



## **Continuation of Business Continuity Plan – People Strategy – Coronavirus Pandemic**

**Committee**            Personnel

**Date of meeting**    5 November 2021

**Date of report**    26 October 2021

### **Report by Acting Chief Executive**

#### **1. Object of report**

To provide members with an update on the staffing impacts of the continuing pandemic and the continuation of SPT's business continuity plan, while operating and following government guidance on infection control.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Personnel Committee on 30 April 2021 received a report on the implications of the pandemic on SPT staffing as at that time. This report is to give an update as the pandemic continued during 2021, varying government restrictions and responses.
- 2.2 As members are aware, Scotland has moved incrementally from and now beyond level 0 restrictions with effect from 9 August 2021, but some mitigations remain in place.

#### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 As a public service, SPT remained committed to staying as operational as possible during the coronavirus pandemic, but critical to this was the protection of our staff and passengers.
- 3.2 Operational/customer-facing staff continued to deliver a full range of services to support the continuity of public transport services the Strathclyde area. The Subway Senior Team continued to meet on a daily basis to provide updates on each of their functional areas, and other operational teams in bus and bus stations continued to have daily focus on service levels and to continue to review all arrangements in relation to SPT employees and key stakeholders.
- 3.3 During this time many non-operational/customer-facing staff continued to work from home in line with the government guidance but in support of staff where a return to an office-based environment was beneficial for wellbeing reasons, this was facilitated in a planned and organised fashion. In addition, staggered office hours with a mixture of commuting and non-commuting days were also recommended to ease the pressure on rush hour traffic and public transport as well as reducing the risks of Covid-19 transmission.
- 3.4 At the time of writing SPT has now implemented a careful and planned move towards a hybrid working arrangement for those staff who have in the main been based at home. This approach supports staff, takes account of infection control but moves SPT business activities

in to a more collegiate and effective phase. This will continue to be reviewed over the autumn and winter.

- 3.5 Acknowledging that the coronavirus and the return to SPT offices and premises, albeit careful and cautious, may place heightened anxiety and stress on employee mental wellbeing and that some employees may need additional support SPT ensured that the Employee Assistance Programme - Validium remained accessible to all staff either by telephone or through their website forum VClub. In addition, a number of our employees suffered bereavement during this period with support offered through our Employee Assistance Programme Validium.
- 3.6 Social distancing, hygiene and cross-contamination prevention measures remained in place, and continue to do so, at all SPT locations, including the provision of additional personal protective equipment (gloves, hand sanitiser and masks, where appropriate). In addition, all risk assessments continue to be regularly reviewed and updated.

#### 4. Staffing Impact Statics

- 4.1 As at 8 August 2021 there were 502 instances of self-isolation, with the majority being single instances. 301 employees self-isolated once, 116 employees self-isolated twice, 44 employees self-isolated three times, 24 employees self-isolated four times, 11 employees self-isolated five times, 4 employees self-isolated six times and 2 employees self-isolated seven times.

The self isolation rules were amended on 9 August whereby self isolation was no longer automatic where vaccination and negative tests were in place. This has resulted in a less immediate impact on SPT as a result.

Reason for Self Isolation	Total Instances as at 8 August	Total Instances as at 7 October
Family member has symptoms	137	158
Has symptoms	186	235
Local Authority education letter	6	6
Quarantine – return from abroad	5	5
Shielding	31	31
Test & Protect Contact	136	171
<b>Total</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>606</b>

- 4.2 As members are aware staff absences are closely monitored, with the reasons for absence changing throughout the pandemic. The statistics showed that the majority of absence during Periods 1, 2 and 3 were related to muscular skeletal while an increase in staff absence in P4 is directly related to an increase of self-isolations. This coincided with the significant rise in Covid-19 cases across the country during June/July 2021. Absence slightly decreased in P5 with muscular skeletal the main reason for absence however; it increased again in P6 with the main reasons for absence related to Covid-19 and self-isolation.

#### 5. Conclusions

SPT will continue to follow Scottish Government guidance on all matters relating to the control of the pandemic, and will keep under review its support to staff as we move towards a more “normal” operation, and our continued delivery of key services.

We will also ensure that our business continuity plan is reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice.

## 6. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

## 7. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>Working arrangements and sickness absence levels are an integral part of SPT's strategy to continue to deliver effective services within a constrained budget. These were continually monitored.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Full consideration of key staff groups impacted by Covid-19 including shielding, underlying health conditions, pregnant workers, over 70s and black and ethnic minority staff.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>Workplace Covid-19 risk assessments were compiled by SPT's Health &amp; Safety function in consultation with our Trade Union Representatives.</i>

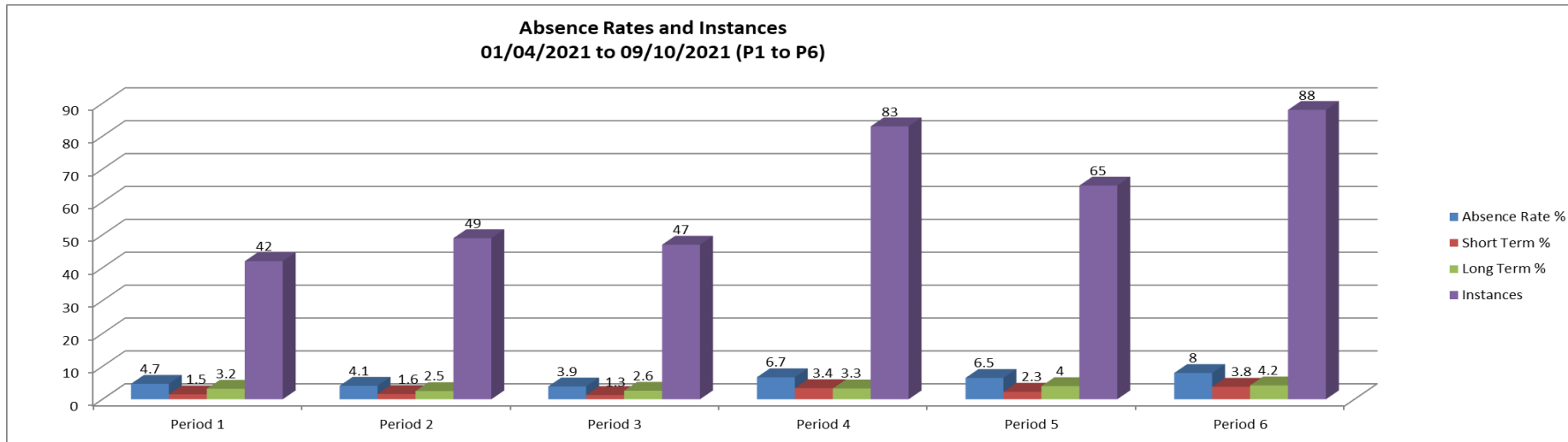
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**APPENDIX 1**

**TABLE 1**



**TABLE 2**

