

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Subject : HR Data
Committee : Governance, Policy & HR Committee
Date : 23 March 2026
Author : Tracy Adams, Head of Human Resources

1. Report summary

1.1. This report provides Councillors with an overview of key workforce information, including:

1.1.1. Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff numbers – shown by quarter for the last year and by year from April 2019.

1.1.2. Time to hire – how long posts remain vacant and the work underway to reduce delays in recruitment.

1.1.3. Sickness absence – including both short-term and long-term absence.

1.1.4. Staff turnover – the number of employees leaving the Council.

1.2. The main points from the data are:

1.2.1. Recruitment during the last quarter took longer than in the previous quarter. The Christmas period was a significant factor, as recruitment activity often slows at that time. However, improvements to recruitment processes are also being considered to reduce delays in the future.

1.2.2. Sickness absence increased during the quarter. This increase is largely due to a small number of long-term cases rather than a wider pattern of poor health across the workforce. Short-term absence was at its lowest level for this quarter compared with the previous year.

1.2.3. Neither of these issues gives immediate cause for concern. However, both areas are being actively monitored and managed. Future quarterly reports will allow Councillors to track progress.

2. Background

2.1. The Council monitors workforce data so that potential issues can be identified early and action can be taken where needed. Monitoring also helps us assess whether actions taken are having a positive effect.

2.2. This report covers the three-month period of December 2025, January 2026 and February 2026.

3. Recruitment:

- 3.1. Vacant posts can have a practical impact on services. When a role is unfilled, other staff may need to cover additional work and this can place pressure on teams. Reducing the time between someone leaving and a replacement starting helps maintain service delivery.
- 3.2. However, from April 2026, the Council will also need to manage recruitment carefully because vacancy savings form part of the Council's financial planning. Future reports will highlight any periods where recruitment was intentionally paused to help achieve those savings.
- 3.3. The report also outlines some of the steps being taken to improve the effectiveness and speed of the Council's recruitment processes.

4. Sickness Absence:

- 4.1. Sickness absence affects the Council in two main ways:
 - 4.1.1. It reduces the staff capacity available to deliver services; and
 - 4.1.2. It can create additional financial costs through sick pay and the need to redistribute work within teams.
- 4.2. Monitoring absence allows the Council to identify issues early, provide appropriate support to employees and help staff return to work as soon as possible. During the last quarter, the HR Manager has focused on ensuring that return-to-work discussions take place consistently when staff return from sickness absence. This may have contributed to the reduction in short-term absence.
- 4.3. Councillors should note that the sickness figures in this report include all calendar days of absence, including weekends, rather than only working days. This reflects how absences are recorded in the Council's current system. The data should therefore be viewed as an indicator of trends over time, rather than an exact count of working days lost. This will be considered as part of any future review of HR systems, due to be implemented from April 2027.
- 4.4. The Council will continue to focus on early support for employees who are unwell, including the use of occupational health services where appropriate, to help reduce both short-term and long-term absence.

5. Recommendation:

- 5.1. It is recommended that the Committee:
 - 5.1.1. Note the contents of the report.

6. Wards Affected: All

7. Background papers: KPI data report

8. Implications

Financial: As discussed in the report concerning sickness absence.

Legal: None identified.

Personnel: As detailed in the report.

Environmental Impact: None.

Equalities Impact Statement: The information applies to all staff.

HR KPI Data - December 25 - February 26

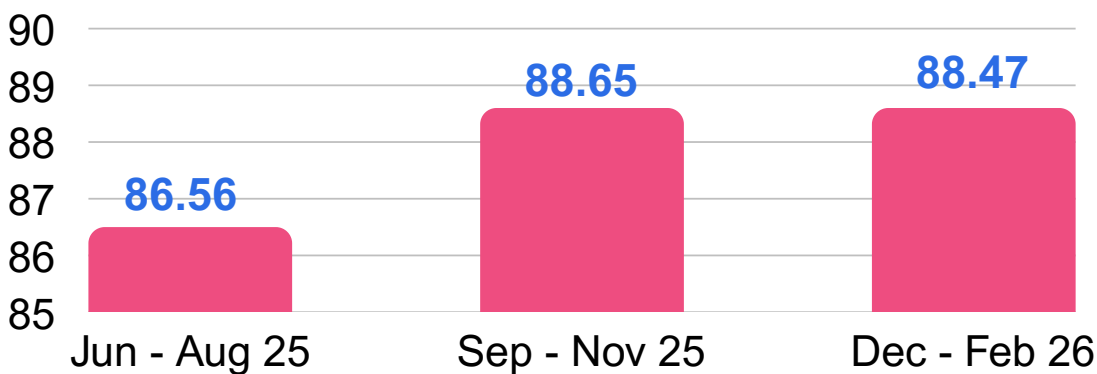
FTE, Time to Hire, Turnover & Absenteeism

FTE (Full-Time Equivalent)

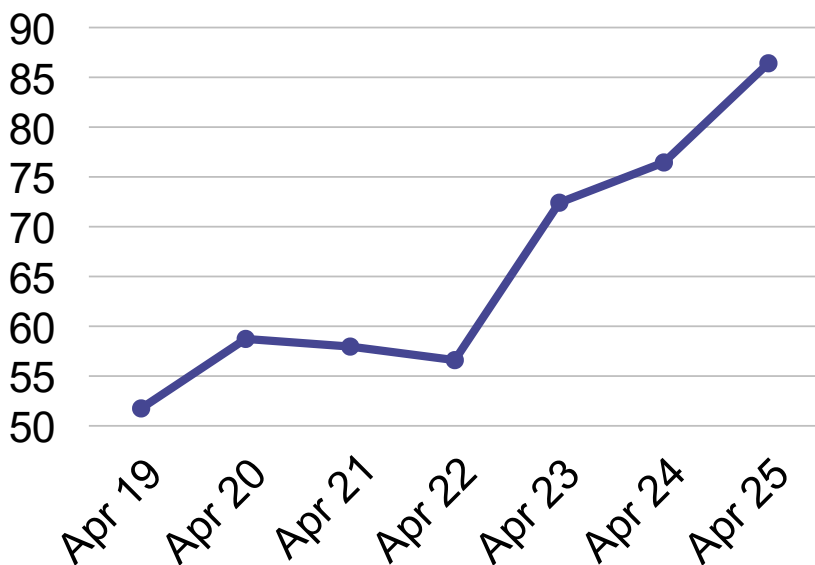
Snapshot: The chart shows the Full-time equivalent total at the start of each month. The Full-time equivalent measures workforce capacity by converting total employee work hours into standardized full-time positions. 37 Hours of work = 1 FTE

It includes both full-time and part-time employees. However, Casual workers, Councillors and volunteers are excluded.

Why it matters: It enables consistent comparison across departments regardless of part-time or flexible work arrangements. This gives us a clear picture of work force capacity across the quarter. It helps us identify any overall changes to staffing levels in the Council.



Yearly FTE numbers every April 2019 - 2026



FTE employed at Salisbury City Council

Clarification of years with significant change:

The increase from April 2022 to April 2023 is due to the TUPE transfer of Streetscene to SCC in December 2022

April 2024 and April 2025 is due to increase in staffing across areas such as H&S and Facilities, Grounds (additional grass cutting), Streetscene (additional weeding) and HR

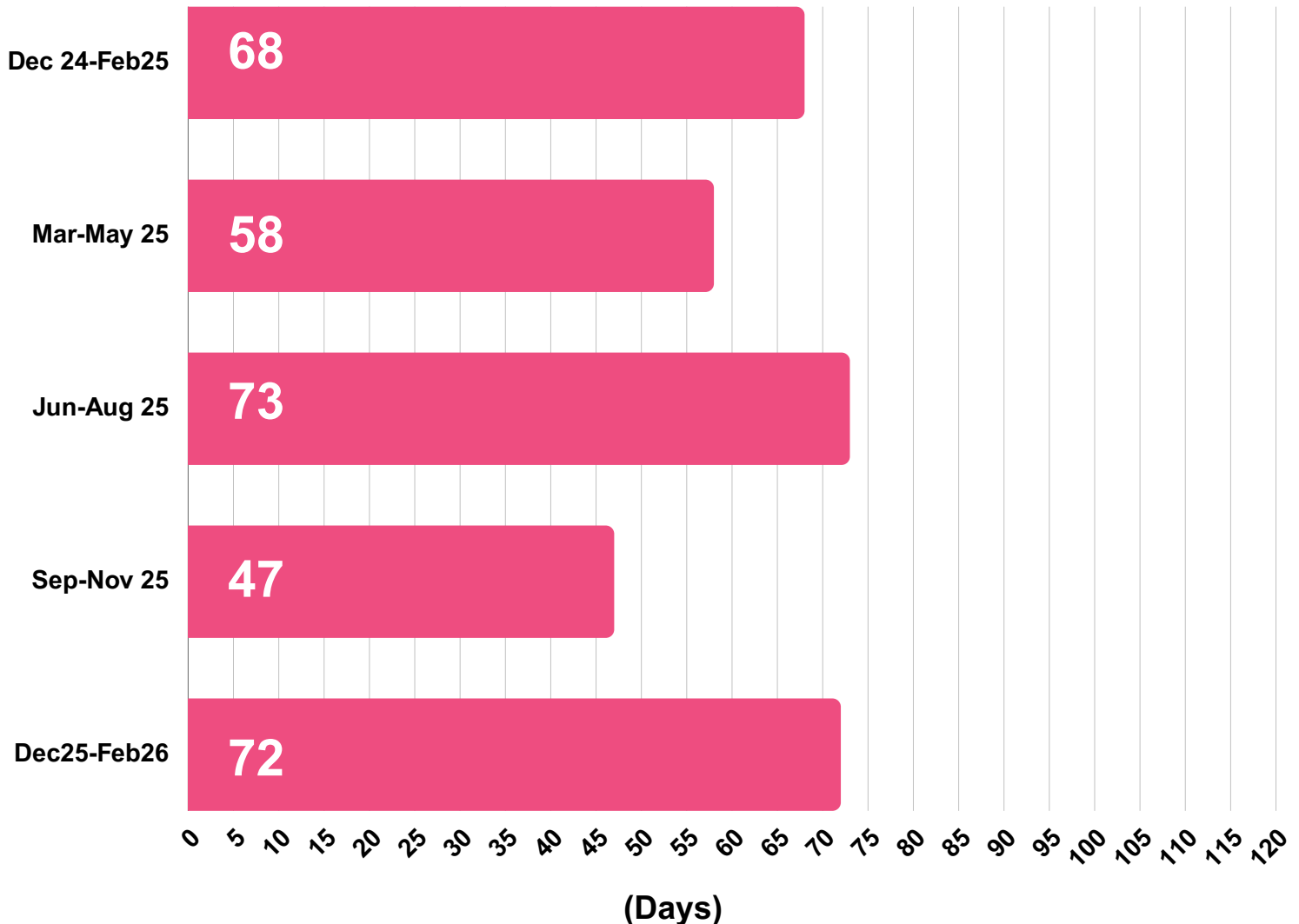
Time to hire - Vacancy Gap

What we're tracking: The average number of days a role remains vacant, from the departure of the previous postholder to the start date of the new hire.

What we're seeing: Most recruitment delays occur in the post-advertising phase, including the time taken to shortlist candidates, schedule interviews, and accommodate notice periods.

The average time that roles remained unfilled increased between December 2025 and February 2026. This was partly due to the Christmas period, which slowed recruitment activity, and also because one successful candidate withdrew after being offered the role, meaning the recruitment process had to restart and the vacancy remained open for longer.

Vacancy Gap Per Quarter



Stages Explained

1 Time to Advertise a Vacancy



From employee exit to manager submitting a job advert request to HR.

Note: Negative numbers mean recruitment started before the previous employee left, a positive indicator.

- **Influencing factors**
 - Whether the role needs to change.
 - Planning ahead for known leavers.
 - Clarity and speed of decision-making.

2 Time to Post Vacancy



From HR receiving the advert request to the advert going live.

- **Key drivers:**
 - Accuracy and completeness of the request.
 - Time taken to finalise JD and advert text.
 - Internal approval processes.

3 Advert to candidate accepting offer

From advert going live to candidate accepting the offer.



- **What impacts this:**
 - Fixed vs rolling advert strategy.
 - Speed of shortlisting and interviews.
 - How quickly candidates accept offers.

4 Acceptance to Start Date

Time from offer acceptance to actual start date.

- **Common causes of delay:**
 - Notice periods
 - Pre-employment checks (e.g. DBS, references).
 - Candidate availability (e.g. relocation, personal commitments).

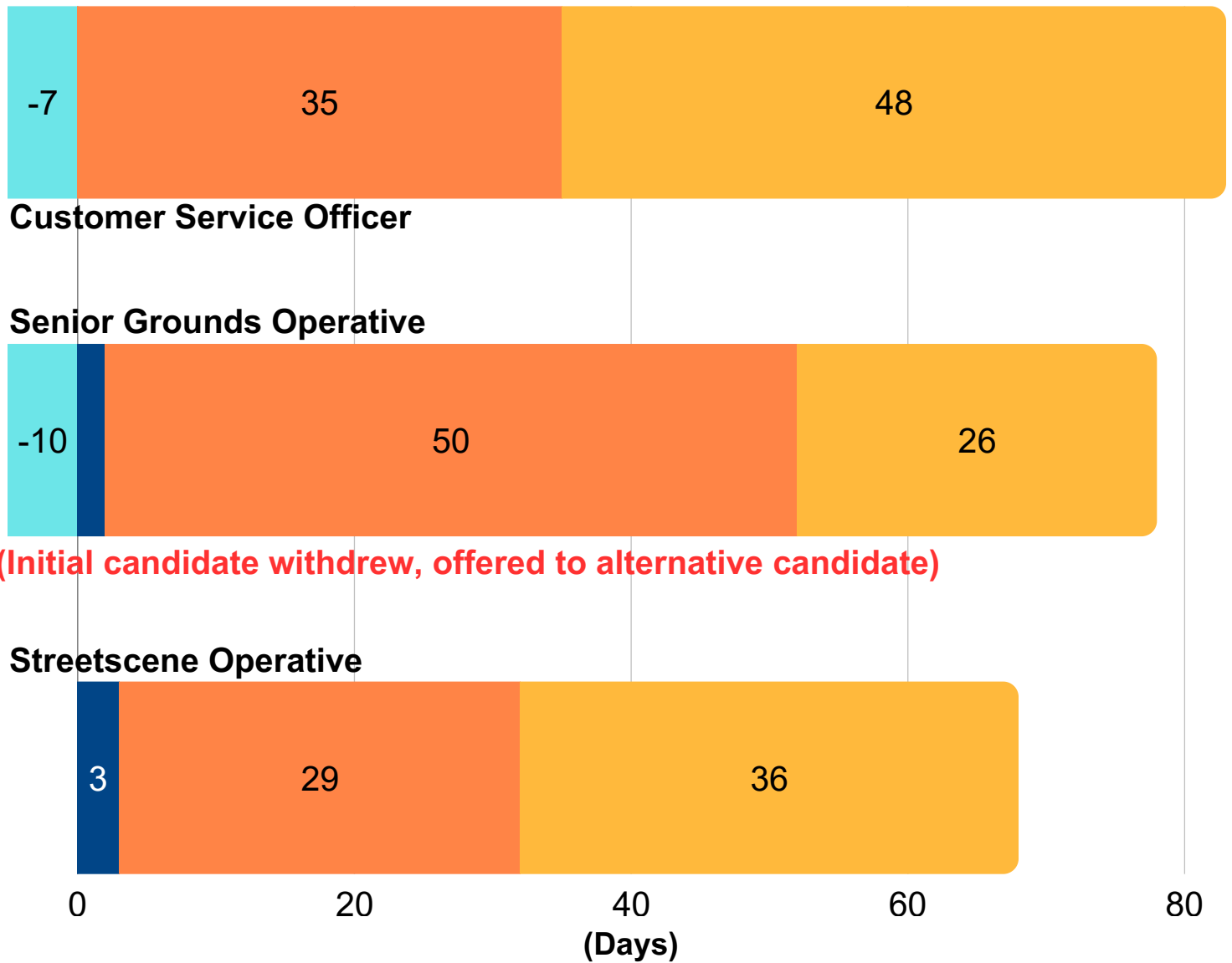
Ways to improve?

- Managers will receive on-going HR guidance supporting shortlisting, interview scheduling, prompt submission of post-interview documentation, and early notification of resignations to reduce recruitment delays.
- HR will support managers in most effective use of existing software to access a self-service function to understand where applicants are in the recruitment process.
- Recruitment trends will be reviewed in HR meetings to identify process inefficiencies and implement targeted improvements.
- The HR Manager is leading an onboarding improvement project, supported by a focus group and external benchmarking (including engagement with other councils and professional body research), to strengthen induction outcomes and new starter experience.



Time to Hire - Each stage (December - February 26)

- Time to Advert (Dept)
- Time to Post Vacancy (HR)
- Advert to offer Acceptance (Dept)
- Acceptance to Start Date (Candidate)



Note: Some vacancies were advertised before the previous postholder left leading to a minus 'Time to advert' value. this reflects proactive recruitment.

Absenteeism

What's included: All calendar days, not just working days. This means weekends are counted if the absence spans them.

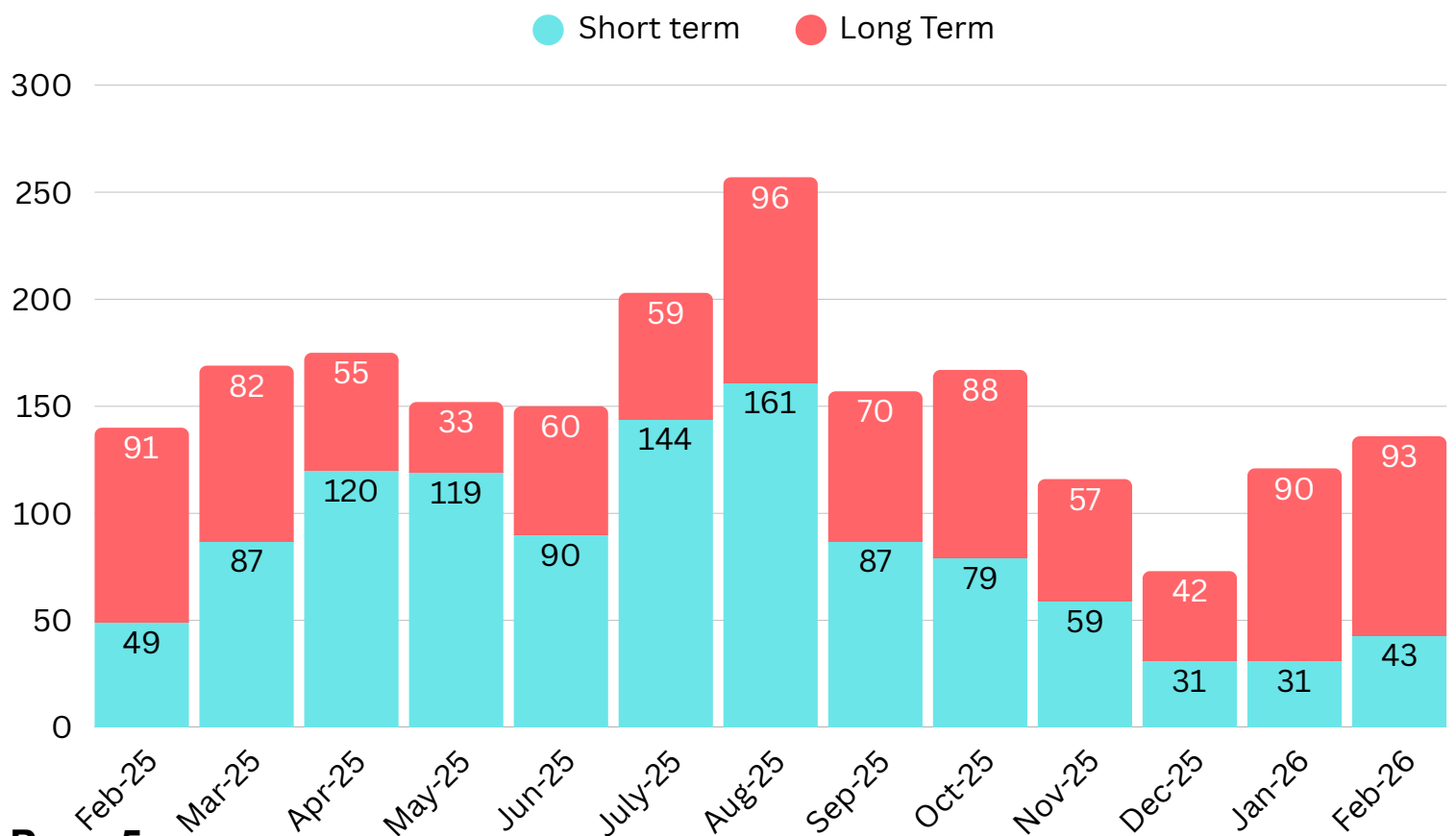
Why the Data is captured this way: Currently, our HR information software produces sickness data based on the start date and finish date, without considering working days within that time. Therefore the data and graph show trends over time, not exact working days lost. *Averages calculated on this data must be considered upper bound estimates.*

A new approach has been taken to long-term sickness data, moving the definition from qualifying after two weeks to four weeks. this is to align the data better with industry and HR standards, shifting previous KPI figures.

- Sickness absence has increased over the last three months, rising from 73 days in December to 136 days in February. This increase is primarily driven by long-term absence, which accounts for most days lost during this period.
- Short-term absence levels have dropped this quarter, to their lowest levels in the last 12months.

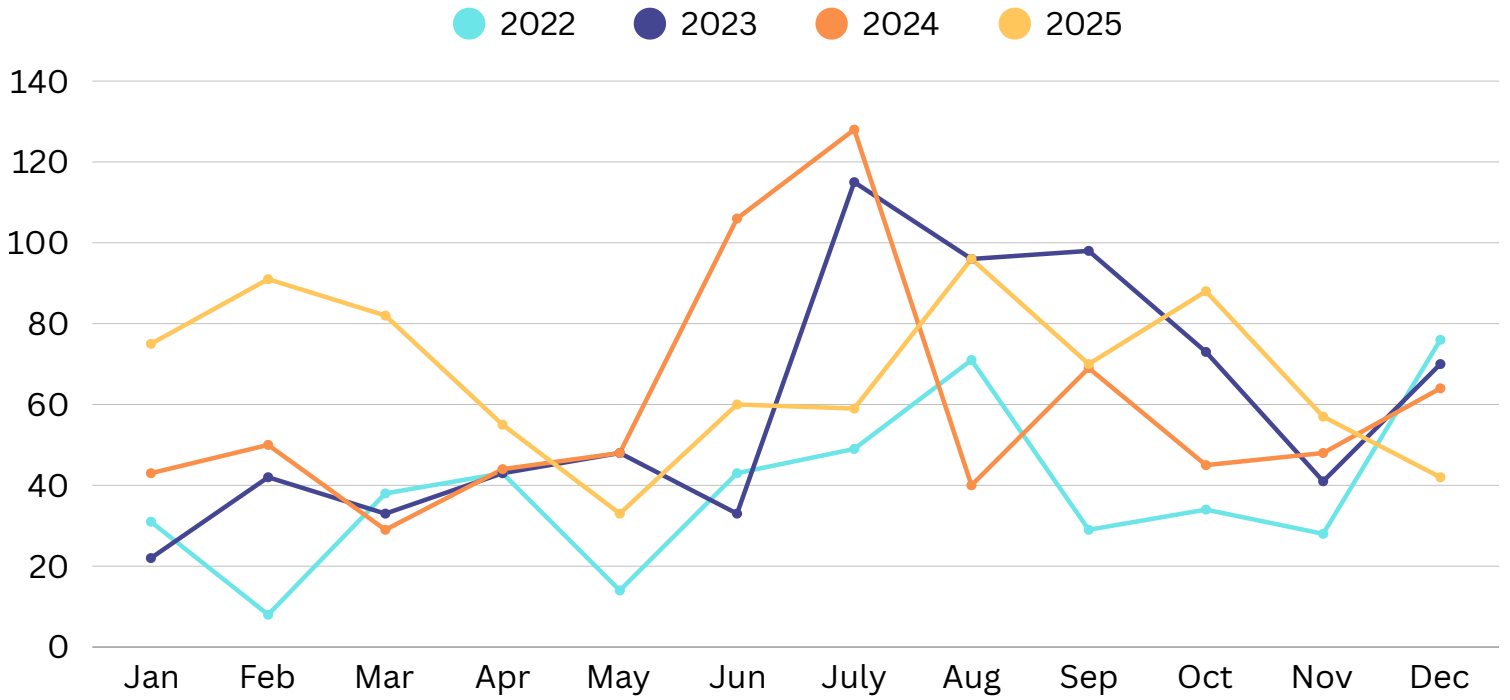
Focus will remain on proactive case management, early intervention, engagement with Occupational Health where appropriate, and structured return-to-work planning to support a reduction in long-term absence levels

Sickness Absence by Calender Days (Short- vs Long-Term)

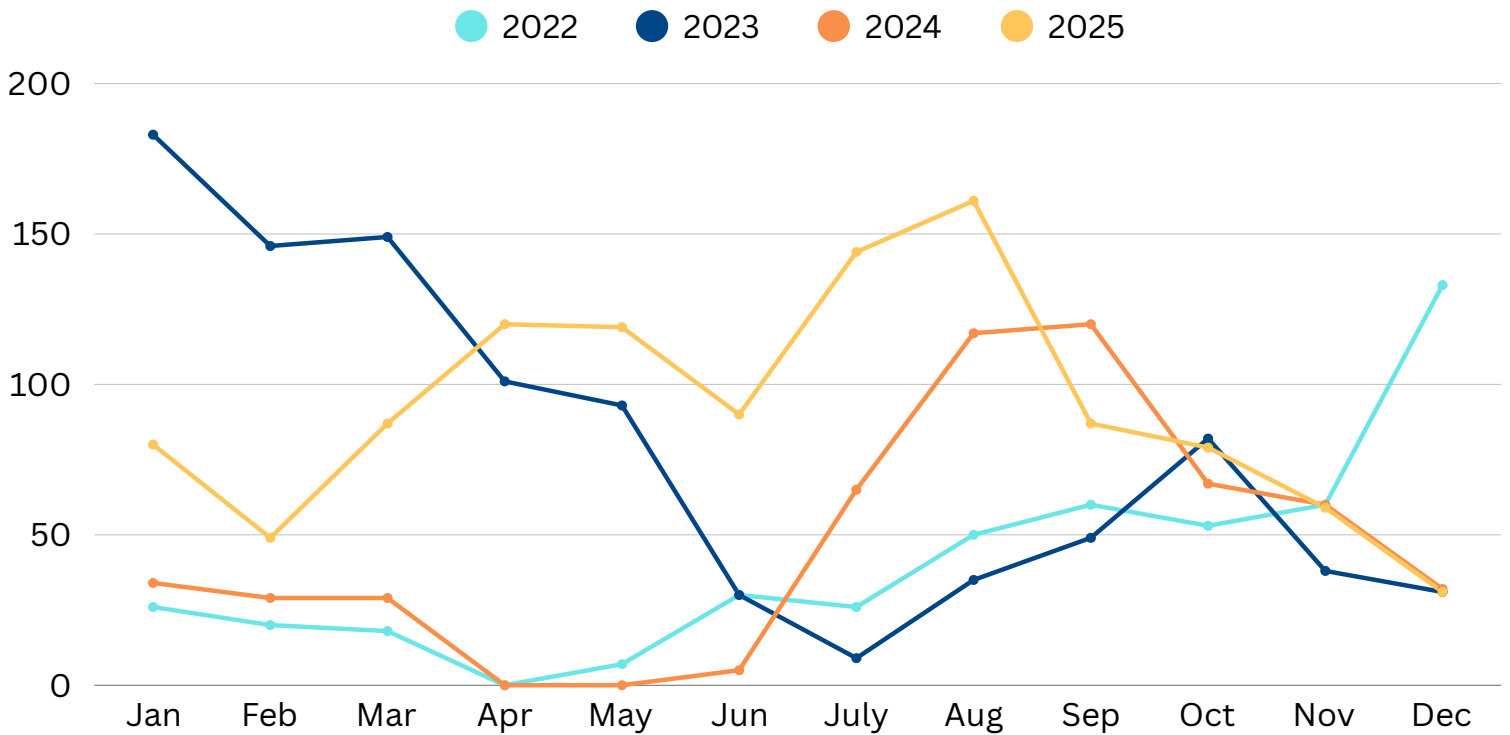


Absenteeism

Sickness Absence by Calender Days (Short Term)



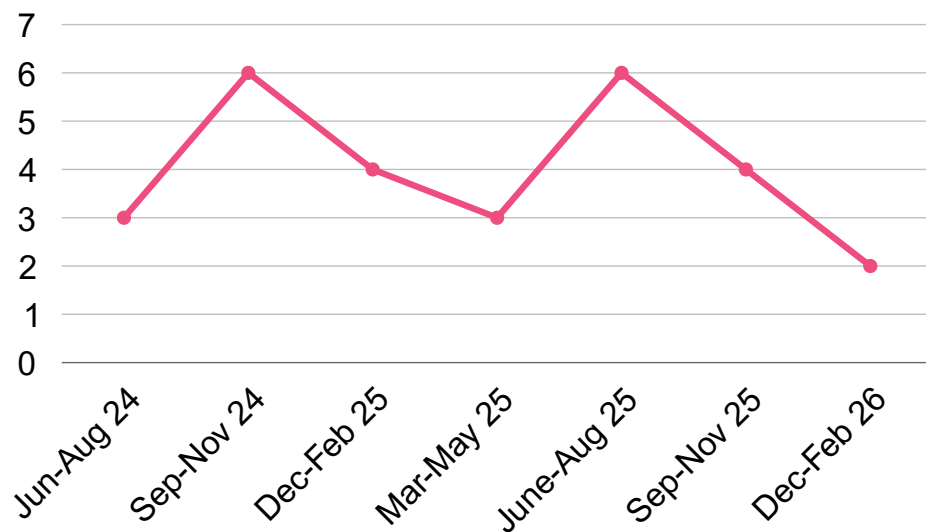
Sickness Absence by Calender Days (Long Term)



Turnover

Data includes all leavers, including those who retired or were dismissed.

Quarterly Turnover Rate (%)



Turnover Rate – What the Data Shows

Our quarterly turnover rates over the past year have remained low and stable:

What does this tell us?

Turnover in the last 12 months is 15%. The Benchmark average for public administration sits at 24.5% annual turnover rate (according to CIPD 2023 research) This suggests a positive level of staff retention and organisational stability.

Why is turnover important?

- High turnover can increase recruitment and training costs.
- It can also impact service continuity and team morale.
- Low and steady turnover helps maintain skills, knowledge, and consistency for our community.

For More information on Turnover Benchmarks, refer to

<https://www.cipd.org/uk/views-and-insights/thought-leadership/cipd-voice/benchmarking-employee-turnover/>

ONS public sector data:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/datasets/publicsectoremploymentreferencetable>