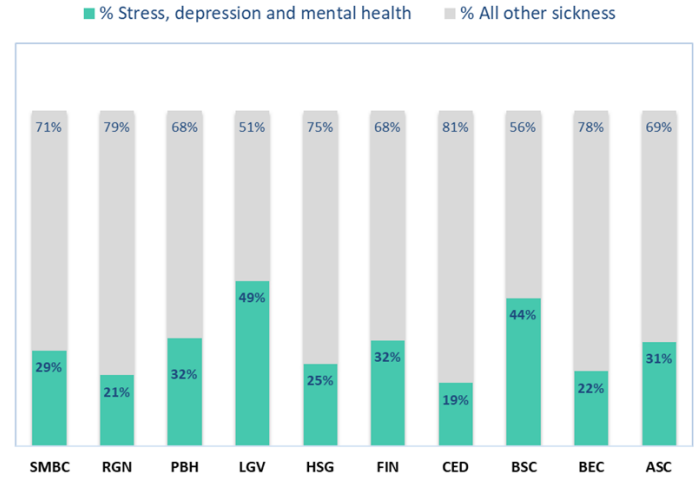
L: Stress, depression, mental health

Stress, depression, mental health 5 Year Trend

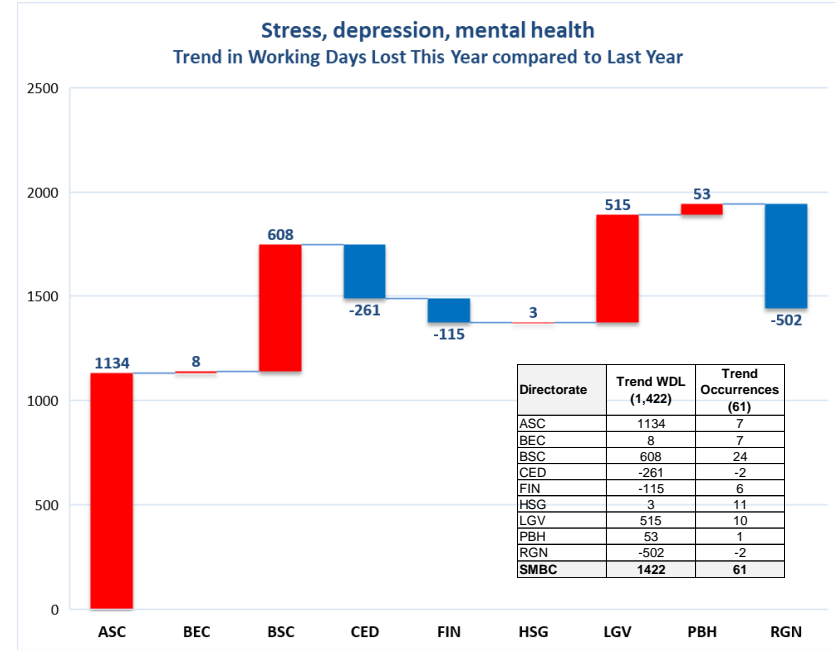
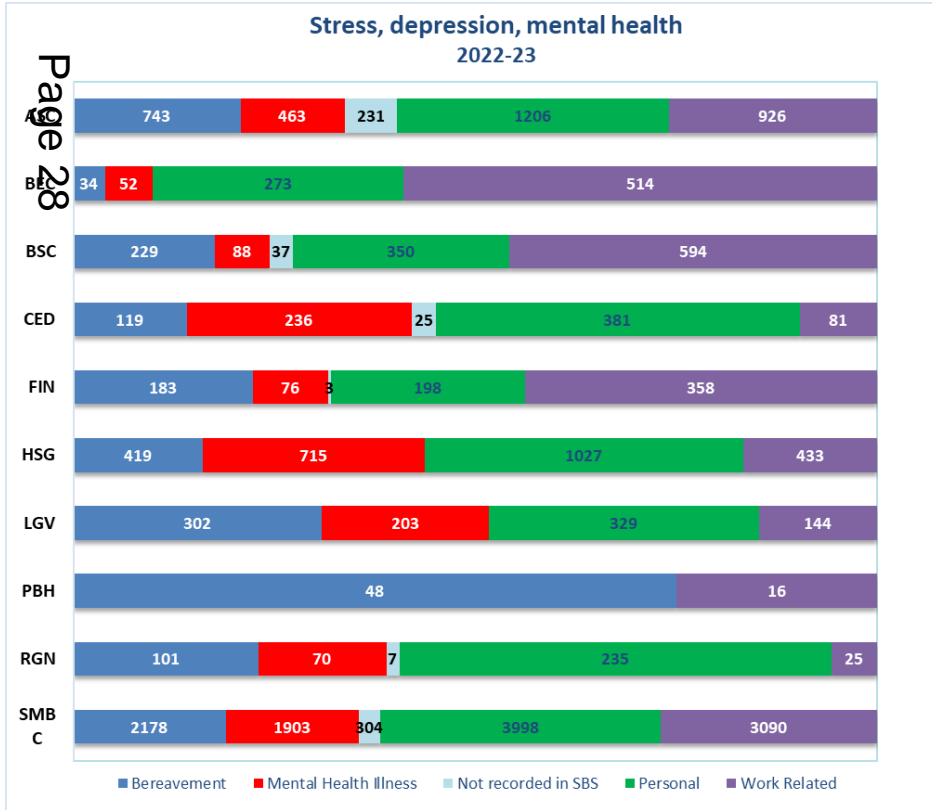


The trend in working days lost due to stress, depression and mental health over the last 5 years shows a general upward trend for Sandwell Council. The percentage makeup by directorate for 2022-23 is as follows:

L: Stress, depression, mental health 2022-23



Stress, depression, mental health

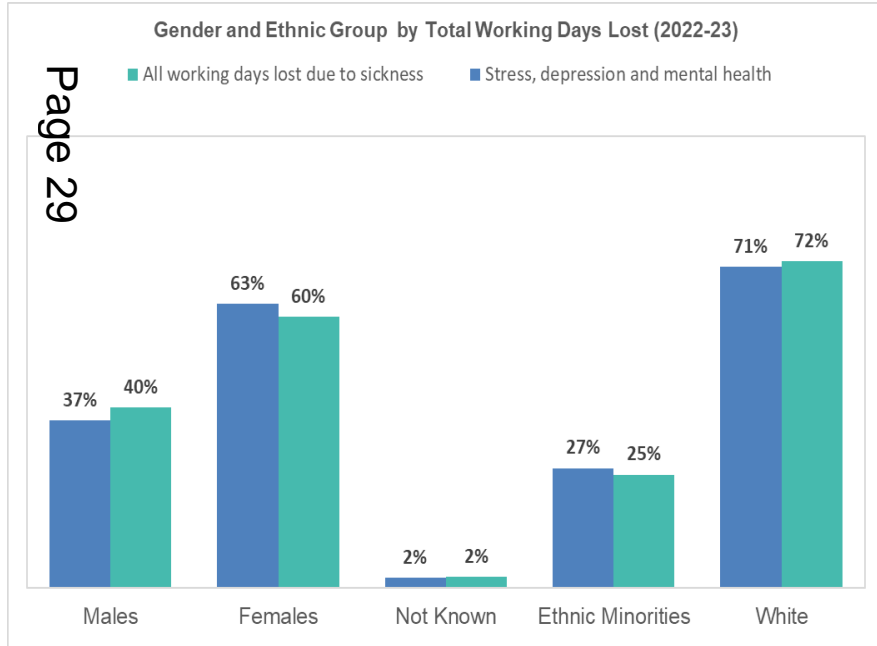


Adult Social Care, Former Business Strategy and Change and Law and Governance have seen increase in working days lost due to stress, mental health and depression.

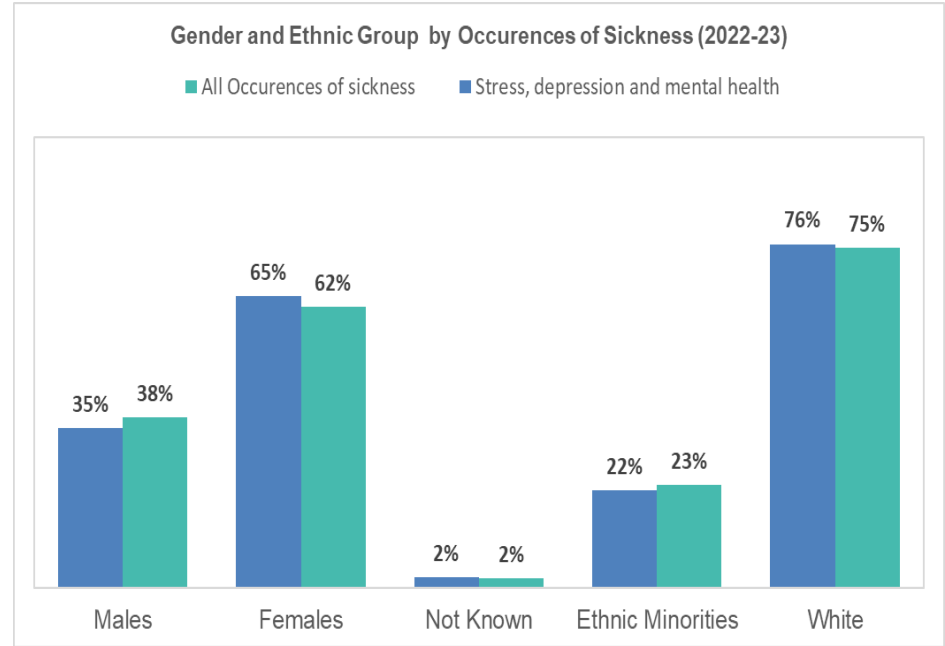


Stress related sickness and workforce demographics

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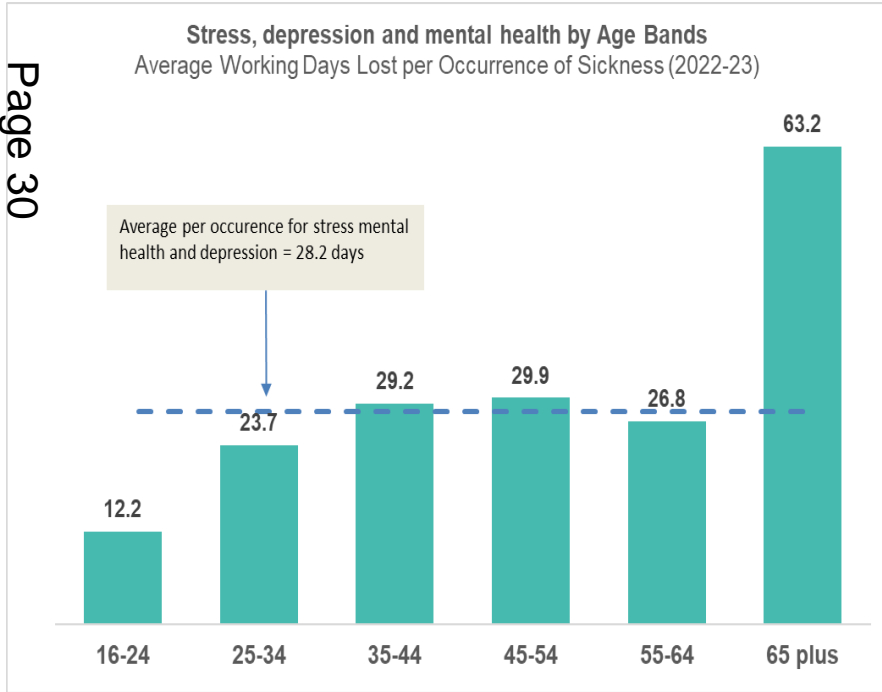
Based on total working days lost, the percentage makeup by gender and ethnic groups is similar for stress, depression and mental health compared to all sickness absence.



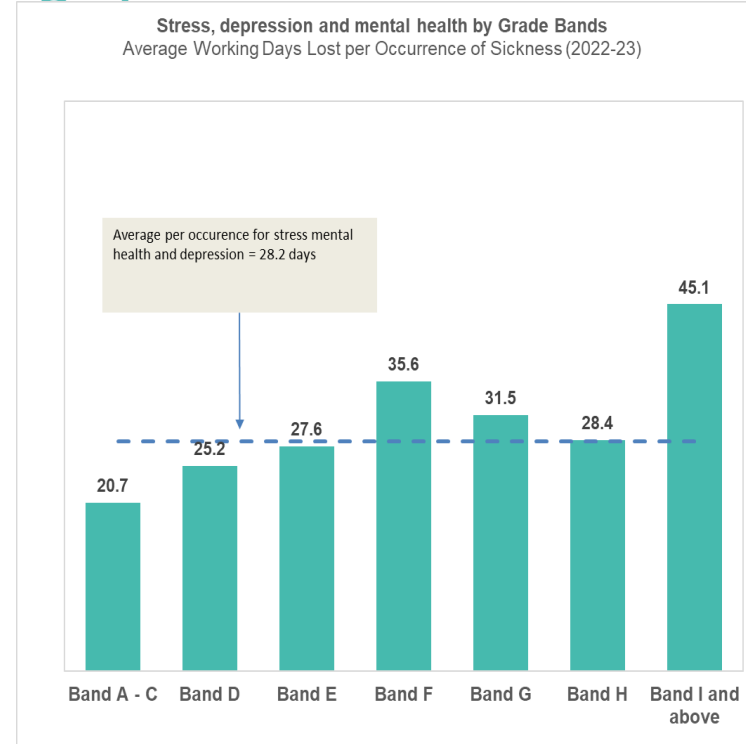
The diversity composition is also similar based on occurrences of sickness.

Stress related sickness and workforce demographics

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There is similarity between working days lost per occurrence of sickness across the age bands, except for the youngest and the eldest employees.



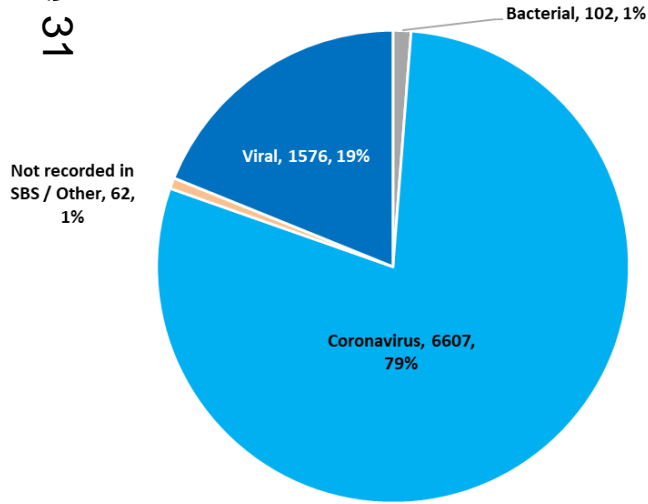
Stress related sickness by occurrence shows progressive increase up to band F, followed by a decline for middle management grades and comparatively much higher level for bands I and above.



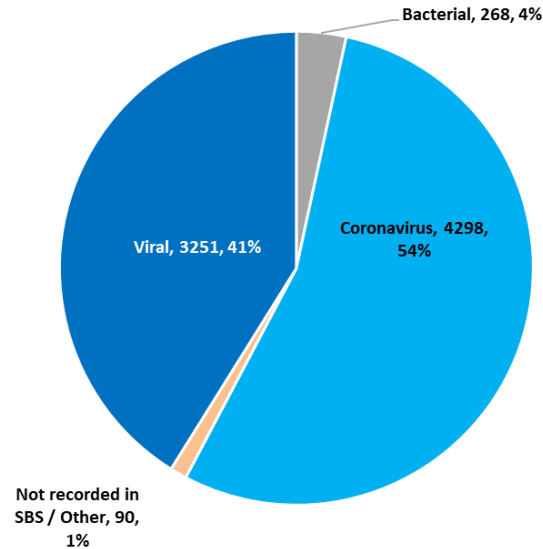
Infections

Page 31

Infections 2021-22
(WDL = 8,347)



Infection 2022-23
(WDL = 7,907)



Working days lost due to infections have reduced by 440 (-5.3%).

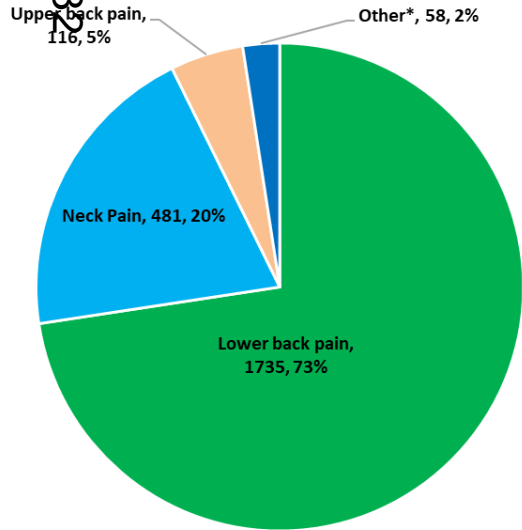
This is due to a significant reduction due to coronavirus (-2310).

However, most of this has been offset by the expected increase in viral (+1676) and bacterial (+166) infections.

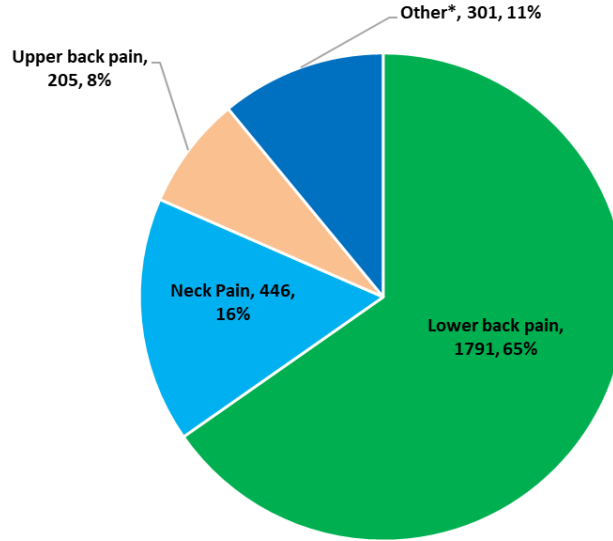
Back and Neck

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**Back and Neck
2021-22
WDL = (2,390)**



**Back and Neck
2022-23
WDL = (2,743)**



Working days lost due to back and neck have increased by 353 (15%).

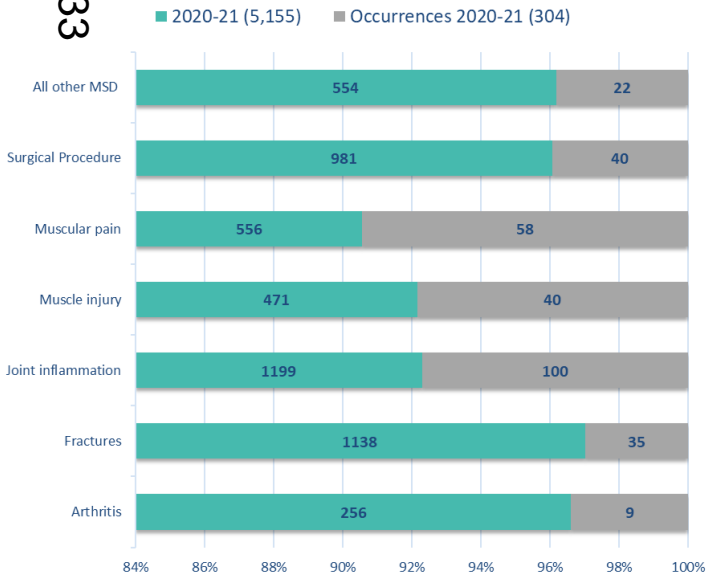
Lower back remains the leading cause of back and neck related sickness.

The overall number of occurrences due to back and neck related sickness in 2022-23 was 219, which is an increase of 24 compared to the previous year.

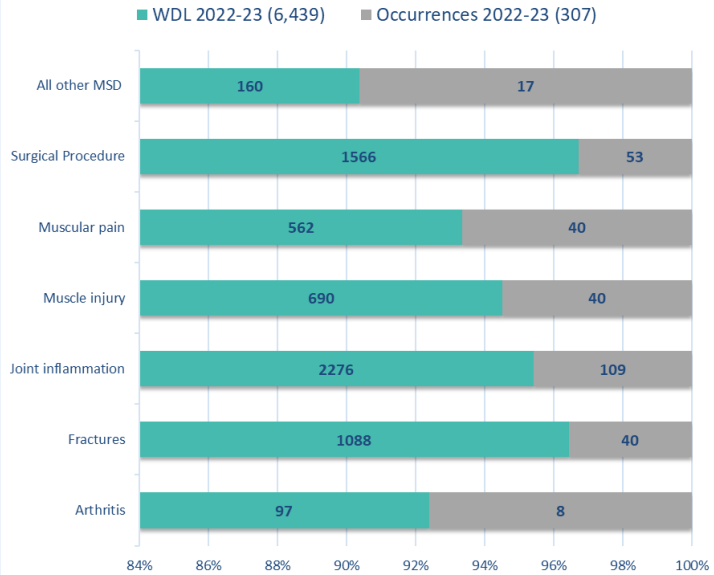
WDL = Working Days Lost (FTE)

Other Muscular Skeletal Problems

**H: Other muscular-skeletal problems
2021-22**



**H: Other muscular-skeletal problems
2022-23**



Working days lost due to other muscular skeletal problems in 2022-23 was 6,439 compared to 5,155 in 2021-22. This is an increase of 1,284 working days (25%).

Joint Inflammation; surgical procedures and fractures were the main reasons for other muscular skeletal related sickness.

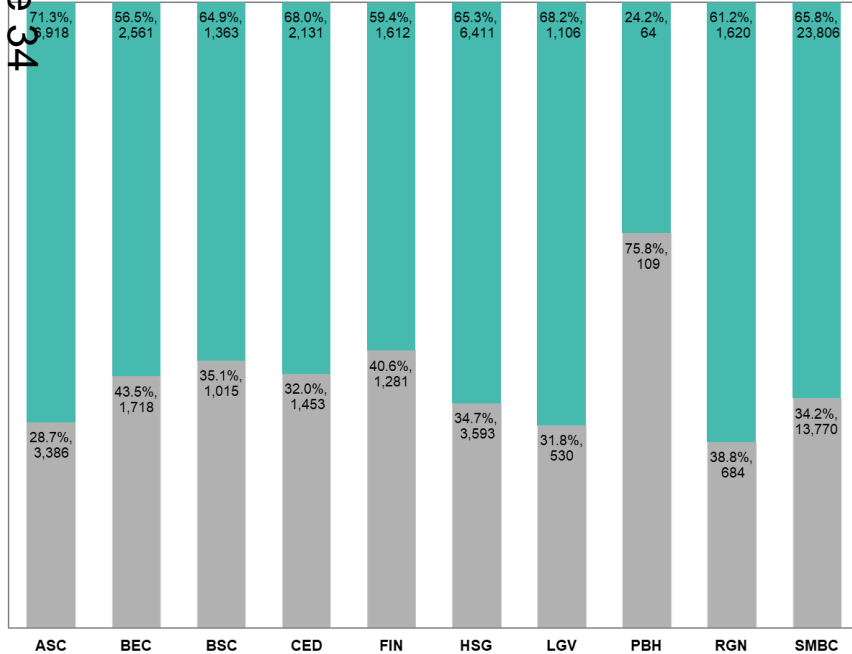
The overall number of occurrences due to other muscular related problems in 2022-23 was 307 compared to 304 in the previous year.

Short-Term and Long Term Sickness

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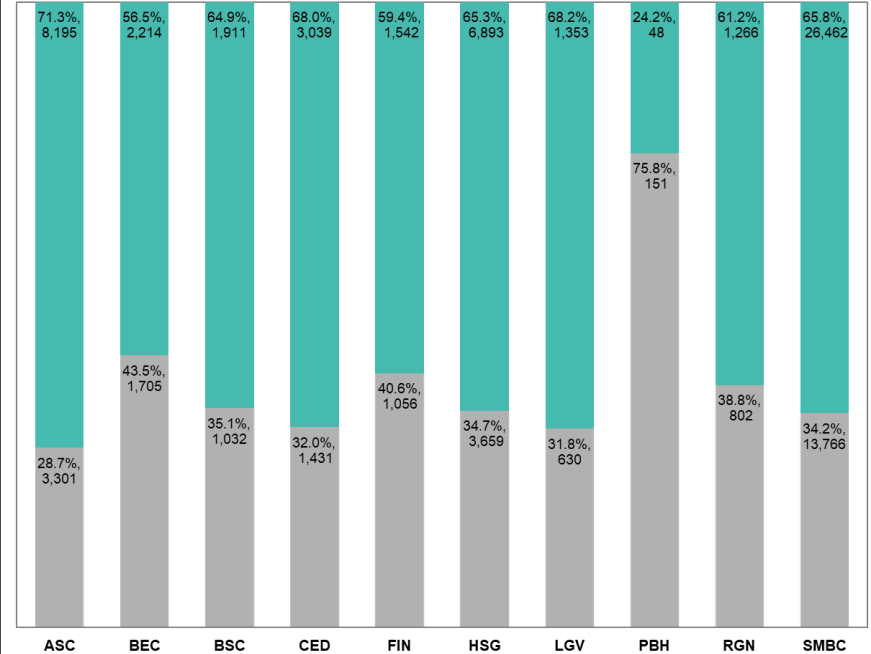
Short-Term and Long-Term Sickness by Directorate 2021-22

■ Short-Term (13,770) ■ Long Term (23,806)



Short-Term and Long-Term Sickness by Directorate 2022-23

■ Short-Term (13,766) ■ Long Term (26,462)

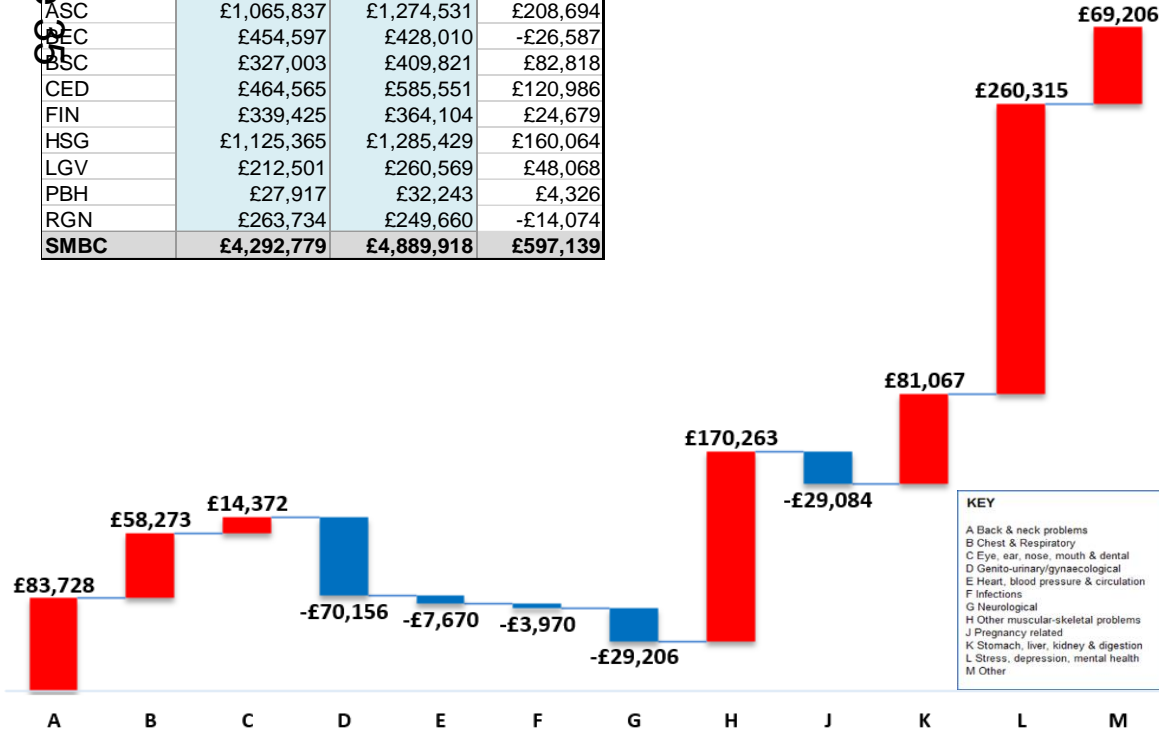


Cost of sickness

Cost of Sickness by Causes

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Directorate	2021-22 (£4.293m)	2022-23 (£4.890m)	Trend (+£597k)
ASC	£1,065,837	£1,274,531	£208,694
CEC	£454,597	£428,010	£-26,587
BSC	£327,003	£409,821	£82,818
CED	£464,565	£585,551	£120,986
FIN	£339,425	£364,104	£24,679
HSG	£1,125,365	£1,285,429	£160,064
LGV	£212,501	£260,569	£48,068
PBH	£27,917	£32,243	£4,326
RGN	£263,734	£249,660	£-14,074
SMBC	£4,292,779	£4,889,918	£597,139



KEY
A Back & neck problems
B Chest & Respiratory
C Eye, ear, nose, mouth & dental
D Genito-urinary/gynaecological
E Heart, blood pressure & circulation
F Infections
G Neurological
H Other muscular-skeletal problems
J Pregnancy related
K Stomach, liver, kidney & digestion
L Stress, depression, mental health
M Other

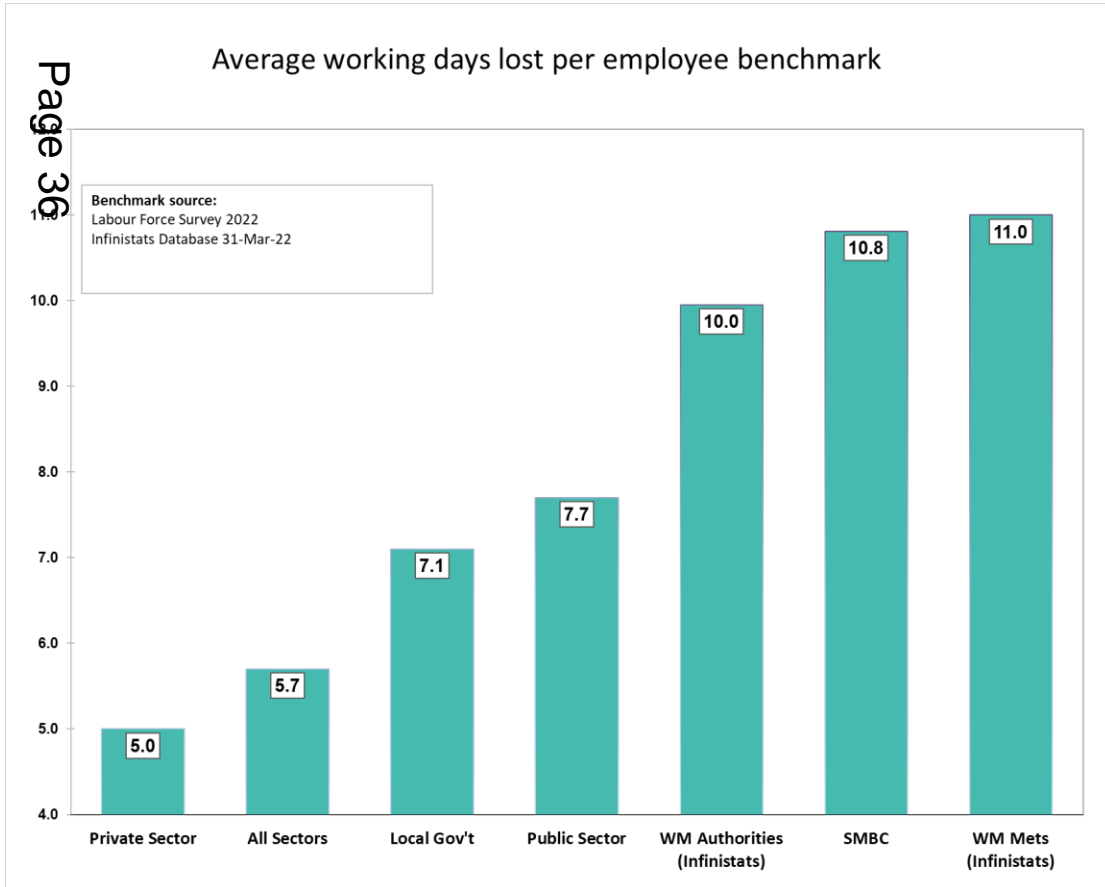
Cost of sickness in 2022-23 was £4.89m compared to £4.29m in 2021-22, this is an increase of almost £600k

A significant proportion of this increase (72%) was due to stress, depression, mental health and other muscular skeletal problems.

Cost of sickness is a measure unproductive time and is calculated as follows:

Cost of sickness = Full-time equivalent working days lost for each occurrence of sickness * the daily rate of pay
(Daily rate of pay = Annual salary/52/37*7.4)

Benchmark – average working days Lost per employee



For benchmarking two separate data sources are included: Labour Force Survey 2022 and Infinistats - Regional Benchmarking Database for West Midlands Authorities.

Sandwell is 3.7 days above the benchmark for Local Government and 0.8 days above the median for the West Midlands Authorities.

The WM Mets average is based on data for the year 2021-22 from 4 out of the 7 West Midlands Met. Authorities: Dudley (14.1); Solihull (10.8); Wolverhampton (10.7) and Sandwell (10.3)

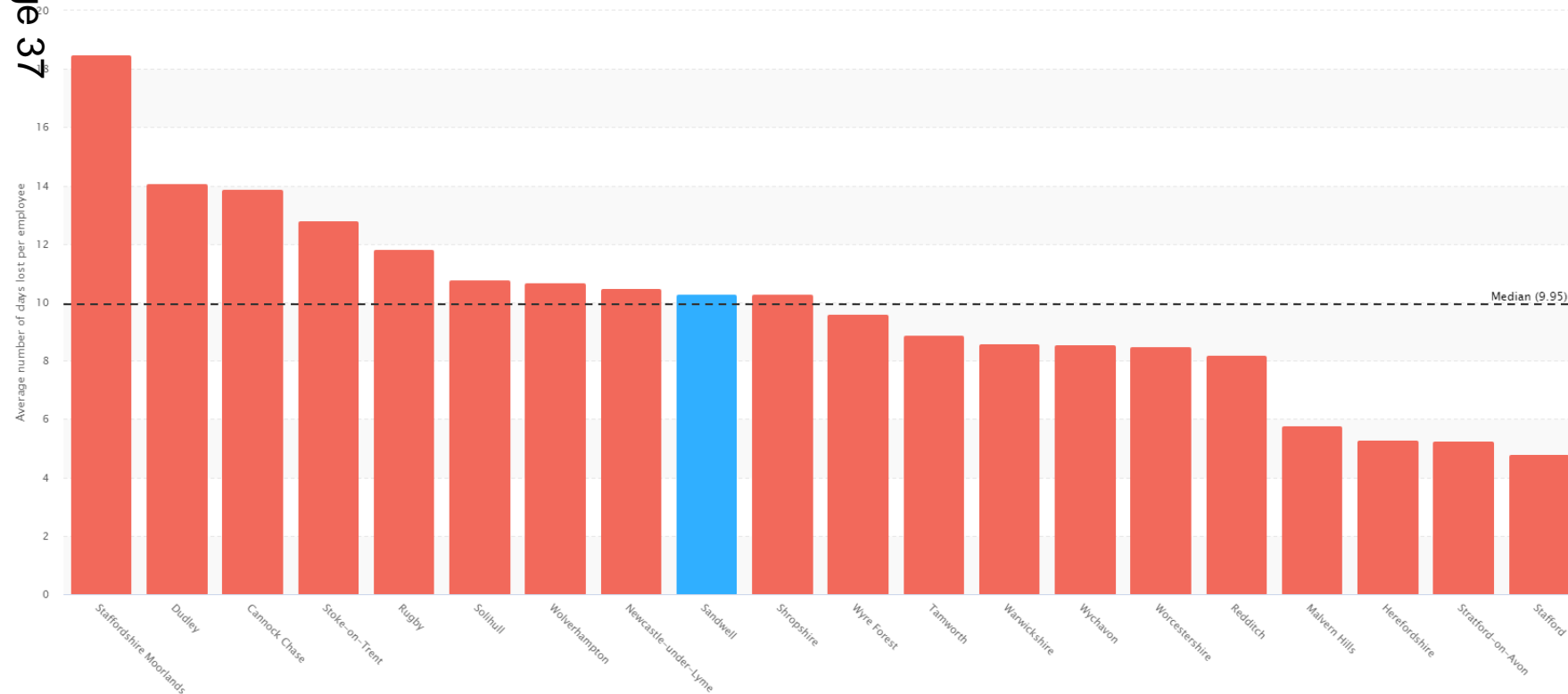
Working days lost per employee- West Midlands Authorities

Sickness Absence: Average number of days lost per employee ▾

12 months up to 31st March 2022 ▾

Download/Export

Sandwell's average number of days lost per employee of 10.3 is the lowest in the METs. It has risen by 33.8% since the last survey in 2020/21, when it was 7.7. This compares with a median average change of +34.4% for the METs since 2020/21.

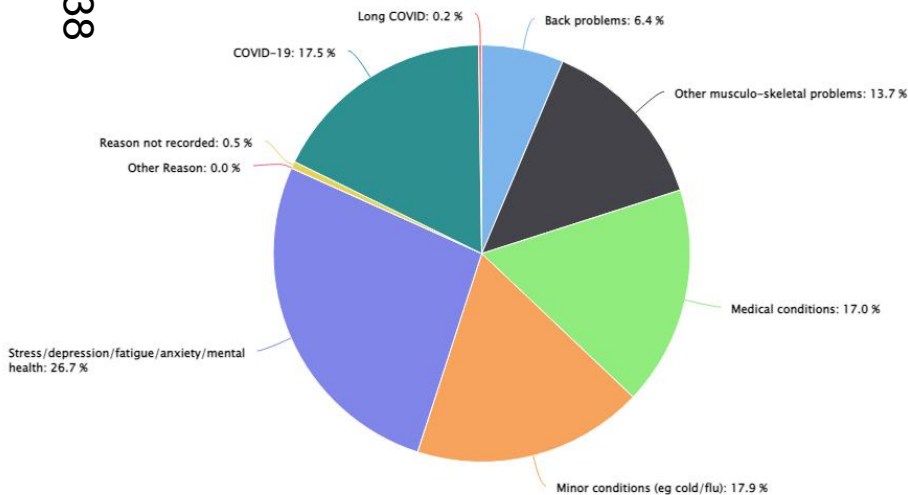


Days Lost By Reason - West Midlands Authorities

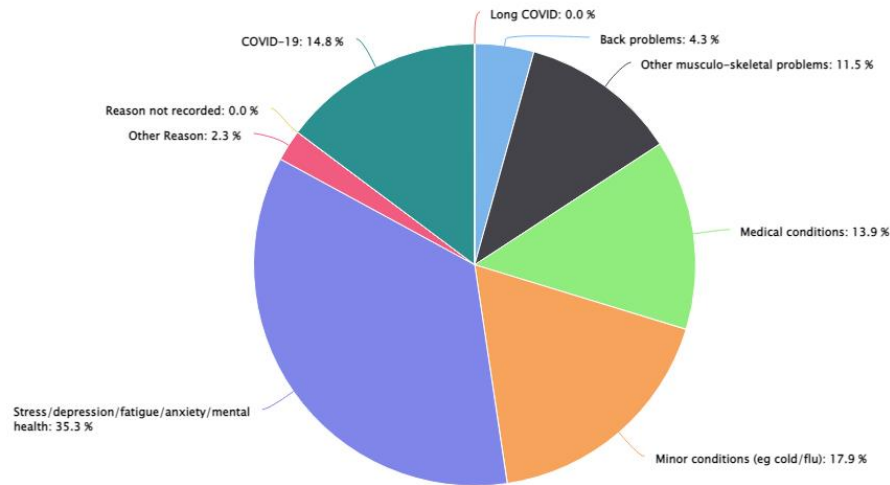


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Days lost by reason
12 months up to 31st March 2022
Sandwell's figures



Median figures across selected respondents



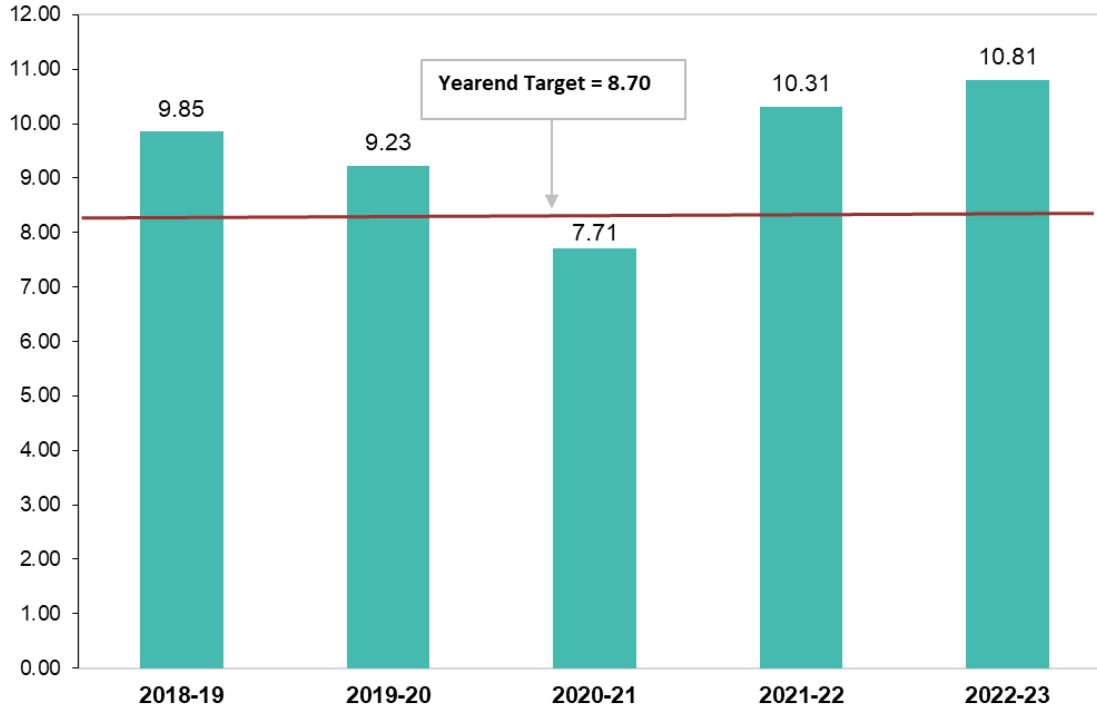
The latest available data for the West Midlands (METs and District) Authorities shows that sickness due to stress, depression and mental health accounts 27% of all sickness compared to 35% for the Regional Authorities.

SMBC Sickness Absence Outturn 2022-23 Summary for Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board 27 July 2023

Headline Summary

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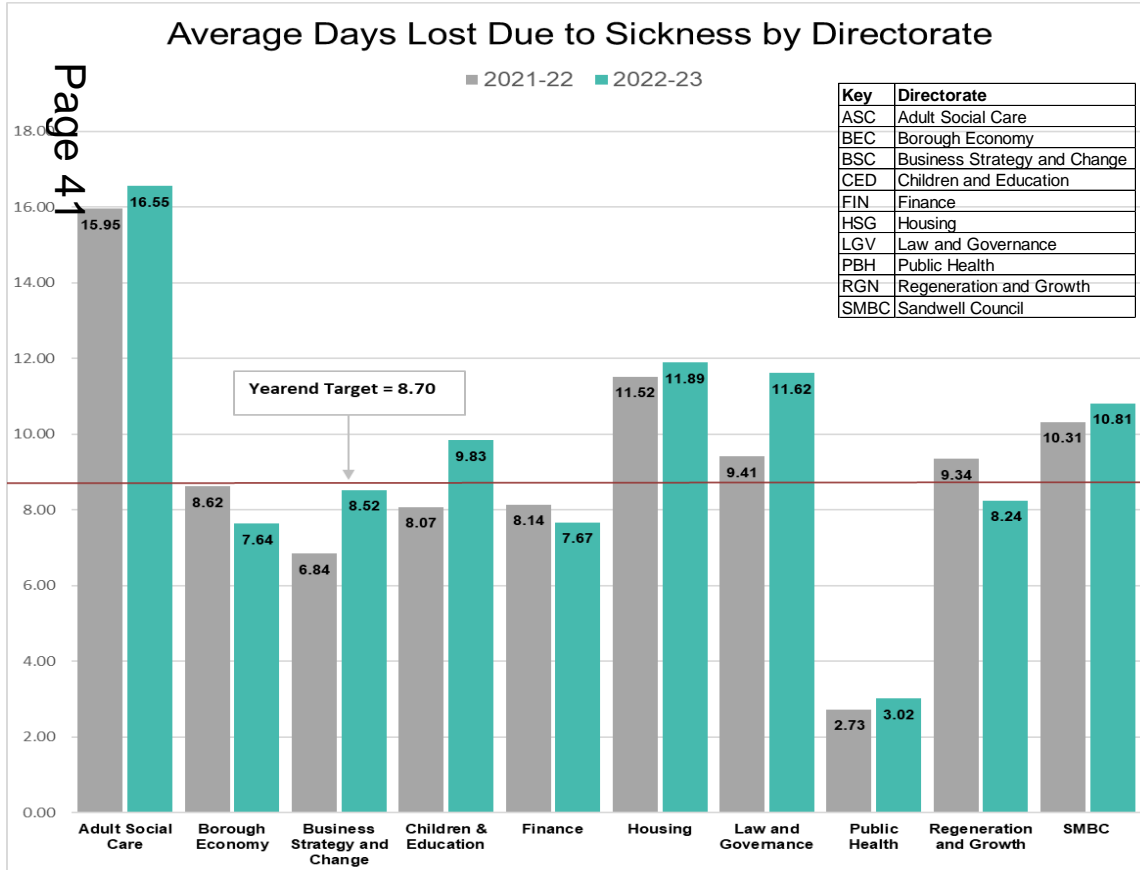
Average Working Days Lost Due to Sickness 5 Year Trend



Sickness levels have increased for the last two consecutive years since the coronavirus pandemic began in 2020-21.

During the first year of the coronavirus pandemic, strict lockdown measures were in place. As a result sickness outturn was much lower, compared to the pre-pandemic years.

Sickness Levels by Directorate



Borough Economy; Finance and Regeneration and Growth have achieved a reduction in sickness compared to last year.

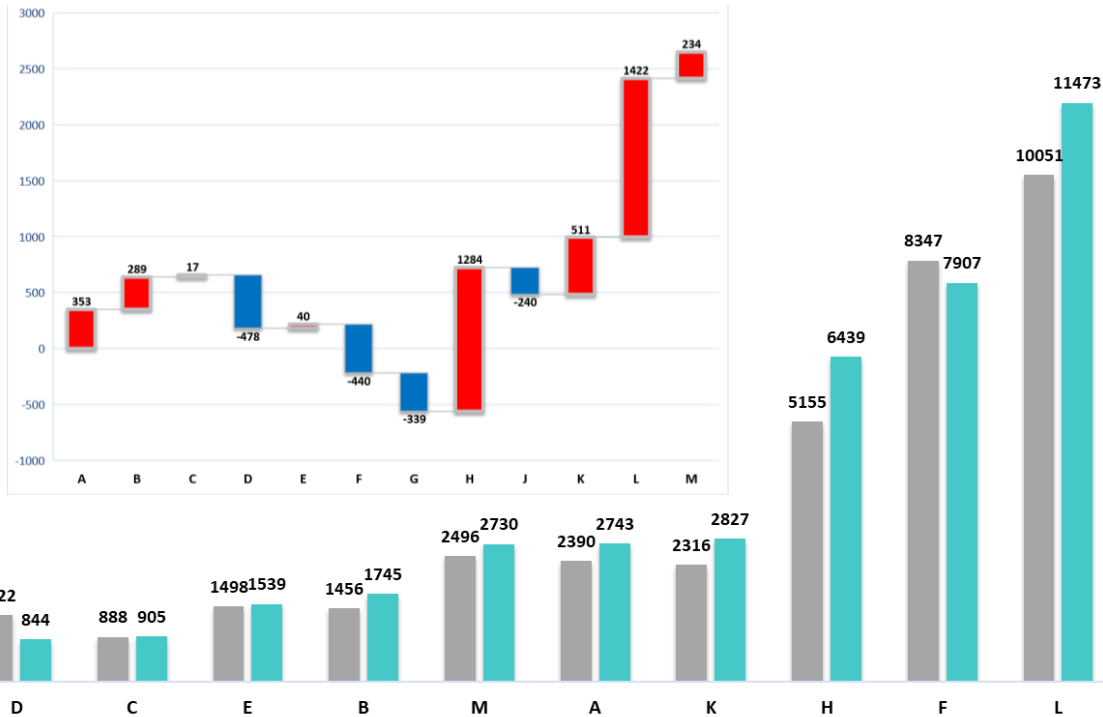
All other directorates have seen an increase and the highest increase was for Law and Governance.

Directorate	2021-22	2022-23	Compared to last year
ASC	15.95	16.55	0.60
BEC	8.62	7.64	-0.98
BSC	6.84	8.52	1.68
CED	8.07	9.83	1.77
FIN	8.14	7.67	-0.47
HSG	11.52	11.89	0.37
LGV	9.41	11.62	2.20
PBH	2.73	3.02	0.29
RGN	9.34	8.24	-1.10
SMBC	10.31	10.81	0.49

Working Days Lost by Causes of Sickness

■ 2022-23 (40,227) ■ 2021-22 (37,575)

- KEY**
- A Back & neck problems
 - B Chest & Respiratory
 - C Eye, ear, nose, mouth & dental
 - D Genito-urinary/gynaecological
 - E Heart, blood pressure & circulation
 - F Infections
 - G Neurological
 - H Other muscular-skeletal problems
 - J Pregnancy related
 - K Stomach, liver, kidney & digestion
 - L Stress, depression, mental health
 - M Other

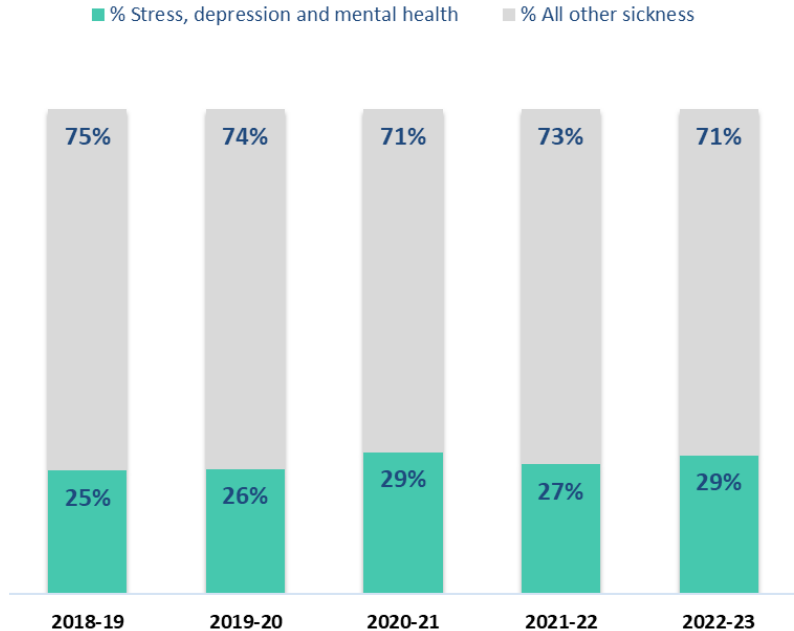


With the exception of category F (infections), working days lost for the five of the six leading causes of sickness L to M have increased compared to the previous year.

The most significant increase is for stress related sickness (+1,422) and other muscular skeletal problems (1,284).

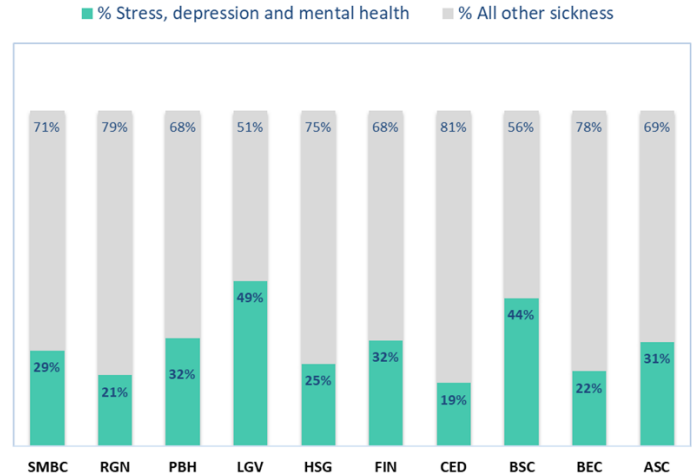
L: Stress, depression, mental health

Stress, depression, mental health 5 Year Trend



The trend in working days lost due to stress, depression and mental health over the last 5 years shows a general upward trend for Sandwell Council. The percentage makeup by directorate for 2022-23 is as follows:

L: Stress, depression, mental health 2022-23

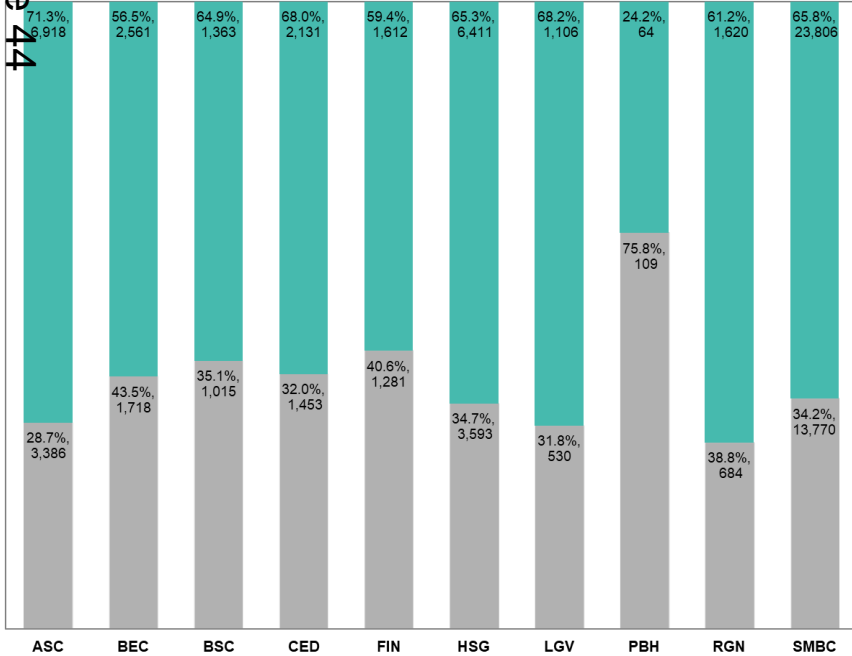


Short-Term and Long Term Sickness

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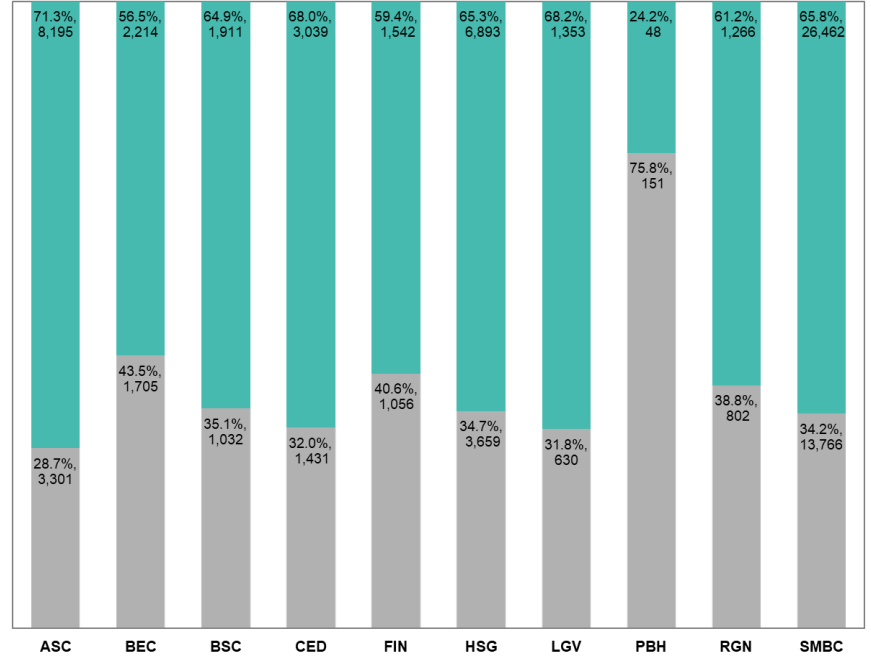
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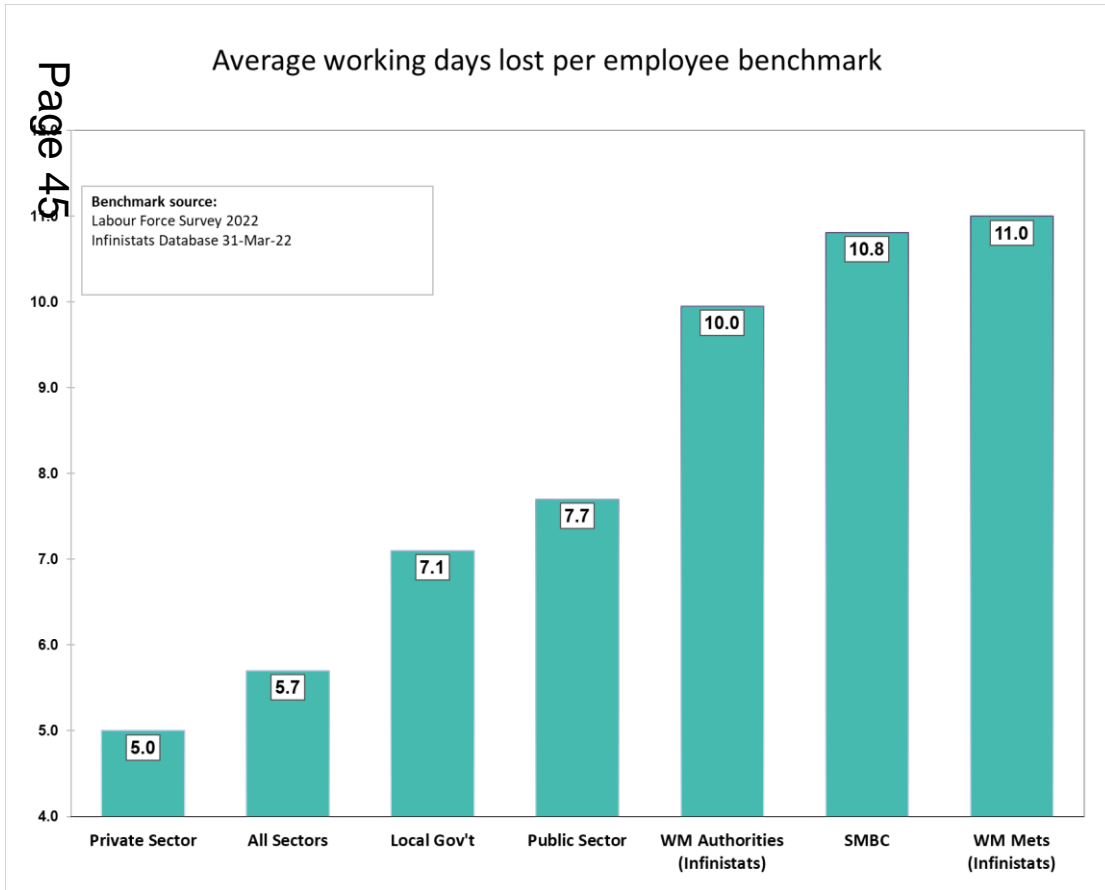


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Benchmark – average working days Lost per employee



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Report to Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

27 July 2023

Subject:	Customer Journey Progress Update
Director:	Director of Regeneration and Growth, Tony McGovern
Contact Officer:	Strategic Improvement Manager – Corporate Customer, Helen Green Helen_Green@Sandwell.gov.uk






1 Recommendations

1.1 That the progress to date on the Customer Journey be noted.


2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board have requested an update on the progress of the Customer Journey.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people	The Customer Journey focuses on achieving long-term sustainable improvements in the service that we offer to customers and on improving outcomes for residents however they choose to contact us. Therefore, this impacts on the council's ability to deliver all the objectives in the Corporate Plan.
	People live well and age well	
	Strong resilient communities	
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods	
	A strong and inclusive economy	



	A connected and accessible Sandwell	
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4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 As public servants, we have a vital role in delivering services to meet the needs of our residents and communities and put local people at the heart of everything we do.
- 4.2 The means by which customers and partners interact with Sandwell Council varies across the authority and has naturally evolved in recent years, particularly following the Covid19 pandemic, which necessitated new ways of working.
- 4.3 Customer expectations and needs in relation to how they contact and interact with the Council have changed. Improvements in technology and means of communication are impacting across society. Customers expect to be able to contact the Council at a time that suits them and in a way that suits them. At the same time, the Council is continually looking to ensure value for money for residents.
- 4.4 Increased channel shift, with an emphasis on self-serve, will enable the Council to meet customer expectations whilst making the best use of resources and delivering greater efficiencies and value for money.
- 4.5 However, whilst a high percentage of Sandwell residents have access to the Internet and have a preference for doing business or contacting the council online, there will still be a proportion of the population that require face to face options, in addition to those that are digitally excluded.
- 4.6 To address this, a Customer Journey Board has been established to provide governance and oversight to all elements of the Customer Journey.

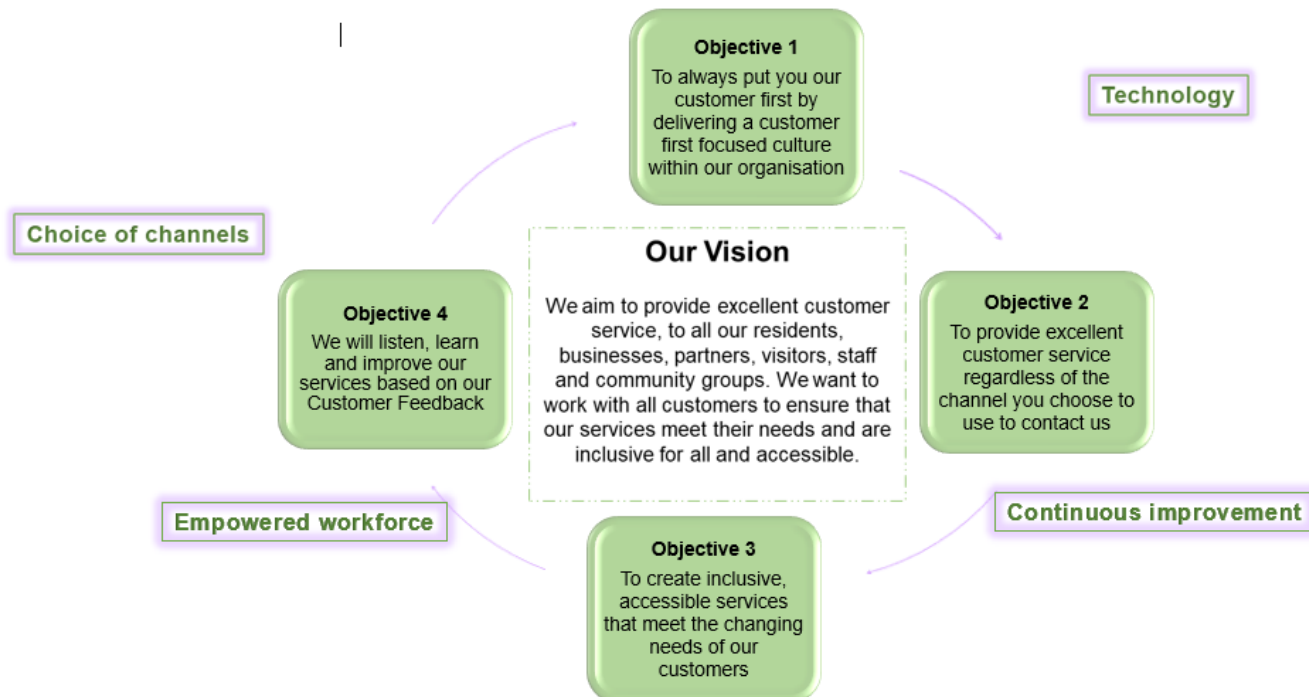


5 Aims and Objectives

5.0 The Customer Journey Board aims to ensure all customers of Sandwell MBC receive the best possible service. In order to achieve and monitor this, a set of aims and commitments have been co-produced with Cabinet Members.

5.1 The Strategic Objectives are detailed below:

We aim to give all our customers the best possible service. We have broken this up to several objectives that we can give clear actions against to ensure we are delivering.



5.2 Customer Commitments:



Customer Experience Strategy - Our commitments

We aim to provide excellent customer service, to all our residents, businesses, partners, visitors, staff and community groups. We want to work with all customers to ensure that our services meet their needs and are inclusive for all and accessible.

1.Adapt We will continue to adapt our face to face services to meet the changing needs and demands of our customers.	2.Online We will develop our online offer to support customers who prefer to communicate digitally. This will include the use of modern technology such as Artificial Intelligence, including a navigation bot for the website.	3.First point of contact We will always try and answer your query at the first point of contact, but if for any reason we can't we will put you in contact with the team best placed to support you.	4. Listen We will listen to feedback and actively learn lessons when things go wrong so that we can improve.
5.GDPR We will work within regulations to protect your personal information.	6.Timely We will get back to you in a timely manner and keep you updated as to what response times you can expect. This will be linked to set service standards.	7.Person Centered We will work with customers who may need additional support. We will ensure this support is tailored to their specific requirements whether this is access, language or any other related need.	8.Honest We will be open and honest and apologise when we get things wrong.
9.Training Our staff will be regularly trained to maintain and strive for the highest standards.	10.Customer Focused Our approach will be customer focused.	11.Respect We will treat you with respect and dignity.	12.Friendly We will be friendly & helpful in our approach, with a 'can do' attitude.

- 5.3 An Action Plan detailing work ongoing to achieve the above, overseen by the Customer Journey Board is attached at Appendix 1 & 2.
- 5.4 An update on Customer Satisfaction data & the Community Hub Pilot can be found at Appendix 3 & 4.

6 Implications

Resources:	The Customer Journey is being carried out within existing resources from within the Corporate Customer Team and there is a dedicated Programme Manager resource. These resources are monitored regularly by the Customer Journey Programme Board.
Legal and Governance:	Governance: monthly meetings of the Customer Journey Programme Board are held (membership: Director of Finance / S151 Officer: Director of Regeneration & Growth: Corporate Customer Team & other Officers as required)
Risk:	The Customer Journey Programme is a key Council priority and part of the required work to provide Commissioners with assurance in order for intervention to cease. A risk register is in place and will be maintained for the duration of the Programme



	which will underpin the council's strategic risk relating to the council's Customer Journey work (057b).
Equality:	The successful delivery of the Customer Journey Programme will require the review of many of the council's policies, procedures, and systems. Any changes will build in consideration of the impact on equalities throughout the development and will include an Equality Impact Assessment where appropriate.
Health and Wellbeing:	The Customer Journey Programme is committed to improving the customer experience for all residents which in turn should lead to better outcomes for residents.
Social Value:	Any contracts awarded under the Customer Journey Programme will require suppliers to demonstrate how they will be responsive to Social, Environmental and Local Economic prospects, and how they will construct and operate their work to deliver a positive impact on the local economic, social and environmental well-being of the local area. For example, this was factored into the recent procurement exercise for the replacement telephony system.
Climate Change:	All decisions made within the Customer Journey Programme will have to take full account of the council's Climate Change Strategy and the ambitious targets to work towards a net zero / carbon neutral society. For example, this was factored into the recent procurement exercise for the replacement telephony system.
Corporate Parenting:	All decisions made within the Customer Journey Programme will ensure to take into account the Council's Corporate Parenting role and responsibilities.

7 Appendices

- Appendix 1 Customer Journey Action Plan – May 2023.
- Appendix 2 Customer Journey Action Plan – June 2023.
- Appendix 3 Customer Satisfaction data.
- Appendix 4 Community Hub Pilot update.



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Appendix 1.

Customer Journey Action Plan May 2023:

CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY								
	Workstream Task	Start Date	Previous Position	May 2023 Update	Responsible Officer	Expected Completion	Resources	
1	Face to Face Customer Journey mapping – including technology & performance metrics.	02/23	Initial mapping concluded. First formal Workshop held on 26 th April with positive feedback received. Session 2 scheduled for 12 th May. All future sessions, including feedback now scheduled	Housing solutions Complete Revs and Bens underway. Remaining services scheduled and Leads engaged. Sharing Event 10 th August	Maria Amos/CTO	07/23	Staffing - CTO	On Track
2	Commitments & Objectives to be agreed & approved.	10/22	Further comms issued to Members. Sessions arranged as above for face to face engagement	Engagement Sessions scheduled. + Dates extended to allow for additional promotion in the Herald for	Helen Green	08/23	Staffing – Comms & Customer Service staff to run F2F sessions. Small budget required for materials for sessions – costs tbc	On Track

				those digitally excluded				
3	Develop a comprehensive communications & engagement plan.	02/23	Dates confirmed and venues sourced. Promotional and marketing material being created. Invitations to be issued. Citizenspace to be utilised as appropriate.	CitizenSpace Survey completed – will be uploaded shortly. Session scheduled with Comms Team to agree completion of all activity to promote.	Elizabeth Beard	06/23	Staffing - Comms	On Track (date extended+)
4	Benchmarking exercise against other Local Authorities who have created Customer Experience Strategies to learn from recognised areas of best practice.	02/23	Benchmarking now complete	Complete	Clair Norton	05/23	Staffing – Business Manager	Complete
5	Develop a comprehensive training plan that will take in to account training needs in relation to customer service across the Council. To include F2F sessions for all staff as part of the Corporate Induction Programme. To link in to wider work in relation to	02/23	HG/TC continue to research available options for further discussion at CJ Board.	Research and benchmarking continue. Meeting arranged with market professionals to look at offers.	Helen Green/Debbie Sant	07/23	Staffing – Corporate Customer/L&D Budget required for training programme Discussions ongoing between HG/KA re available budget from LGA	On Track

	Culture/Values & Behaviour.							
6	Develop a co-produced strategy in collaboration with stakeholders and customers based on intelligence gathered. Formal approval & sign off via agreed governance channels, with an estimated launch date of September/October 2023.	03/23	Key dates now confirmed and F2F engagement sessions to commence in May.	Dates delayed to June to allow for promotion to those digitally excluded. Venues booked across the borough during day and evenings throughout June, July and August.	Helen Green/Corporate Customer Management Team	09/23 – 10/23	Staffing – Corporate Customer Management Team/Comms Cross Directorate support required	On Track
7	Address emerging risk highlighted by LGA re: Elected Member case work not being given the priority required – impacting the customer experience.	02/23	Discussions ongoing between TMcG/ST Local work ongoing to reduce historic open cases. Weekly report provided to Leadership Team to provide ongoing oversight.	Commenced attendance at members Board Meetings to allow engagement with all members. Action Plan and solutions to be drafted once all sessions complete.	Helen Green/Andrew Langford	On-going monitoring throughout 2023	Staffing – Democratic Services & Corporate Customer	On Track

ONE STOP SHOP/COMMUNITY HUBS								
	Workstream Task	Start Date	Previous Position	May 2023 Update	Responsible Officer	Expected Completion	Resources	
8	Ensure appropriate specialist Revs & Bens Officers are in place to meet customer demand and expectation.	10/22	Complete – monitoring no longer required	Complete	Theresa Shrigley	12/22	Staffing – Revs & Bens	Complete
9	Specialist Housing Officers from the Homeless Team to provide duty function within the OSS.	10/22	Still awaiting appointment booking system.	Still awaiting appointment booking system.	Karl Robinson	05/23	Staffing – Homeless Team	Minor Slippage
10	Community Hub Pilot to be trialled – 1 day a week in Blackheath Library & 1 day a week in West Bromwich Library.	02/23	Pilot continuing to operate and data gathered on satisfaction with service and reasons for utilisation of Hub to inform future options. Further comms required	New data collection in use and continuing to show positive results. Further comms agreed and produced. Mid point report currently in process for Leadership Team on 27 th June	Tracy Causer/Rachel Allchurch	09/23	Staffing – Corporate Customer/Housing Hub/Profile Security. Small budget of approximately £5k required for furniture removal & marketing.	On Track

CONTACT CENTRE								
	Workstream Task	Start Date	Previous Position	May 2023 Update	Responsible Officer	Expected Completion	Resources	
11	Undertake initial review of current Contact Centre models.	11/22	Leadership Team discussion held on 18 th April and agreement to pause review whilst supporting work continues to better inform future decision.	Complete	Helen Green/Tracy Causer	08/23	Corporate Customer	On Track
12	Inclusion of the chosen Option into the project business case so next steps can be agreed and progressed.	03/23	Agreement to pause Options Appraisal to allow a more informed decision at a later date	On Hold	Tracy Causer	08/23	Staffing – Corporate Customer/ASC/Revs & Bens/HR	On track/on hold
13	Replacement of current AVAYA CC6 contact centre telephony system.	05/22	Procurement timeline in place. Specification & Tender documents will be uploaded on the 10 th May 2023.	Tender published on InTend. Closing date 21 st June 2023. Evaluation to commence 26 th June.	Helen Green	06/24	Staffing – Corporate Customer/ASC/Revs & Bens/Housing Hub & other smaller teams using CC6 licenses.	On Track
14	Review current customer data – look at quantitative & qualitative methods. Ensure end	02/23	Revised data capture commenced on 1 st April and	New data capture in use	Theresa Smith/Tracy Causer	On-going whilst the CJ work is developing.	Staffing – Corporate Customer – front & back office staff.	On Track

	to end capture so data can be reliably used to inform decisions & direction of travel.		continue to be monitored.					
15	Investigate the feasibility and cost of providing an 0800 (or free) customer number `golden` number to the public (Request from Elected Member Briefing held in March 2023)	04/23	Potential requirement included in Specification for new telephony system. Further discussion around evidence gathering took place at CJ Board in April, with officers tasked to look into detail on costs and feasibility.	Included in engagement session questions and will be explored within Telephony procurement.	Helen Green/Tracey Causer/Clair Norton	06/23	Potential to include in previously agreed budget of £2.8m to be sourced from Capital, HRA & CJ Priority Service Investment Budget for new telephony system. Further costs to be identified as part of the scope of work.	On Track
TECHNOLOGY								
	Workstream Task	Start Date	Previous Position	May 2023 Update	Responsible Officer	Expected Completion	Resources	
16	Purchase SMART assistant to sit on front page of website and navigate to other pages of the new website.	01/23	SMART assistant purchased.	Complete	Clair Norton	02/23	£15k funded via CC vacancies.	Complete
17	Work between SMBC & Inform 360 to integrate Navigation Bot.	03/23	Continues to link to Website development	Continues to link to	Elizabeth Beard/Andrew Langford	Ongoing	Staffing – Corporate Customer	On Track

				Website development				
18	Procurement of new Complaints/FOI/SAR & MP system.	08/22	Business Case complete and scheduled for CAMB May 23. Procurement to follow if approved (full timescale will be provided in next report if approval granted)	Approval by CAMB in May. SIU approval in process. Specification being drafted.	Colette Knight/Dawn Webster	TBC	Staffing – Corporate Customer/Service Improvement/Legal Services. Costs of system tbc.	On Track
19	Review of all systems that support the delivery of customer service.	02/23	Arrangements for demonstrations and soft market testing underway. Scheduled for key Agenda Item at CJ Programme Board in May 23 with AL in attendance. Specific milestones to support this work drafted.	Discussion at Board in May. Potential for SOCITM to assist with this work. Awaiting decision from Director and CEX	Andrew Langford	07/23 for initial options appraisal	Staffing – Cross Directorate support required. Budget will be required if decision is to purchase new CRM system.	Minor slippage due to potential to include SOCITM
20	Increase data capture on customer satisfaction from end to end to inform improvements.	02/23	CH Pilot Satisfaction Survey working well. Issues	Work continuing to resolve ICT Issues.	Andrew Langford/Clair Norton	11/23		On Track

			observed with OSS Pilot due to Tablet protocols. ICT working to resolve.	Microsoft forms being utilised as `work arounds`. Data now included in this report.				
Scrutiny Recommendations								
	Recommendation	May 2023 Update	Responsible Officer	Expected Completion	Links to Action Plan			
	1.1 That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, be authorised to agree customer care standards/charter, and staff responsibilities in relation to those standards to ensure;	NEW	HG	Aug 23	3			
	a) that “back-office” staff take ownership and accountability of customer requests received via Contact Centre Agents;	NEW	HG	Aug 23	3			
	b) a standard approach is taken to making officer contact numbers available on Outlook and to customers to prevent additional calls being made to the Contact Centre;	NEW	HG	Aug 23	3			
	c) a standard approach to the complaints process and deadlines for responding to complaints are clear and accessible across all Council services;	NEW	All ADs and SMs	Aug 23	8			
	d) that key contacts are identified within each service area to aid Customer Service Agents in their enquiries;	NEW	All ADs and SMs	Aug 23				

e)	that residents are regularly updated and informed about the current process of their request/query.	NEW	All ADs and SMs	Aug 23	Link to Technology Workstream and 3	
1.2:	That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive be authorised to commission/develop a customer training package that incorporates the following topics:	NEW	Helen Green/Debbie Sant	07/23	6	
a)	The completeness of response letters	NEW	Helen Green/Debbie Sant	07/23	6	
b)	Methods to manage customer expectations and awareness around the Council's remit and responsibilities.	NEW	Helen Green/Debbie Sant	07/23	6	
1.3:	That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive ensure that all members of staff undertake training around customer care standards as identified in 1.2 and that staff performance against these standards be incorporated within the appraisal process.	NEW	Helen Green/Debbie Sant	07/23	6	
1.4:	That mandatory corporate customer service training be included as part of the induction process for all staff.	NEW	Helen Green/Debbie Sant	07/23	6	
1.5:	That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Finance, investigate options for procuring a single joint Customer Relations System across the Council.	NEW	Andrew Langford	07/23 for initial options appraisal	20	

1.6:	That the Director for Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive considers the introduction of automated feedback surveys and that regular feedback on Council enquires/complaints are analysed and shared with Directorates.	NEW	Helen Green/Andrew Langford	April 24	14 15 20 21	
1.7:	That the Director for Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive introduces corporate guidelines in relation to the use of Council contact numbers to ensure that all officers are contactable and that contact details are updated regularly.	NEW	HG	Aug 23	3	
1.8:	That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive considers the feasibility of amalgamating the current three contact centres (Corporate Contact Centre, Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre and Adult Social Care Care) into a single contact centre number with staff specialising in various areas.	NEW	Helen Green/Tracy Causer	08/23	12 13	
1.9:	That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, as part of the refresh of the Council's website, ensures the Council continues to promote the use of Sandwell Digital First and the Council's website as the first point for accessing information and raising an issue/request.	NEW	Helen Green/Andrew Langford	Ongoing	17 18	

	<p>1.10: That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive reviews current timescales for responding to enquiries, with a view to reducing them wherever possible, including member enquiries being reduced from 10 working days to 3-5 days. (This is part of a wider piece of work on-going with Members around the Cllr Portal – the response time standard will need to be considered further and in line with this work)</p>	<p>NEW</p>	<p>Helen Green/Andrew Langford</p>	<p>On-going monitoring throughout 2023</p>	<p>8</p>	
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Appendix 2.

Customer Journey Action Plan June 2023:

CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY								
	Workstream Task	Start Date	Previous Position	June 2023 Update	Responsible Officer	Expected Completion	Resources	
1	Face to Face Customer Journey mapping – including technology & performance metrics.	02/23	Housing solutions Complete Revs and Bens underway. Remaining services scheduled and Leads engaged. Sharing Event 10 th August.	Revs & Bens complete, Borough Economy & ASC underway.	Maria Amos/CTO	07/23	Staffing - CTO	On Track
2	Commitments & Objectives to be agreed & approved.	10/22	Engagement Sessions scheduled. + Dates extended to allow for additional promotion in the Herald for those digitally excluded..	Engagement sessions commenced.	Helen Green	08/23	Staffing – Comms & Customer Service staff to run F2F sessions. Small budget required for materials for sessions – costs tbc	On Track

3	Develop a comprehensive communications & engagement plan.	02/23	CitizenSpace Survey completed – will be uploaded shortly. Session scheduled with Comms Team to agree completion of all activity to promote.	Comprehensive plan in place, but delays have occurred due to not being able to promote.	Elizabeth Beard	06/23	Staffing - Comms	On Track (date extended+)
4	Benchmarking exercise against other Local Authorities who have created Customer Experience Strategies to learn from recognised areas of best practice.	02/23	Complete	Complete	Clair Norton	05/23	Staffing – Business Manager	Complete
5	Develop a comprehensive training plan that will take in to account training needs in relation to customer service across the Council. To include F2F sessions for all staff as part of the Corporate Induction Programme. To link in to wider work in relation to	02/23	Research and benchmarking continue. Meeting arranged with market professionals to look at offers.	Meetings taking place July 2023, discussion will then take place at CJ Programme Board to agree way forward.	Helen Green/Tracy Causer/Debbie Sant	07/23	Staffing – Corporate Customer/L&D Budget required for training programme Discussions ongoing between HG/KA re available budget from LGA	On Track

	Culture/Values & Behaviour.							
6	Develop a co-produced strategy in collaboration with stakeholders and customers based on intelligence gathered. Formal approval & sign off via agreed governance channels, with an estimated launch date of September/October 2023.	03/23	Dates delayed to June to allow for promotion to those digitally excluded. Venues booked across the borough during day and evenings throughout June, July and August.	First 4 sessions held, but attendance has been poor – further dates will need to be scheduled.	Helen Green/Corporate Customer Management Team	09/23 – 10/23	Staffing – Corporate Customer Management Team/Comms Cross Directorate support required	Minor Slippage
7	Address emerging risk highlighted by LGA re: Elected Member case work not being given the priority required – impacting the customer experience.	02/23	Commenced attendance at members Board Meetings to allow engagement with all members. Action Plan and solutions to be drafted once all sessions complete.	All Board meetings attended with a total of 54 Members in attendance. Presentation to be given to Cabinet Member, Chair & Vice Chair Meeting on the 10/7/23 – highlighting issues raised and next steps. Then further feedback will be provided at	Helen Green/Andrew Langford	On-going monitoring throughout 2023	Staffing – Democratic Services & Corporate Customer	On Track

				Members Board Meetings.				
ONE STOP SHOP/COMMUNITY HUBS								
	Workstream Task	Start Date	Previous Position	May 2023 Update	Responsible Officer	Expected Completion	Resources	
8	Ensure appropriate specialist Revs & Bens Officers are in place to meet customer demand and expectation.	10/22	Complete	Complete	Theresa Shrigley	12/22	Staffing – Revs & Bens	Complete
9	Specialist Housing Officers from the Homeless Team to provide duty function within the OSS.	10/22	Still awaiting appointment booking system.	Duty function being provided, DT working with Housing to produce an apt booking system.	Karl Robinson	05/23	Staffing – Homeless Team	Minor Slippage
10	Community Hub Pilot to be trialled – 1 day a week in Blackheath Library & 1 day a week in West Bromwich Library.	02/23	New data collection in use and continuing to show positive results. Further comms agreed and produced. Mid point report currently in process for Leadership	Mid-way report presented to LT 27/6/23. Further discussion to be had with The Leader. Also other options to be explored.	Tracy Causer/Rachel Allchurch	09/23	Staffing – Corporate Customer/Housing Hub/Profile Security. Small budget of approximately £5k required for furniture removal & marketing.	On Track

			Team on 27 th June					
CONTACT CENTRE								
	Workstream Task	Start Date	Previous Position	May 2023 Update	Responsible Officer	Expected Completion	Resources	
11	Undertake initial review of current Contact Centre models.	11/22	Complete	Complete	Helen Green/Tracy Causer	08/23	Corporate Customer	On Track
12	Inclusion of the chosen Option into the project business case so next steps can be agreed and progressed.	03/23	On Hold	On Hold	Tracy Causer	08/23	Staffing – Corporate Customer/ASC/Revs & Bens/HR	On track/on hold
13	Replacement of current AVAYA CC6 contact centre telephony system.	05/22	Tender published on InTend. Closing date 21 st June 2023. Evaluation to commence 26 th June.	Evaluations complete, moderation sessions planned for 17 & 19 July, with contract award scheduled for August 2023.	Helen Green	06/24	Staffing – Corporate Customer/ASC/Revs & Bens/Housing Hub & other smaller teams using CC6 licenses.	On Track
14	Review current customer data – look at quantitative & qualitative methods. Ensure end to end capture so data can be reliably used to inform decisions & direction of travel.	02/23	New data capture in use	Customer Satisfaction data being captured for Corporate CC, Revs & Bens CC, Community Hubs and MySandwell.	Theresa Smith/Tracy Causer	On-going whilst the CJ work is developing.	Staffing – Corporate Customer – front & back office staff.	On Track
15	Investigate the feasibility and cost of	04/23	Included in engagement	Email sent to provider to	Helen Green/Tracey	06/23	Potential to include in previously agreed	On Track

	providing an 0800 (or free) customer number `golden` number to the public (Request from Elected Member Briefing held in March 2023)		session questions and will be explored within Telephony procurement.	request ball park cost. Feedback from engagement sessions will help to inform direction of travel.	Causer/Clair Norton		budget of £2.8m to be sourced from Capital, HRA & CJ Priority Service Investment Budget for new telephony system. Further costs to be identified as part of the scope of work.	
TECHNOLOGY								
	Workstream Task	Start Date	Previous Position	May 2023 Update	Responsible Officer	Expected Completion	Resources	
16	Purchase SMART assistant to sit on front page of website and navigate to other pages of the new website.	01/23	Complete	Complete	Clair Norton	02/23	£15k funded via CC vacancies.	Complete
17	Work between SMBC & Inform 360 to integrate Navigation Bot.	03/23	Continues to link to Website development	Continues to link to Website development	Elizabeth Beard/Andrew Langford	Ongoing	Staffing – Corporate Customer	On Track
18	Procurement of new Complaints/FOI/SAR & MP system.	08/22	Approval by CAMB in May. SIU approval in process. Specification being drafted.	SIU in progress, awaiting decision as to whether SOCITM work on CRM system needs to happen prior to a decision	Colette Knight/Dawn Webster	TBC	Staffing – Corporate Customer/Service Improvement/Legal Services. Costs of system tbc.	On Track

				being made on this.				
19	Review of all systems that support the delivery of customer service.	02/23	Discussion at Board in May. Potential for SOCITM to assist with this work. Awaiting decision from Director and CEX	SOCITM have been commissioned to assist with this work. Kickoff session arranged for 18/7/23.	Andrew Langford	07/23 for initial options appraisal	Staffing – Cross Directorate support required. Budget will be required if decision is to purchase new CRM system.	Minor slippage due to potential to include SOCITM
20	Increase data capture on customer satisfaction from end to end to inform improvements.	02/23	Work continuing to resolve ICT Issues. Microsoft forms being utilised as `work arounds`. Data now included in this report.	Links to Action 14. Customer Satisfaction data being captured for Corporate CC, Revs & Bens CC, Community Hubs and MySandwell.	Andrew Langford/Clair Norton	11/23		On Track
Scrutiny Recommendations								
	Recommendation			June 2023 Update	Responsible Officer	Expected Completion	Links to Action Plan	
	1.1 That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, be authorised to agree customer care standards/charter, and staff responsibilities in relation to those standards to ensure;			NEW	HG	Aug 23	3	

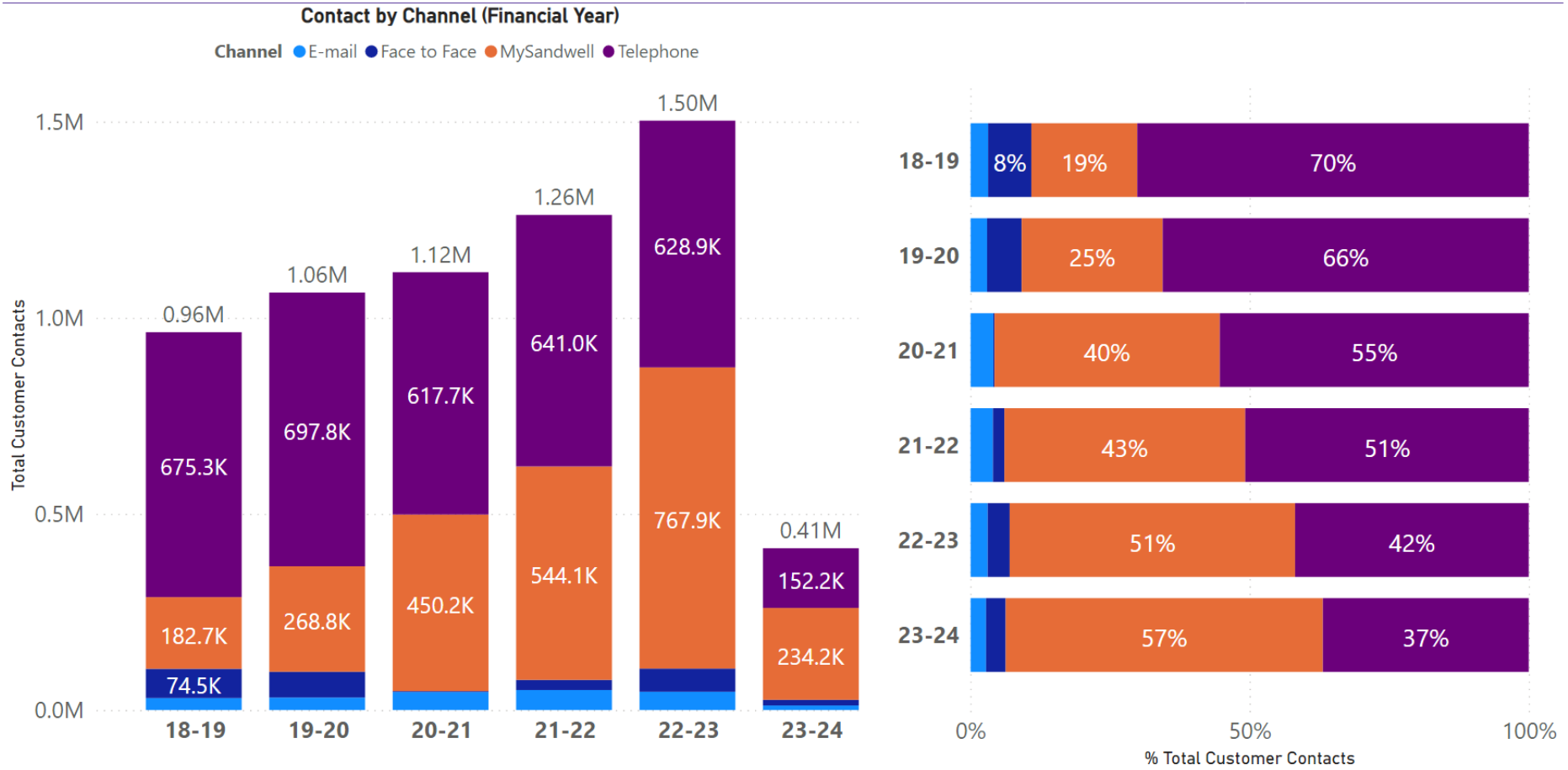
a)	that “back-office” staff take ownership and accountability of customer requests received via Contact Centre Agents;	NEW	HG	Aug 23	3	
b)	a standard approach is taken to making officer contact numbers available on Outlook and to customers to prevent additional calls being made to the Contact Centre;	NEW	HG	Aug 23	3	
c)	a standard approach to the complaints process and deadlines for responding to complaints are clear and accessible across all Council services;	NEW	All ADs and SMs	Aug 23	8	
d)	that key contacts are identified within each service area to aid Customer Service Agents in their enquiries;	NEW	All ADs and SMs	Aug 23		
e)	that residents are regularly updated and informed about the current process of their request/query.	NEW	All ADs and SMs	Aug 23	Link to Technology Workstream and 3	
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b)	Methods to manage customer expectations and awareness around the Council’s remit and responsibilities.	NEW	Helen Green/Debbie Sant	07/23	6	

1.3:	That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive ensure that all members of staff undertake training around customer care standards as identified in 1.2 and that staff performance against these standards be incorporated within the appraisal process.	NEW	Helen Green/Debbie Sant	07/23	6	
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1.5:	That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Finance, investigate options for procuring a single joint Customer Relations System across the Council.	NEW	Andrew Langford	07/23 for initial options appraisal	20	
1.6:	That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive considers the introduction of automated feedback surveys and that regular feedback on Council enquires/complaints are analysed and shared with Directorates.	NEW	Helen Green/Andrew Langford	April 24	14 15 20 21	
1.7:	That the Director for Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive introduces corporate guidelines in relation to the use of Council contact numbers to ensure that all officers are contactable and that contact details are updated regularly.	NEW	HG	Aug 23	3	

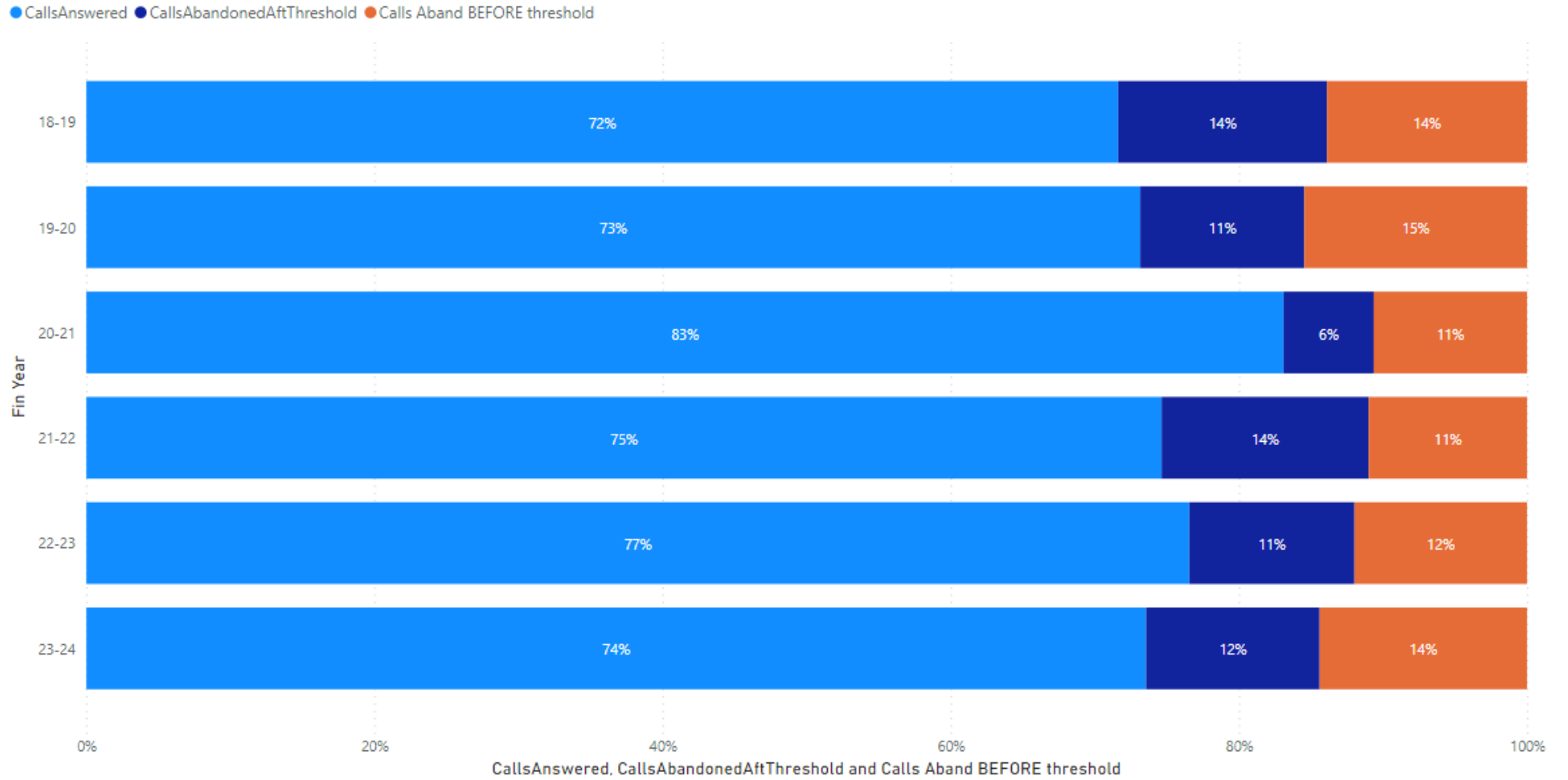
	1.8: That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive considers the feasibility of amalgamating the current three contact centres (Corporate Contact Centre, Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre and Adult Social Care Care) into a single contact centre number with staff specialising in various areas.	NEW	Helen Green/Tracy Causer	08/23	12 13	
	1.9: That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, as part of the refresh of the Council's website, ensures the Council continues to promote the use of Sandwell Digital First and the Council's website as the first point for accessing information and raising an issue/request.	NEW	Helen Green/Andrew Langford	Ongoing	17 18	
	1.10: That the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive reviews current timescales for responding to enquiries, with a view to reducing them wherever possible, including member enquiries being reduced from 10 working days to 3-5 days. (This is part of a wider piece of work on-going with Members around the Cllr Portal – the response time standard will need to be considered further and in line with this work)	NEW	Helen Green/Andrew Langford	On-going monitoring throughout 2023	8	

1. Customer Performance Indicators and Commentary

1.1 Channel Shift



1.2 Contact Centre Call Performance



1.3 Contact Centre call volume and performance

Corporate Contact Centre

< Back to report

CORPORATE CONTACT CENTRE

Fin Year	Calls Offered	Ave Wait Time	Ave Talk Time	% Abandoned Aft Threshold
☒ 21-22	505112	06:18	06:40	16.93%
☒ 22-23	491018	04:56	06:47	11.68%
☒ Q1	117337	02:37	06:04	5.98%
April	39276	02:46	05:52	6.20%
May	40122	02:34	06:10	6.22%
June	37939	02:32	06:09	5.50%
☒ Q2	117274	04:30	06:27	10.54%
July	38371	02:36	06:05	5.85%
August	38453	04:50	06:33	10.94%
September	40450	06:14	06:44	14.61%
☒ Q3	124046	08:25	07:21	17.43%
October	42305	11:53	07:16	24.89%
November	42972	09:01	07:44	17.62%
December	38769	04:08	07:01	9.09%
☒ Q4	132361	04:53	07:21	12.36%
January	43410	04:05	07:24	9.19%
February	38821	03:14	07:11	7.13%
March	50130	07:10	07:27	19.17%
☒ 23-24	121683	05:36	07:07	13.19%
☒ Q1	121683	05:36	07:07	13.19%
April	39433	05:30	07:10	13.22%
May	38338	05:34	07:15	12.83%
June	43912	05:43	06:56	13.48%

1.4 Revs and Bens Contact Centre

< Back to report

REVENUES & BENEFITS CONTACT CENTRE

Fin Year	Calls Offered	Ave Wait Time	Ave Talk Time	% Abandoned Aft Threshold
21-22	61060	03:25	08:12	5.15%
22-23	58342	11:04	08:46	14.89%
Q1	17762	13:57	09:03	18.71%
April	5900	14:14	08:22	20.29%
May	6143	13:26	09:17	17.81%
June	5719	14:13	09:30	18.05%
Q2	13965	14:51	09:02	19.46%
July	5038	15:03	09:18	19.69%
August	4373	14:51	08:46	19.14%
September	4554	14:37	08:58	19.52%
Q3	12215	09:41	08:32	12.20%
October	4789	16:39	08:48	18.06%
November	4625	07:31	08:33	10.34%
December	2801	03:32	08:10	5.25%
Q4	14400	05:57	08:27	8.02%
January	5200	06:32	08:38	9.12%
February	3890	05:42	08:29	7.71%
March	5310	05:34	08:16	7.18%
23-24	10500	05:11	08:12	7.68%
Q1	10500	05:11	08:12	7.68%
April	3557	09:41	08:27	13.49%
May	3211	03:14	07:60	4.52%
June	3732	02:57	08:09	4.85%

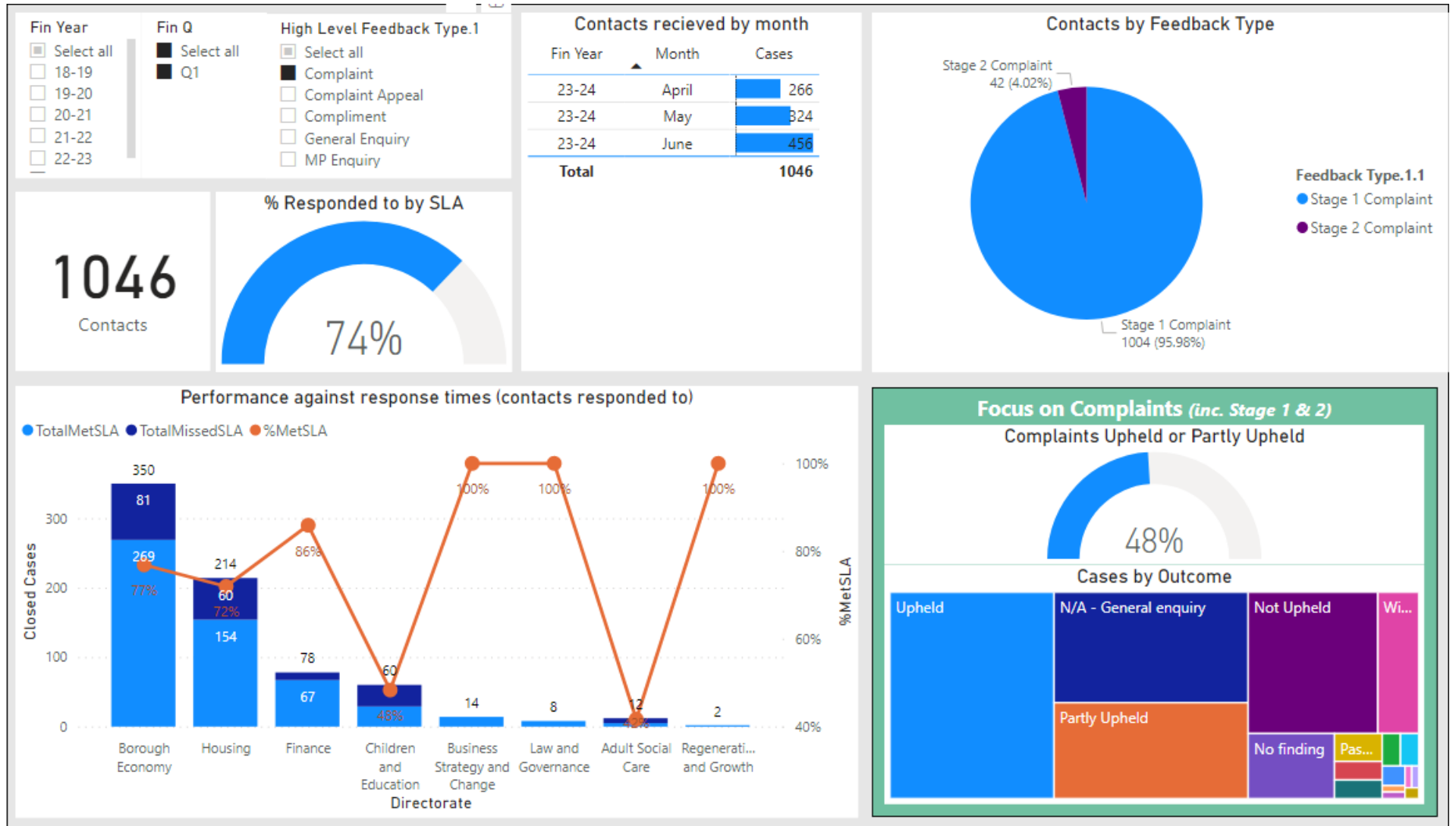
1,5 Adults Contact Centre

[Back to report](#)

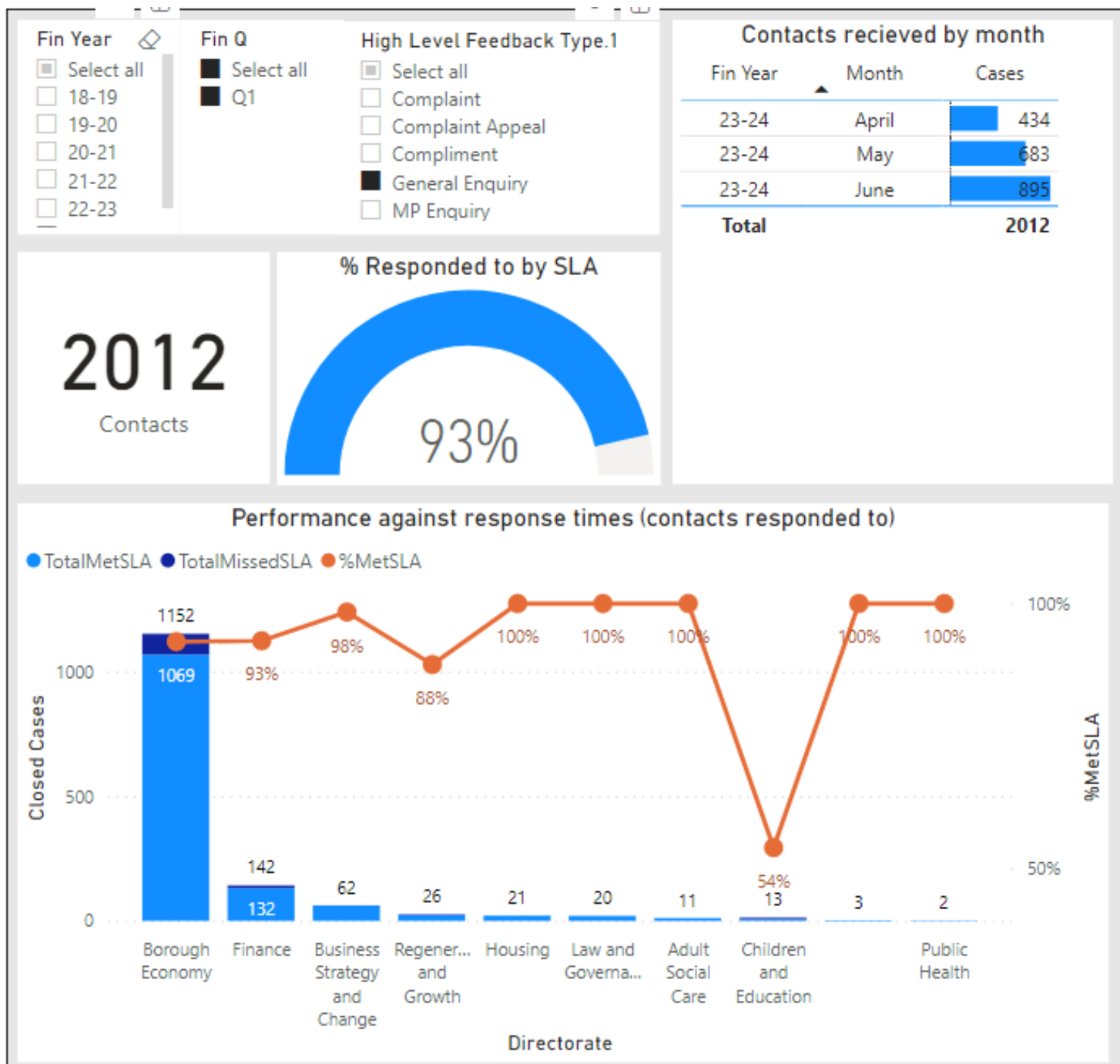
ADULT SOCIAL CARE CONTACT CENTRE

Fin Year	Calls Offered	Ave Wait Time	Ave Talk Time	% Abandoned Aft Threshold
⊕ 21-22	74816	00:31	04:59	1.45%
⊖ 22-23	79550	01:12	05:14	3.87%
⊖ Q1	19066	01:02	05:28	3.08%
April	5681	00:34	05:29	1.62%
May	6565	01:01	05:37	2.79%
June	6820	01:26	05:19	4.57%
⊖ Q2	20959	01:49	05:16	5.82%
July	6914	01:52	05:07	6.38%
August	7094	01:25	05:16	4.21%
September	6951	02:11	05:25	6.89%
⊖ Q3	17836	00:50	05:06	2.93%
October	6563	00:47	05:08	2.27%
November	6523	00:55	05:07	2.79%
December	4750	00:47	04:60	4.02%
⊖ Q4	21689	01:04	05:07	3.46%
January	7574	01:19	05:07	4.07%
February	6866	01:03	05:08	3.36%
March	7249	00:50	05:04	2.92%
⊖ 23-24	19967	01:09	05:20	3.49%
⊖ Q1	19967	01:09	05:20	3.49%
April	5862	01:15	05:16	3.75%
May	6992	01:18	05:19	3.79%
June	7113	00:55	05:25	2.97%

1.6 Complaints Stage 1 and 2



1.7. General Enquiry –



2012

Contacts

% Responded to by SLA

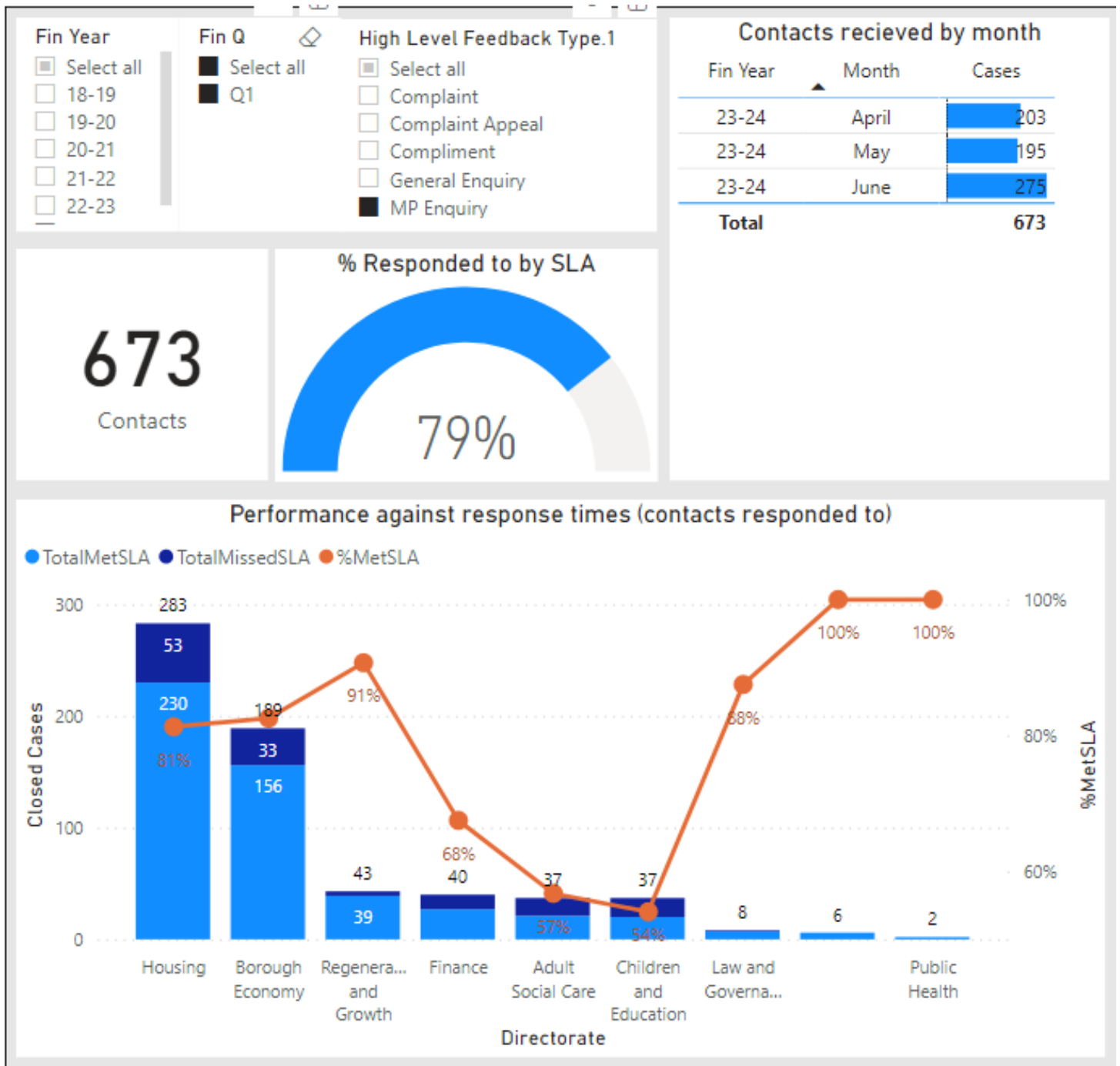
93%

Performance against response times (contacts responded to)

● TotalMetSLA ● TotalMissedSLA ● %MetSLA

Directorate	Total Closed Cases	%MetSLA
Borough Economy	1152	93%
Finance	142	93%
Business Strategy and Change	62	98%
Regener... and Growth	26	88%
Housing	21	100%
Law and Govern...	20	100%
Adult Social Care	11	100%
Children and Education	13	54%
Public Health	2	100%

1,8 MP Enquiries



1.9 - My Councillor Portal Open Cases

Directorate	Total Cases Awaiting Response	Cases with officers	Cases with Cllrs	With officers, over 10 days	% With officers, Over 10 Days	Oldest case with officer, awaiting response	Average age of Case with Officer
⊕ Borough Economy	192	189	3	118	62%	59	21
⊕ Housing	85	83	2	37	45%	385	47
⊕ Business Strategy and Change	32	12	20			6	2
⊕ Regeneration and Growth	21	20	1	6	30%	266	40
⊕ Children and Education	17	17		9	53%	304	29
⊕ Adult Social Care	10	10		5	50%	38	13
⊕ Finance	10	10		1	10%	22	7
⊕ Sandwell Children's Trust	4	4		2	50%	30	12
⊕ Law and Governance	1	1		1	100%	13	13
Total	372	346	26	179	52%	385	27

2. Customer Experience Insights

2.1 Corporate Contact Centre Customer Feedback Pilot/Snapshot

1. Are you happy with the service we have provided today?

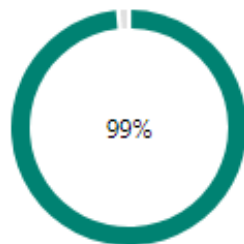
[More Details](#)


 Insights




 Update

99% of people answered **Yes** for this question, and the majority answered "**Yes**" for Question 2.



 99% people answered "Yes" for question 1



 78% of them answered "Yes" for question 2

2. Have we resolved your query today?

[More Details](#)



3. If not, is this because

[More Details](#)

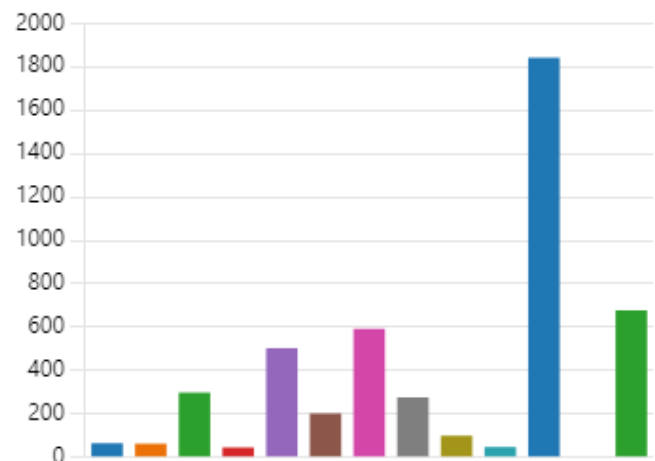
● Call Back is requested from Serv...	1428
● Further Action is required by Ser...	3304
● Other	570



4. Which service is further action required from

[More Details](#)

● ASB	65
● Childrens	63
● Choice Based Letting	299
● Customer Feedback	46
● Envirionmental	504
● Highways	204
● Homeless	592
● Registrars	278
● Regulatory Services	101
● Rents	49
● Repairs	1840
● Safeguarding	0
● Tenancy	678



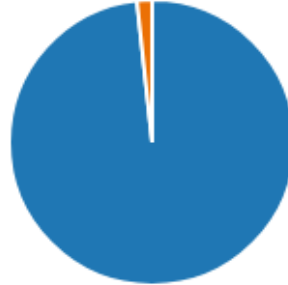
2.2 b Revs and Bens Contact Centre Customer Feedback Pilot/Snapshot

1. Are you happy with the information I have provided today?

[More Details](#)

 Insights

 Yes	230
 No	4



2. Have I solved your enquiry or addressed the issue?

[More Details](#)

 Yes	225
 No	8

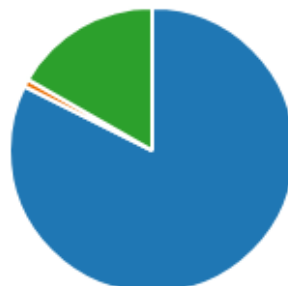


3. Are you clear on any next steps you need to take?

[More Details](#)

 Insights

 Yes	192
 No	2
 N/A	39



4. Are you clear on any next steps we (SMBC) need to take?

[More Details](#)

 Insights

 Yes	118
 No	4
 N/A	106



2.3 Corporate customer Experience Insights by service



Customer Experience Insights



Out of a possible 5 stars...

...When rating the service delivered in response to the request...

...the average rating left by **5075** customers after a case is closed case is **4.3**



13%
1 or 2 Stars



3%
3 Star



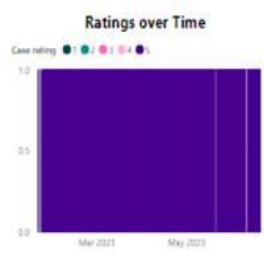
84%
4 or 5 Stars

Ratings by Service

Process	Total Ratings	Ave Experience Rating
Tip Booking	2964	5
Missed collection	592	3
Bulky collection	544	5
Housing repairs	313	4
Fly-tipping inc private land	235	4
Pest control	74	4
Contact us about revenues and benefits	62	3
Dog mess	53	3
Tree problem	49	2
Damaged or replacement bin	38	4
Street lights and street furniture	29	3
Total	5075	4

Ratings Over Time

Year	Total Ratings	Ave Experience Rating
2023	5075	4
January	188	4
February	824	4
March	911	4
April	1228	4
May	1249	4
June	675	4
Total	5075	4



...When rating the experience of using MySandwell to log a contact...

The average rating left by **415875** customers when logging a case is **4.5**



6%
1 or 2 Stars



7%
3 Stars



86%
4 or 5 Stars

Ratings by Directorate

directorate	Total Ratings	Average Rating
Borough Economy	187683	5
Finance	118406	4
Housing & Communities	42800	4
Law & Governance	10669	5
Children & Education	7047	5
Public Health	5118	5
Business Strategy & Change	370	5
Adult Social Care	2	3
Education	1	5
Total	372096	4

Ratings over Time

Year	Total Ratings	Average Rating
2019	22445	4
2020	66418	4
2021	111666	4
2022	106865	5
2023	64702	5
January	8220	5
February	10852	5
March	13002	5
April	12814	5
May	12860	5
June	6954	5
Total	372096	4

2.4 Community Hubs Monthly Performance

	March	April	May	June	Total
Attendees	46	107	143	128	424

5 Star	4 Star	3 star	2 star
322	84	1	1

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Appendix 4.

Community Hub Pilot Update:

The aim of the Pilot was to look at footfall and customer satisfaction in order to provide data to inform future discussions and decision making on long term operation of this type of service via:

- Offering a Face-to-Face local service.
- Signposting residents where appropriate.
- Supporting residents to set up MySandwell accounts.
- Promoting SMBC's digital offer where appropriate.

1. Service Offer

Resource within Pilot

- 2 x Customer Service Advisors (sourced from the Contact Centre)
- 1 x Housing Officer (sourced from Housing Hub)
- Live Teams Chat with Council Tax / Revs & Bens (to mitigate need to place Officer on site)
- 1 x Healthy Sandwell (public health) officer – half day from 13.6.23 at both sites
- 1 x Security Guard at both sites
- 1 x Manager on-site to offer support as/when required

The Hubs operate from

- Central Library, High Street, West Bromwich, B70 8DZ: Every Tuesday, 10am to 4.30pm
- Blackheath Library, High Street, Blackheath, B65 0EA: Every Wednesday, 10am to 4.30pm

2. Community Hub – support of Corporate Plan KPIs

The Community Hub Pilot meets the following priorities Corporate Plan priorities for Sandwell Council:

L4 – We will work with our partners, including the community and voluntary sector, to reduce social isolation and ensure people are connected within their local communities and beyond.

L6 – We will create lots more community-based opportunities with local people, working across our partnerships including the voluntary and community sector, and we will commission a range of services that make the most of Sandwell's assets (including leisure centres, libraries, parks, community centres, youth centres, museums, canals and Sandwell Valley.

L8 – We will support people through easily accessible information, advice, and guidance

O5 – We will design a corporate approach to improve both the accessibility of Council services and the quality of service we deliver; to make sure that Sandwell people get a good quality, consistent level of service, however they choose to contact the council

3. Half-way point data return

Data captured during the Hubs first months of operation in March and April was presented to Customer Journey Board for initial discussion. As a result, Customer Journey Board identified areas where additional information would be beneficial to inform the future direction of travel – for example, whether a customer was attending the Hub after utilising other avenues or whether the Hub was being used for a first point of contact.

Data monitoring was revised to capture this information, but the method of capture was also amended to use Microsoft Forms, following feedback from the Officers on site, to streamline the capture process. Therefore, the data provided below is in two different formats.

Data demonstrates a total of **354** customers visited the Hubs throughout the first 3 months.

Some customers attended with more than one query, and not all customers consented to completing the satisfaction survey, therefore totals and questions differ across the charts.

Chart 1: What is the age range of the customer presenting at the Hub?

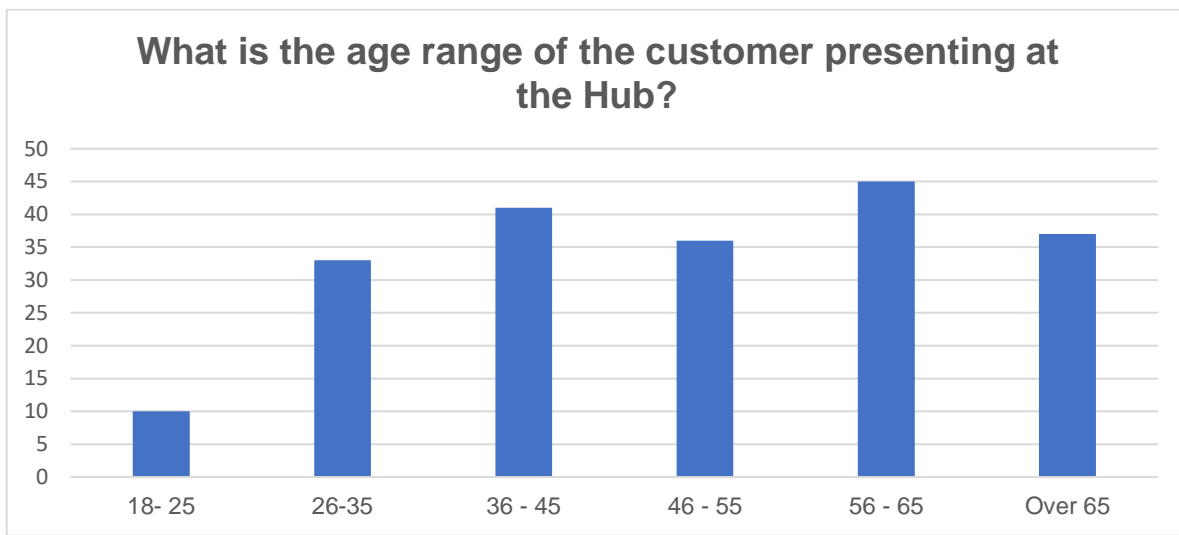


Chart 2: Total number of customers up to 14th June 2023



Chart 3: Service the enquiry relates to – March and April

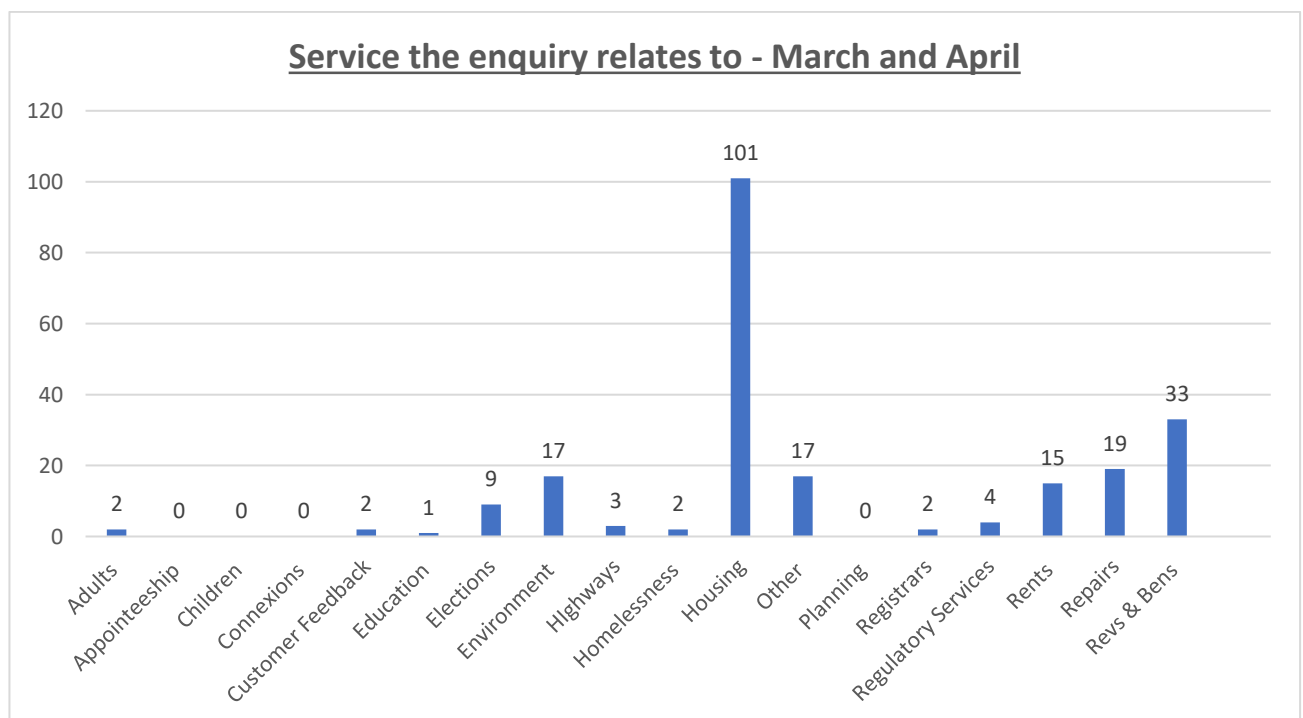


Chart 4: Service the enquiry relates to May and June

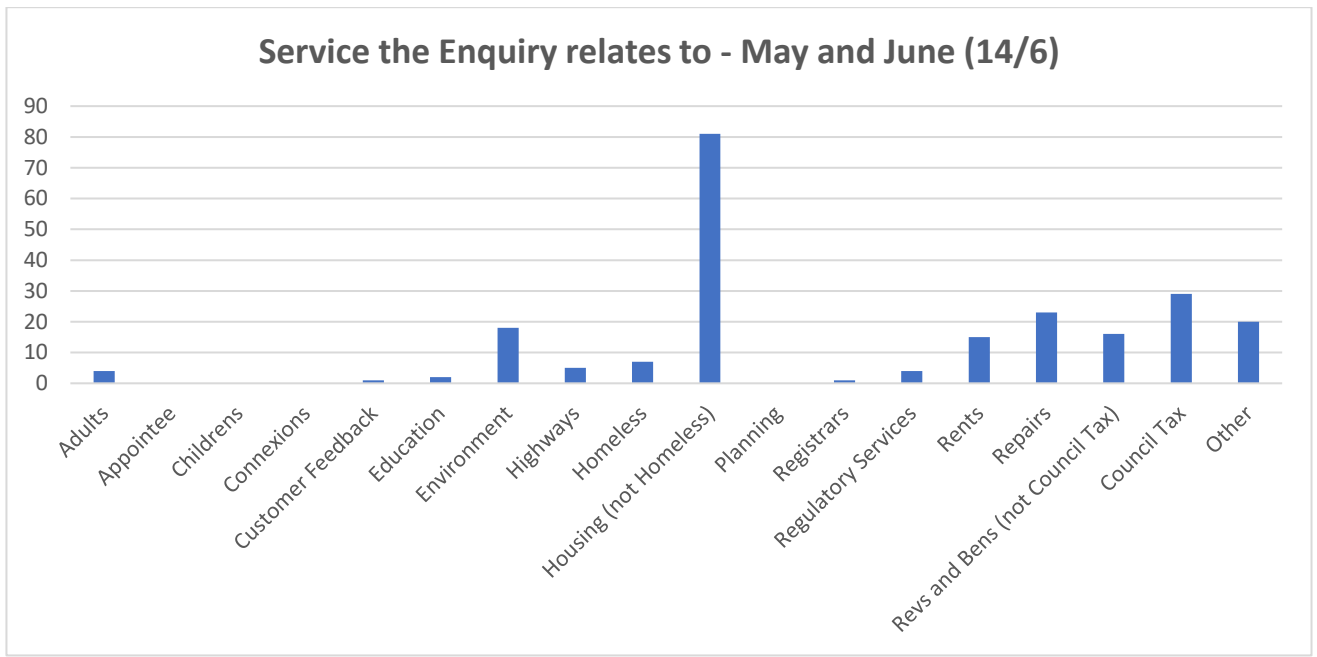
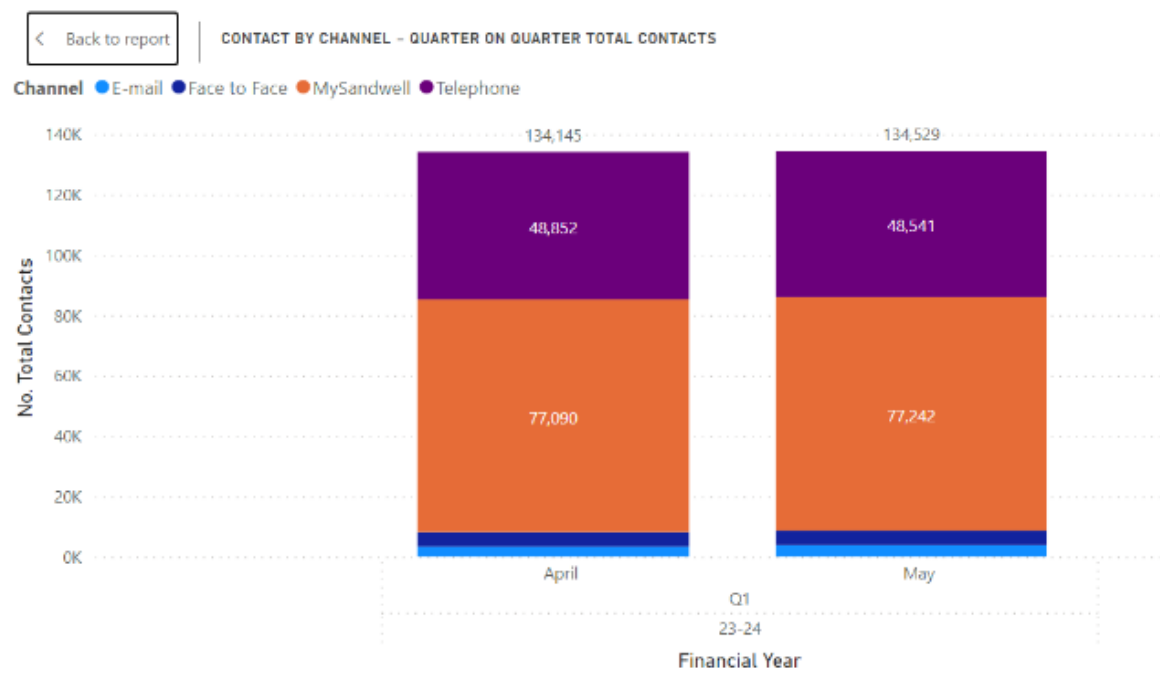


Chart 5: Other channels of customer contact volume between April-May 2023

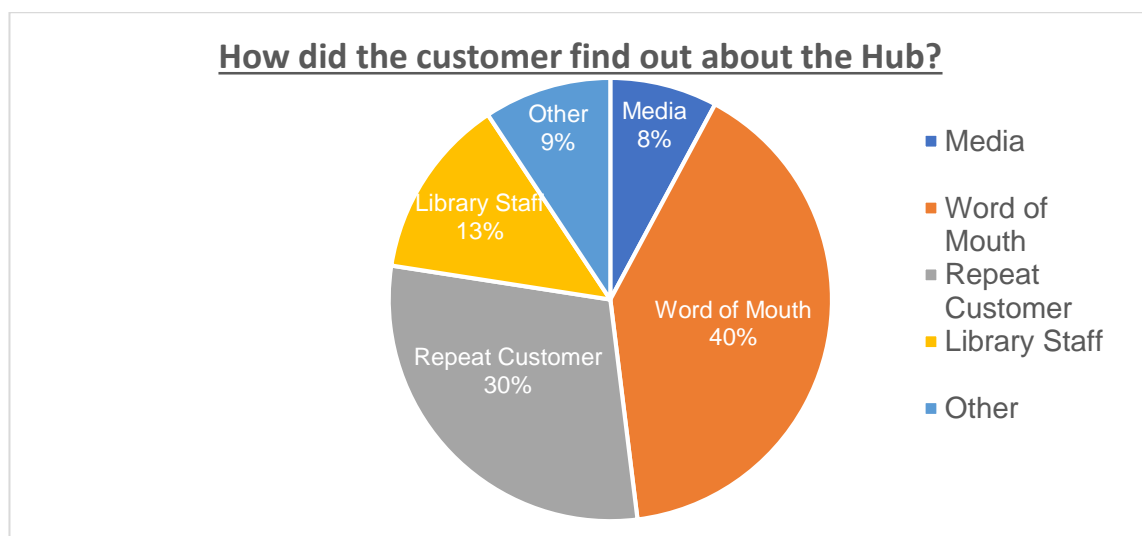


The proportion of overall customer access of the Community Hubs v/s other customer access channels is approximately 0.3%. Customer awareness is no doubt a factor here due to the soft launch, but we must also consider the reality that many residents have adapted to self-service.

4. Customer Awareness of Community Hubs

Leadership Team were initially keen for the Hub to utilise a `soft` launch to ensure success of the pilot and avoid potential unmet demand. Therefore, very little promotion of the Hubs took place throughout March and April. Several discussions have taken place with officers from the Communications Team to discuss increasing publicity, with text messaging services utilised, and a future article in The Herald scheduled.

Chart 6: How did the customer find out about the hub?



5. First Contact Resolution/Avoidable contact /Failure demand

A key addition to the data collection requested by Customer Journey Board was around First Contact Resolution. Questions were included to identify if this was the first-time customers have attempted to contact Sandwell to resolve the issue, and if not, why resolution was not previously found.

Chart 7: Was this the first time the customer has attempted to resolve this issue with us?

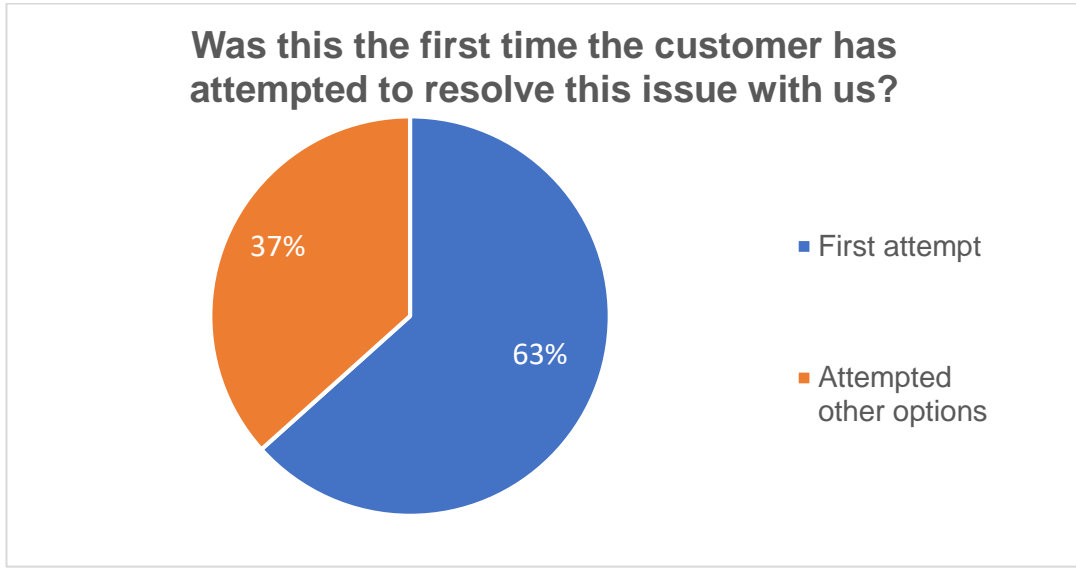
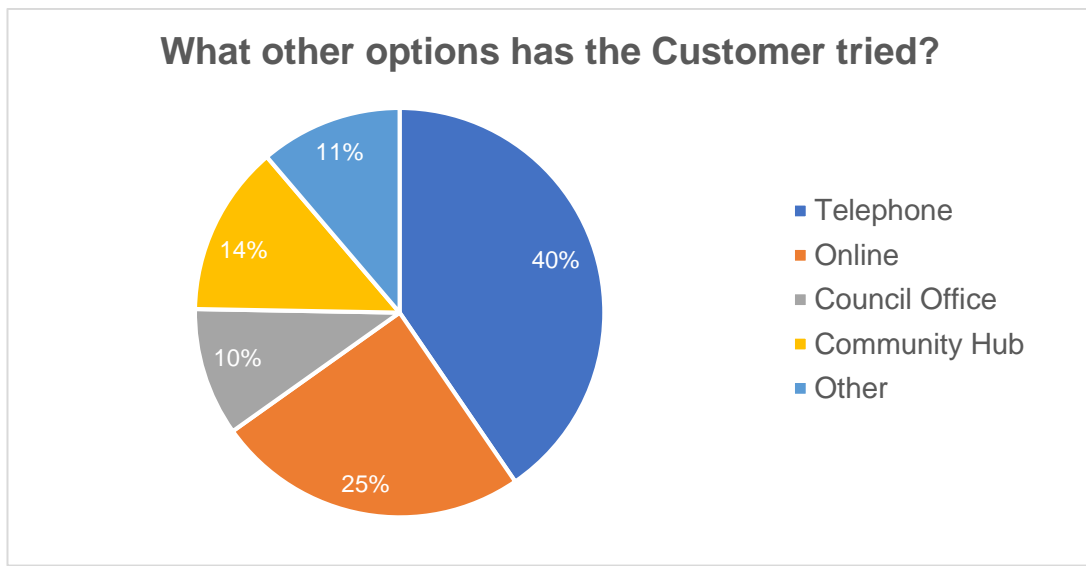


Chart 8: What other options has the customer tried?



6. Healthy Sandwell

Healthy Sandwell is part of Sandwell Public Health. The aim is to get Sandwell healthier, happier and to keep people well for longer.

As part of the collaborative Community Hub project, the Healthy Sandwell team have delivered MECC training to colleagues who are part of the pilot project.

The aim of the training was to enhance and build on their knowledge and skills and for staff to confidently deliver MECC conversations and enable them to signpost to other supporting services.

To date the service supported both Blackheath and West Bromwich hubs by engaging with **192** people (**Chart 9 below**). The support provided consisted of encouragement and providing information to stimulate behaviour change in health and improve lifestyle behaviour by referring to health and lifestyle opportunities and signposting into services, organisations and support groups. (**Chart 110 below identifying the different areas of support**). NB – please note some individuals required more than one area of support.

Chart 9 – Healthy Sandwell, number of people supported by location April-June 2023

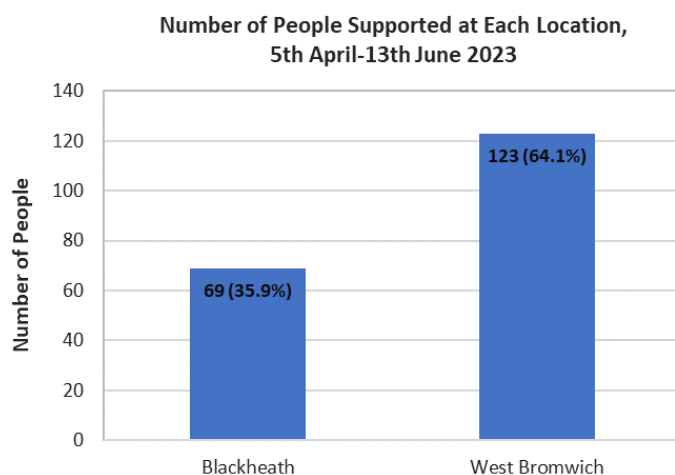
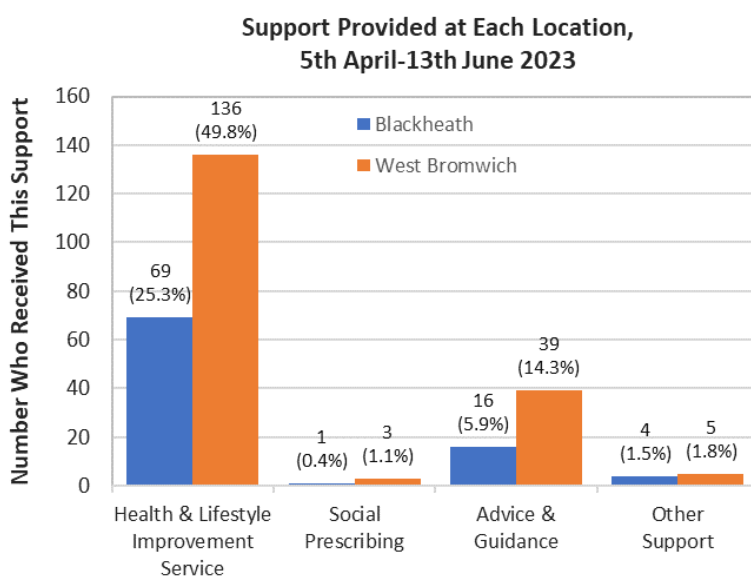


Chart 10 – Healthy Sandwell support type provided at each location April – June 2023



7. Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction has been monitored by the use of a [MySandwell Survey](#) via handheld tablets on exit from the Hubs. Some Customers have declined to complete a Survey or have only been willing to answer some questions. Analysis of the data is below:

Chart 11: Community Hub Customer satisfaction

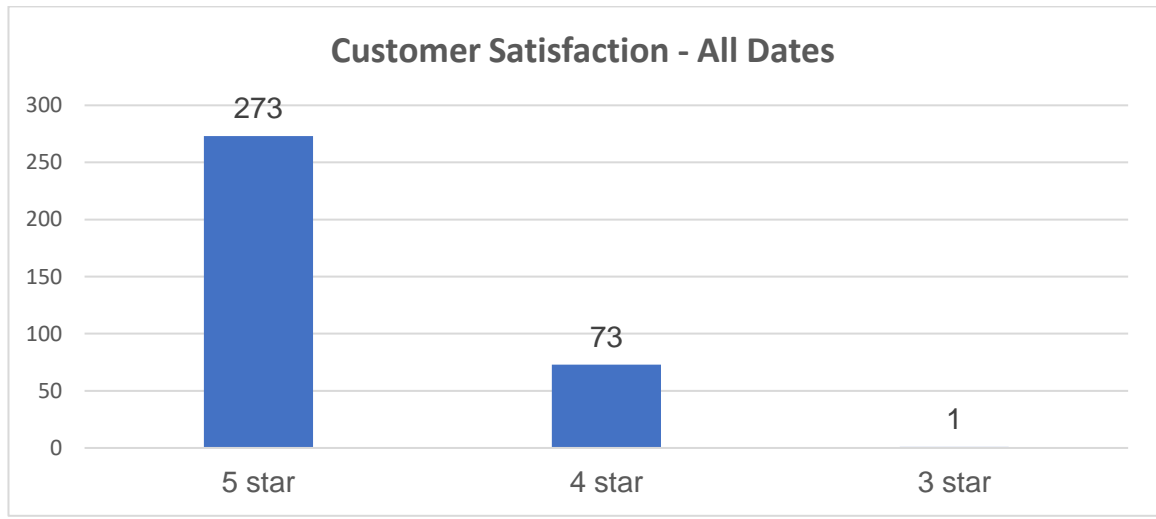
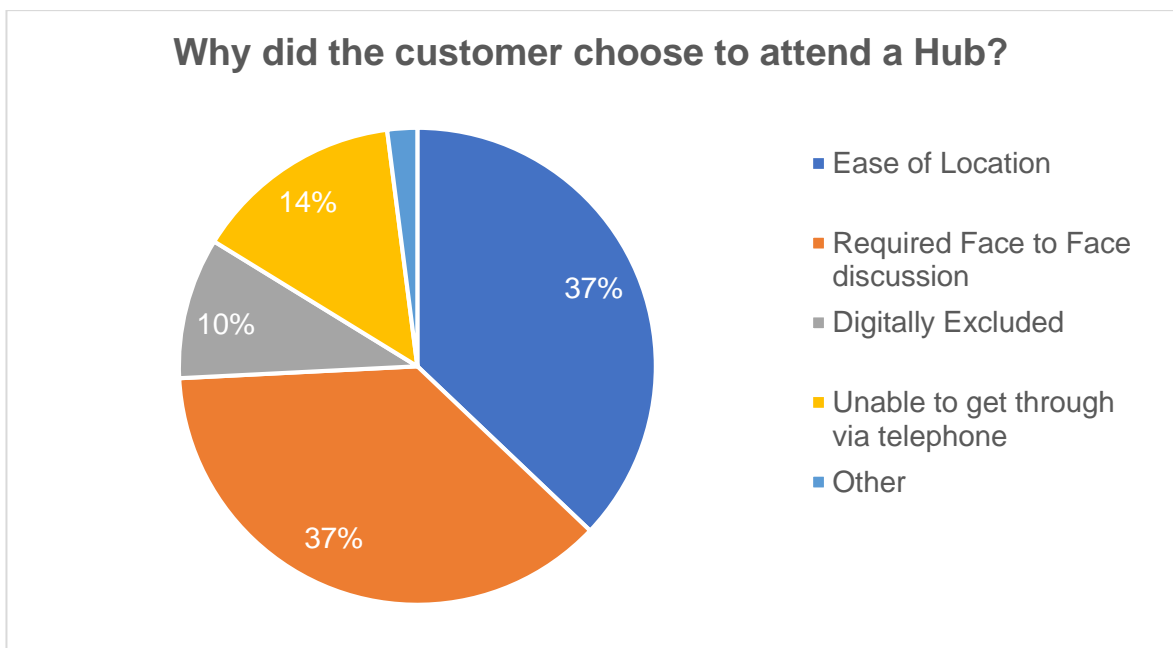


Chart 12: Why did the customer choose to attend a Hub?



Customer Satisfaction Qualitative feedback

Very happy and pleased with service given

Took time to listen to me and was very helpful during a difficult time

Nice to see friendly face and have a chat

Explained things to me in a way I can understand thanks

Not online and phones too busy so can talk to someone and get answers

Could not get through on phone. pleased I turned up and got my issues sorted.

Needed help to complete application forms for housing

Wanted to see when repairs where booked and can't get through on phone

Location, location, location, glad someone can help in my area. Why

did West Brom office shut down?

Very helpful shown me how to access and print off through ~~mysandwell~~ account

Got advice I needed and it was clearly told to me so I understood

Supported with how to place my bids very helpful and explained and showed me how to do it for myself using my phone

Nice to see friendly faces and get help

Did well to answer questions and offer advice after i found it difficult trying to do it myself.

Got the right info. when I did not know what to do. Pleased I came in!

8. Examples of customer journey touch points

These 2 case studies evidence the value the Hubs add from a positive customer service experience perspective. Being able to speak face2face with advisors who were able to escalate issues with the right colleagues at pace meant we were able to resolve long running issues.

Customer Journey touch points

Case Study A – Poor Road condition



Condition of road reported by resident at least 4 times logged in Firmstep between **May 2021 - May 2022**



Condition of road reported at least 3 times by other residents in **February, April and June 2022**

Mid-April 2023 - Petition from residents brought to Community Hub, Rowley Regis



April 2023
Escalated to Customer Service management who liaised with Highways Team

System check revealed numerous previous enquiries had been logged complaining about the road that had been patched but the issues raised regarding the disrepair of the road and curbs had never been fully resolved.



April 2023
Highways confirmed to residents that the road surface would be replaced in the same financial year

7 contacts made to council by at least 3 residents for 1 road.

Part resolution meant faults were unresolved and customers not satisfied.

1 visit to the Hub resolved the issue

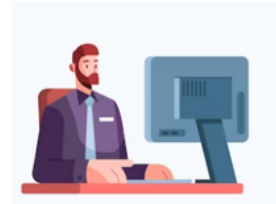
Case Study B – Homeless Resident



Housing app completed via post as not online and no mobile phone. Application received **15/9/22**



The mother visited the Hub on **22/03/23** for an update and the case wasn't 'live'



Mom visited again on **29/03/23**. CSA checked the system and the case had been closed stating 'NFA'. No confirmation of this had been shared

At least **6** contact points from family visits over an **8-month** period before a resolution was found

Difficulty with internal queries to get to root cause

Positive relationship built with family and trust in Council improving

Customers son had been homeless since **Aug 2022**, due to difficult relationship with his mother and a history of addictive behaviours.

Son moved in with his grandmother, who subsequently died

Was offered a Hostel by Homeless Team but declined due to previous history

Visited the OSS on **22/12/22** to get help with a further info request which was passed to the team



Mom visits every week to bid for properties on behalf of her son.

Mom has confirmed that she prefers to come to the Hub as she gets 'much better help' and is currently being supported with applications for her son's welfare priority application



The CSA liaised with Mom, and she managed to bring the required documents to the Community Hub. The son's application finally went 'live' on **5/04/23**.



CSA left a further note and was advised additional forms were required but this was not confirmed to the residents

9. Library officer's qualitative feedback

Customers are appreciative of the face to face service. Initially they approach library staff and are then signposted to the relevant part of the hub, acknowledging library staff on the way out.

Comments from library service users:

'Travelling to Oldbury to sort out housing stuff with the little ones and buggy is a nightmare so coming into Blackheath Library has been great for me and the kids'

'Having this here has saved me from travelling to Oldbury because I couldn't afford the travel until I get my benefit'

'It's local and all the staff in this library are so kind and helpful'

Some customers have asked if it can be on more days of the week.

Computer usage has increased as well over the same months (Hub staff direct customers to join the library and then customers create/access My Sandwell accounts)

I've also noticed how staff in conversation with our customers talk about the hub naturally now and give that positive spin that we're here to help them.

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Report to Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

27 July 2023

Subject:	Centre for Governance and Scrutiny – The use of call-in: guidance for English authorities
Director:	Surjit Tour Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer:	Suky Suthi-Nagra Democratic Services Manager and Statutory Scrutiny Officer Alex Goddard Scrutiny Lead Officer

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board consider and comment upon the key points arising from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny publication – The use of call-in: guidance for English authorities.
- 1.2 That where any changes are required to the Council’s Scrutiny Procedure Rules or any other constitutional document as a result of 1.1 above, the Council be recommended to consider and approve any changes.



2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 As part of the ongoing work to strengthen and develop the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function the Council has sought to understand and address the key points raised by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) in its April 2023 publication "The use of call-in: guidance for English authorities.
- 2.2 Currently only key decisions (i.e. over £1m in spend/savings or significantly affects two or more wards) can be made by Cabinet and are subject to call in. Individual Cabinet Member decisions below this financial threshold are not subject to call in.
- 2.3 Whilst almost all of the guidance points are addressed within the revised Scrutiny Procedure Rules and supplementary guidance published by the Council, the views of the Scrutiny Management Board are sought, in particular, around the threshold for call-in – i.e. should it remain for key decisions only as is currently set out in Sandwell's Constitution, or should it include all Cabinet or Cabinet Member decisions?
- 2.4 Any changes made to the Council's Constitution, which includes changes to call in threshold, will require approval by the Council.
- 2.5 Benchmarking has been conducted across the West Midlands local authorities to ascertain their call in thresholds as follows:

Local Authority	Call in threshold
Coventry CC	All Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions are subject to call in
Dudley MBC	All Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions are subject to call in
Solihull MBC	All key and non key decisions made by Cabinet and Cabinet Members are subject to call in
Walsall MBC	Cabinet decisions (key and non key) are all subject to call in Cabinet members do not make decisions as these are delegated



	to officers within the Scheme of Delegations
Wolverhampton CC	Key decisions made by Cabinet are subject to call in. Cabinet Members and officers are not permitted to make key decisions and are therefore not subject to call in.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

		Effective governance arrangements support the delivery of all corporate objectives.
		
		

4 Objectives

Ensuring alignment with national best practice helps promote good governance procedures in Sandwell.

5 Implications

Resources:	The call-in function of Scrutiny is supported within existing resources.
Legal and Governance:	The call-in function was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000.
Risk:	There are no direct risk implications arising from this report.
Equality:	There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.



Health and Wellbeing:	There are no direct implications for health and wellbeing from this report.
Social Value	There are no direct implications for social value arising from this report.
Climate Change	There are no direct implications for climate change arising from this report.
Corporate Parenting	There are no direct implications for corporate parenting arising from this report.

Whilst there are no direct implications relating to many of the above areas, an effective call-in function can contribute to holding decision makers to account around all of the above issues.

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Commentary on key points

7. Background Papers

[CfGS – The use of call-in: guidance for English authorities](#)



CfGS – The use of call-in: guidance for English authorities

The CfGS released this guidance in late April, the following extracts key points alongside commentary as it relates to Sandwell.

CfGS guidance	Comments
Where call-in rules should sit: there is no 'right place'. (most authorities include them in the Scrutiny Procedure Rules)	Contained within the Scrutiny Procedure Rules.
CfGS considers best practice to be that all cabinet or cabinet member decisions are potentially subject to call-in, as are those key decisions made by an officer of the authority.	16(a) – 'may refer for scrutiny any key decision made under Part 4 of the Executive Procedure Rules'. Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board's view is sought on if this should be extended to include what CfGS considers best practice?
2 clear working days for the decision notice/minutes to be published and then 5 clear working days from publication to allow for a call-in.	Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16(b) addresses this, although "beginning the day after the decision is published".
Hurdle 1: Requiring a certain number of members to request a call-in for it to be valid. There is no overall consensus on numbers, which committees members should sit on, cross/same party etc.	16(a) – three members of a scrutiny board (including co-opted members with voting rights relevant to the subject matter), or six members of the Council.
Hurdle 2: Requiring that the call-in request meets specific criteria, in terms of its substance CfGS view is that there should be a requirement to give reasons for call-ins.	16(b) – requests referral in writing, via the Notice of Call-In (which is where reasons are captured).
Hurdle 3: Taking into account prior opportunities to "feed in" to a decision	Only call-ins "substantially the same as...one previously considered within the preceding 6

<p>CfGS view is that pre-decision scrutiny “should not automatically remove the need for call-in later in the process.”</p>	<p>months” are precluded (16(d).</p>
<p>Using a form – to request a call-in. CfGS view is these are useful but validity should not rest on councillors’ using the form correctly to call-in.</p>	<p>16(b) requires the use of a form to refer an item for call-in.</p>
<p>Who should determine that a call-in is valid?</p> <p>CfGS view is that the decision on validity should be made by the Monitoring Officer.</p>	<p>16(d) – Monitoring Officer may reject</p>
<p>Some councils include a step between a valid request being made and the Scrutiny meeting to hear it. This can include a mediation process or round-table discussion between the lead requestor(s)/decision maker/scrutiny chair.</p>	<p>Not practice in Sandwell.</p>
<p>Where there is more than one call-in on the same issue, the CfGS view is that the proper officer should liaise with requestors/scrutiny chair to ensure the matters can be considered together, without prejudicing any individual request.</p>	<p>Addressed in supplementary Overview and Scrutiny – Call-In guide.</p>
<p>10 working day period in which to hear the call-in is considered ‘standard and applied wherever practicable’.</p>	<p>16(e) – ‘meet within 15 working days of the receipt of the (call-in)’</p>
<p>An agenda for the reviewing overview and scrutiny committee should be fronted by a report(s) by officers and should, at the least, reflect the same material that has gone to decisionmakers,</p>	<p>A meeting procedure is set out in supplementary Overview and Scrutiny – Call-In guide.</p>

<p>but those requesting call-ins may reasonable expect additional information to be provided. The report and agenda should also set out the procedure to be followed at the meeting.</p>	
<p>Who is invited to participate? Requestor(s), decision maker, relevant senior officer</p>	<p>16(h) requires at least one requesting member to be present. It further states that the relevant Cabinet Member and officers shall also be expected to attend the meeting.</p>
<p>Common for there to be a process document/protocol for how call-in meetings operate.</p>	<p>A meeting procedure is set out in supplementary Overview and Scrutiny – Call-In guide.</p>
<p>Referral to full Council – only around whether the decision maker ‘ever held the lawful authority to purport to make that decision or not’.</p>	<p>Not addressed in Scrutiny Procedure Rules.</p>
<p>Where decision is by an individual (Cabinet Member or officer), it could be that Scrutiny recommendations arising from a call-in are referred up to Cabinet.</p>	<p>Not current practice in Sandwell.</p>
<p>CfGS view is that decision maker should give reasons for their final decision to ‘help ensure that call-in is taken seriously’.</p>	<p>Not specified.</p>

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Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

27 July 2023

Subject:	Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme 2023-24
Director:	Surjit Tour, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer:	Suky Suthi-Nagra, Democratic Services Manager Alex Goddard, Scrutiny Lead Officer

1 Recommendations







- 1.1 That the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme 2023-24 be approved.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is asked to consider its work programme for 2023-24 taking into account where scrutiny can add value, strengthen decision making to enhance services that the Council delivers and align to Vision 2030 as well as objectives of the Corporate Plan.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

		Effective governance arrangements support the delivery of all corporate objectives
		
		

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The relevant Director(s) were invited to attend a work programming session on 6 July 2023 for overview and scrutiny members. This included an overview of the services, key issues and priorities relevant to the Board’s terms of reference.
- 4.2 A list of items, including suggestions from the public, were considered and subsequently added to the planned work programme for the year.
- 4.3 The work programme is a live document and amendments can be made in response to the changing priorities of the Council as and when the Board deems it necessary to do so.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 If the Scrutiny Board does not determine a work programme, the opportunity to review policies and services will not be realised meaning that improvements, savings and income generation possibilities may be missed.

6 Implications

Resources:	The Scrutiny function is directly supported by the Council’s Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Democratic Services Officers within the Council’s Law and Governance directorate. Additional technical expertise and evidence on specific matters will be
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	<p>provided by officers within the various directorates of the authority.</p> <p>The strategic resource implications of the topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to members on a case by case basis.</p>
Legal and Governance:	<p>Local Government Act 2000 states that Councils operating executive arrangements must also make provision for the appointment of overview and scrutiny committees.</p> <p>Further powers relating to overview and scrutiny are set out in the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Localism Act 2011, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.</p>
Risk:	Any risks identified of scrutiny work programme items will be reported to members on a case by case basis.
Equality:	Any risks identified of scrutiny work programme items will be reported to members on a case by case basis.
Health and Wellbeing:	Any risks identified of scrutiny work programme items will be reported to members on a case by case basis.
Social Value	Any risks identified of scrutiny work programme items will be reported to members on a case by case basis.
Climate Change:	Any risks identified of scrutiny work programme items will be reported to members on a case by case basis.
Corporate Parenting:	Any risks identified of scrutiny work programme items will be reported to members on a case by case basis.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme 23-24.





Work Programme 2023/24

Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Meeting Date	Item	Links with Strategic Aims	Notes (Director Lead)
29 June 2023 (Publish 21 June)	Customer Journey Review Report		Suky Suthi-Nagra
	Oracle Fusion Report		Simone Hines
	Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme for the year		Suky Suthi-Nagra
	Financial Outturn 23/23		Simone Hines
27 July 2023 (Publish 19 July)	Customer Journey Progress Update		Helen Green
	Managing attendance/sickness absence		Victoria Lee
	CfGS call in guidance		Alex Goddard
	Work Programme		Alex Goddard, Anthony Lloyd
14 September 2023 (Publish 6 September)	Improvement Plan Quarterly Progress Report		Kate Ashley Rebecca Jenkins
	Oracle Fusion Update		Simone Hines/Victoria Lee

	Customer Journey Scrutiny Review – Response from Cabinet		
	Recommendations from Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board in response to quarter 3 budget monitoring report 2022/23 – response from Cabinet		
	Scrutiny Annual Report		Alex Goddard
5 October 2023 (Publish 27 September)	Q1 Budget Monitoring		Rebecca Maher/Director of Finance
2 November 2023 (Provisional Budget Proposals) (Publish 25 October 2023)	Q1 - Corporate Plan progress report and Corporate Performance report (Date TBC)		Sarah Sprung/Kayleigh Walker

30 November 2023 (Publish 22 November)	Improvement Plan Quarterly Progress Report		Kate1 Ashley Rebecca Jenkins
4 January 2024 (Publish 19 December)	Q2 Budget Monitoring		Rebecca Maher/Director of Finance
1 February 2024 (24 January)	Q2 – Corporate Plan progress report and Corporate Performance Report (Date TBC)		Sarah Sprung/Kayleigh Walker
20 March 2024 (12 March)	Improvement Plan Quarterly Progress Report		Kate1 Ashley Rebecca Jenkins
	Midland Metro Hospital Update (Registrar Officer Demand)		Mark Satchwell

Items to be scheduled/referred to relevant Scrutiny Board

Development of Transformation Strategy – Simone Hines/Assistant Chief Executive

Medium Term Financial Strategy – Simone Hines

Digital Transformation – customer journey – ensuring all residents can access – Helen Green (Regular updates)

Scrutiny Review

Voluntary sector support, grant funding, etc
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The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive:-

	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
1	<p>Levelling Up Partnership</p> <p>Contact Officer: Tammy Stokes</p> <p>Director of Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern</p>	<p>Cabinet – Leader of the Council (Cllr Carmichael)</p>	Public	September 2023	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandwell Levelling Up Partnership evidence base and proposed interventions.



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
2	Animal Welfare Policy – Forge Mill Farm Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet - Leader of the Council (Cllr Carmichael)		13 September 2023		



Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
<p>3</p> <p>Information Governance – Retention Schedule</p> <p>Contact Officer: Vanessa Mahersmith</p> <p>Director – Surjit Tour, Director of Law and Governance</p>	<p>Cabinet – Leader of the Council (Cllr Carmichael)</p>		<p>September 2023</p>		



Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
<p>4 Information Governance Framework Review</p> <p>Contact Officer: Vanessa Mahersmith</p> <p>Director – Surjit Tour, Director of Law and Governance</p>	<p>Cabinet – Leader of the Council (Cllr Carmichael)</p>		<p>13 September 2023</p>		



Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
<p>5 COVID Grant Proposals</p> <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Maher</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p>	<p>Cabinet – Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>September 2023</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>



Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
<p>6 Contract for the provision of temporary agency workers to the council</p> <p>Contact Officer: Victoria Lee</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p>	<p>Cabinet – Finance & Resources (Cllr Piper)</p>		<p>13 September 2023</p>		



Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

27 July 2023

Subject:	Tracking and Monitoring of Scrutiny Recommendations
Director:	Law and Governance Surjit Tour Surjir_tour@sandwell.gov.uk
Contact Officer:	Suky Suthi-Nagra Democratic & Member Services Manager Suky_suthinagra@ sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations







- 1.1 That the Board notes the responses from the Executive/Directors/Partners on recommendations referred since the Board's last meeting, as set out in the Appendix.
- 1.2 That the Board notes the progress on implementation of those recommendations approved by the Executive/Directors/Partners, as set out in the Appendix.
- 1.3 That the Board identifies any recommendations where progress is unsatisfactory and determines what action it wishes to take.
- 1.4 That the Board determines which recommendations no longer require monitoring.



2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 To facilitate the effective monitoring of progress on responses to and press with implementation of recommendations made by the Board and identify where further action is required.
- 2.2 Effective monitoring of recommendations facilitates the evaluation of the impact of the scrutiny function overall.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people	<p>The scrutiny function supports all of the objectives of the Corporate Plan by seeking to improve services for the people of Sandwell. It does this by influencing the policies and decisions made by the Council and other organisations involved in delivering public services.</p> <p>Effective monitoring of recommendations made supports this and allows scrutiny to evaluate its impact.</p>
	People live well and age well	
	Strong resilient communities	
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods	
	A strong and inclusive economy	
	A connected and accessible Sandwell	

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The attached Appendix details the responses to and progress on the implementation of recommendations made by the scrutiny function.



5 Implications

Resources:	The recommendations made by Scrutiny may have cost implications associated with it which will need to be considered by Cabinet/Directors/Partners.
Legal and Governance:	<p>The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.</p> <p>The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on the Executive to respond to Scrutiny recommendations within two months of receiving them.</p>
Risk:	<p>Any risk implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Risk Owner at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board.</p> <p>Any specific risks for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>
Equality:	<p>Any equality implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board.</p> <p>Any specific equality implications for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>Any health and wellbeing implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board.</p> <p>Any specific health and wellbeing implications for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>
Social Value:	The recommendations made by Scrutiny may have social value implications associated with it which will need to be considered by Cabinet/Directors/Partners.



Climate Change:	The recommendations made by Scrutiny may have climate change implications associated with it which will need to be considered by Cabinet/Directors/Partners.
Corporate Parenting:	The recommendations made by Scrutiny may have corporate parenting implications associated with it which will need to be considered by Cabinet/Directors/Partners.

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Tracking and Monitoring of Actions and Recommendations of Scrutiny Boards

7. Background Papers

None.



Tracking and Monitoring of Actions and Recommendations of Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Scrutiny Board Date	Agenda Item Title	Action/Recommendation	Responsible Director /Body	Activity Log
Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board				
1 March 2023	Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring	To set up a spotlight session for members of the Board to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> current outstanding section 106 spend, including details of deadline for spend and how ward members are consulted; 	Surjit Tour Simone Hines	Spotlight session scheduled for 27 July 2023.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to understand the high cost associated with Sandwell Children's Trust. 	Cabinet Member for Children's SMB Chair and Scrutiny Chair of Children's Scrutiny	Meeting arranged between the Cabinet Member of Children, Young people and Education and the Chair of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Board and Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Board – 12 July 2023.
1 March 2023	Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring	Submit a report to Cabinet recommending: <p>1.1 that Directors review and update any pages they hold on the Council's website, in particular, the webpage where the Council have facilities/offices to rent.</p>	Surjit Tour All Directors	Recommendations approved by Cabinet on 29 June 2023.
		<p>1.2 the introduction of additional financial controls on general</p>	Simone Hines Cllr Piper	Recommendations approved by Cabinet on 29 June 2023.

		spend, in particular, matters relating to recruitment and day to day spend where necessary.		
		1.3 to explore the feasibility of providing in house care for young people in care, SEND placements and adult social care placements.	Simone Hines, Michael Jarrett, Rashpal Bishop Cabinet Members	Recommendations approved by Cabinet on 29 June 2023.
29 March 2023	SEND transport	That an update on the new model be presented to a future meeting, in consultation with Children's & Education Scrutiny Board	Michael Jarrett/Simone Hines	To be included in the 2023/24 work programme.
	Improvement Plan	1) A summary and chronology of events explaining where the Council is currently with regards to the proposed development on Lion Farm, and how it reached the Expert Determination process, be circulated to the Board.	Tony McGovern	A written response in relation to the Expert Determination Process will be circulated ED process has been fully concluded.
		2) A copy of the recent internal review in relation to Serco be provided to the Board.	Alice Davey	Executive Summary of the Frith review into the Serco Contract shared with members of the Board – 26 May 2023
		3) That a further report in relation to recruitment of the Children to Adults Transition Project Officer role be submitted to a future meeting of the Board.	Michael Jarrett/Rashpal Bishop	<i>Previous update Initial meeting went ahead in December. PID reviewed and amendments being captured. Agreement reached to engage with key external stakeholders. The Trust's sign-off process incorporated into the Project Governance Structure. The project manager appointment was delayed and the post re-advertised. Closing date 6 Jan.</i>

				<p>Current position:- The re-advertisement of the project manager post was unsuccessful, the post is due to be advertised again shortly. To ensure no further delays, resource from within the business has been identified to progress actions identified in the PID.</p> <p>Regular monthly meetings have been diarised with key stakeholders, PID and TOR have been revised and signed off. Remit of the first stage business mapping has been agreed, draft scope and comm's will be presented at the April meeting with the aim to undertake first stage business mapping in May.</p>
Performance Framework	1) that a written response be provided to members of the Board on reasons for the delay in introducing recycling in high rise flats/maisonettes;	Alice Davey	2. With regard recycling in flats, officers were not aware of any suggested delay in the re-introduction of recycling in high-rise flats. The project to pilot different recycling options at the Kenrick House blocks in early 2023 ran to schedule, with the pilots concluding in April and the draft results presented earlier this month. The results are encouraging and would seem to have addressed the issues of contamination that previously led to the withdrawal of recycling bins. The report is now under consideration with a view to the roll-out of the optimal recycling option to other blocks in the borough	
	2) that a written response be provided to members of the Board on how cleanliness and other standards are being maintained by SLT until the end of their contract;	Alice Davey	Monitoring of the SLT contract has been unaffected by the notice of termination. The last 12 months as the proposals for a transfer to LATC and latterly the potential for extension with SLT has seen an improvement in the relationship with SLT colleagues and more collaborative working. Work is currently underway to enhance performance management with the development of a stronger set of performance indicators. The most recent performance report (Q4 2022/3) was shared with members of the Board.	

		<p>3) that a further report be submitted to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board in the new municipal year, exploring issues relating to staff sickness levels, recruitment and retention issues.</p>	Victoria Lee	Item added to work programme for 2023/24
29 June 2023	Customer Journey Review	<p>(1) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, be authorised to agree a customer care standards/charter, and staff responsibilities in relation to those standards to ensure;</p> <p>a) that “back-office” staff take ownership and accountability of customer requests received via Contact Centre Agents;</p> <p>b) a standard approach is taken to making officer contact numbers available on Outlook and to customers to prevent</p>		The recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2023.

		<p>additional calls being made to the Contact Centre;</p> <p>c) a standard approach to the complaints process and deadlines for responding to complaints are clear and accessible across all Council services;</p> <p>d) that key contacts are identified within each service area to aid Customer Service Agents in their enquiries;</p> <p>e) that residents are regularly updated and informed about the current process of their request/query.</p>		
		<p>(2) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive be authorised to commission/develop a customer training package that incorporates the following topics:-</p> <p>a) The completeness of response letters</p> <p>b) Methods to manage customer expectations and awareness around the Council's remit and responsibilities.</p>		<p>The recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2023.</p>

		<p>(3) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive ensure that all members of staff undertake training around customer care standards as identified in (2) and that staff performance against these standards be incorporated within the appraisal process;</p>		<p>The recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2023.</p>
		<p>(4) that mandatory corporate customer service training be included as part of the induction process for all staff;</p>		<p>The recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2023.</p>
		<p>(5) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Finance, investigate options for procuring a single joint Customer Relations System across the Council;</p>		<p>The recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2023.</p>
		<p>(6) that the Director for Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive considers the introduction of automated</p>		<p>The recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2023.</p>

		feedback surveys and that regular feedback on Council enquires/complaints are analysed and shared with Directorates;		
		(7) That the Director for Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive introduces corporate guidelines in relation to the use of Council contact numbers to ensure that all officers are contactable and that contact details are updated regularly;		The recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2023.
		(8) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive considers the feasibility of amalgamating the current three contact centres (Corporate Contact Centre, Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre and Adult Social Care Care) into a single contact centre number with staff specialising in various areas;		The recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2023.
		(9) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive, as part of the		The recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2023.

		<p>refresh of the Council's website, ensures the Council continues to promote the use of Sandwell Digital First and the Council's website as the first point for accessing information and raising an issue/request;</p>		
		<p>(10) that as part of the customer journey review being undertaken, the Director of Regeneration and Growth/Assistant Chief Executive reviews current timescales for responding to enquiries and consider a reduction, wherever possible, including member enquiries being reduced from 10 working days to 3-5 days.</p>		<p>This recommendation was NOT approved by Cabinet on 12 July 2023. A lack of resources meant that the request could not be feasibly met. However, officers would review the request at a later date.</p>