

Employee Relations Quarterly Report on Casework and Policy Development

Q2 2023/24 (1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023)



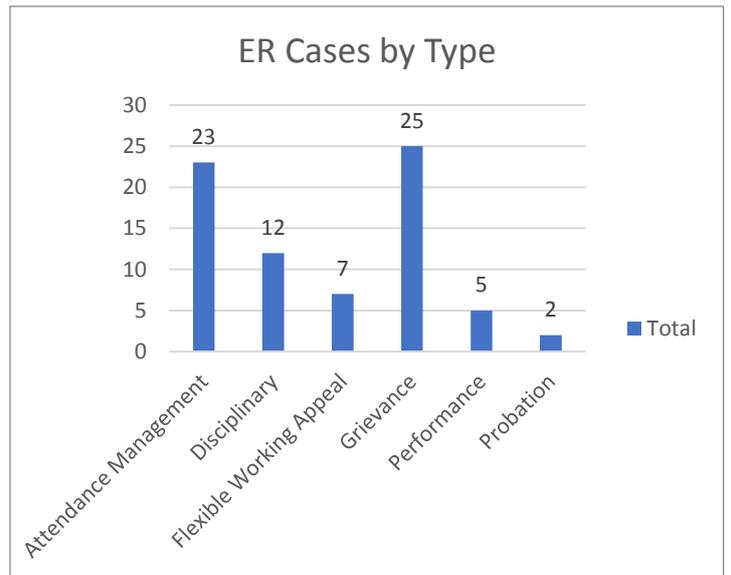
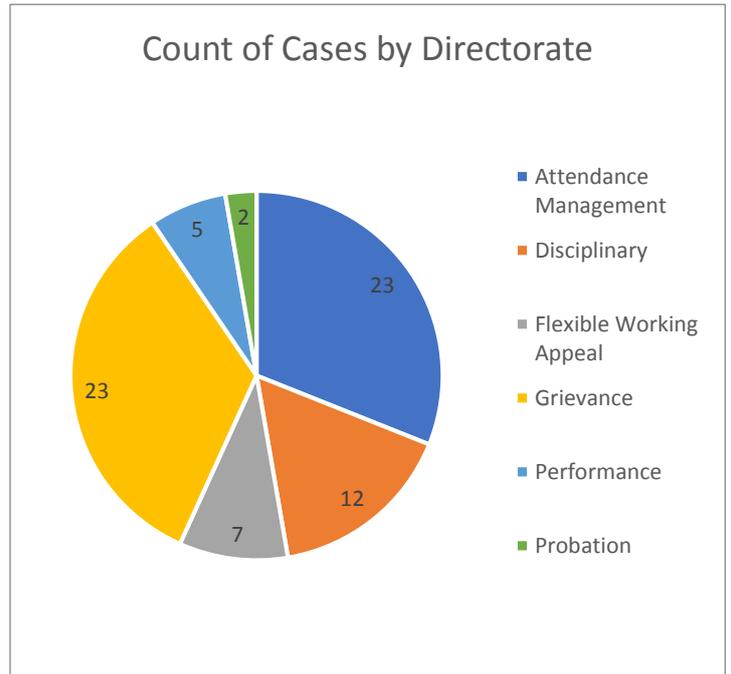
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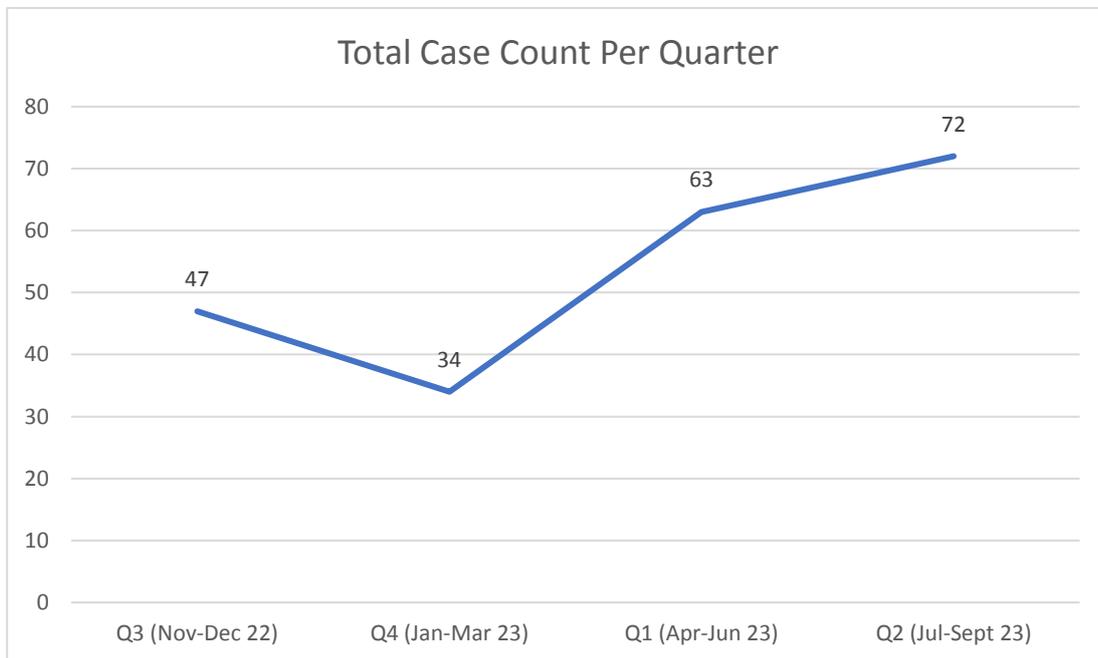
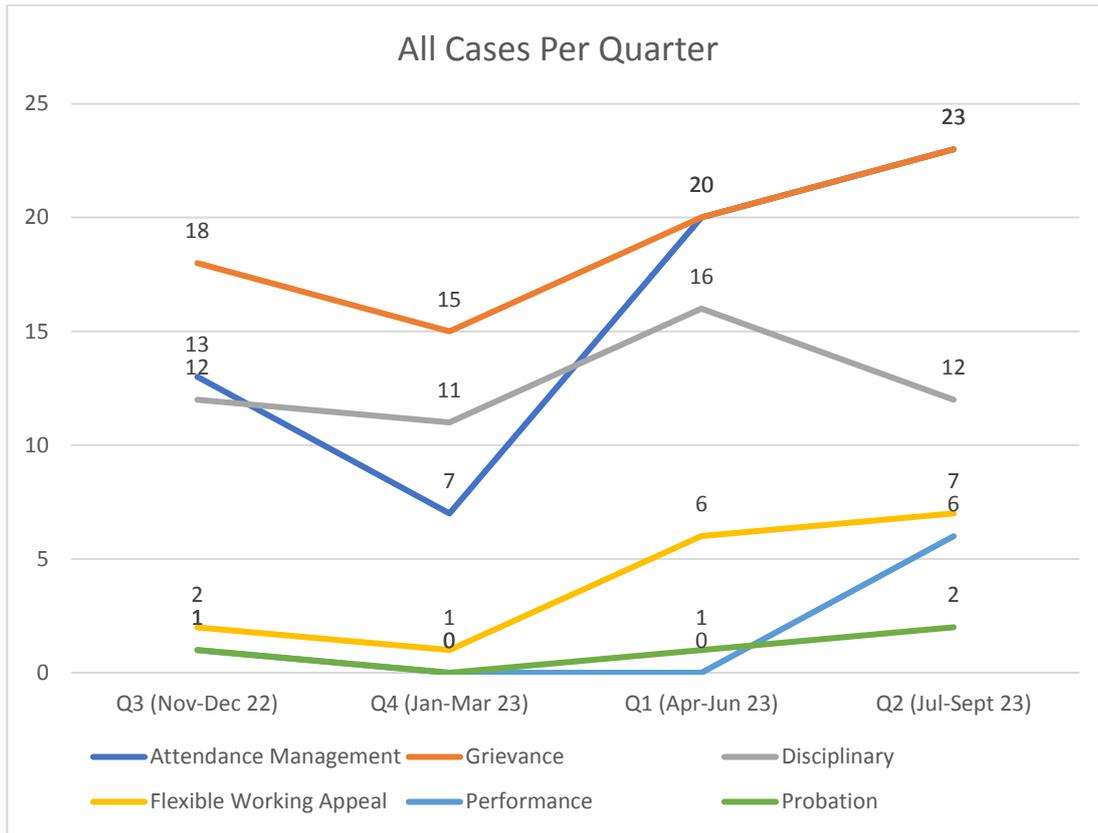
Employee Relations

1. Dashboard

Row Labels	Count of Case Type
Chief Executive's Office	5
Attendance Management	1
Disciplinary	1
Grievance	3
Children & Culture Services	21
Attendance Management	8
Disciplinary	1
Flexible Working Appeal	5
Grievance	5
Performance	2
Children's Services	1
Probation	1
Communities	1
Attendance Management	1
Health, Adults & Community	7
Attendance Management	1
Disciplinary	1
Grievance	5
Performance	2
Housing and Regeneration	2
Flexible Working Appeal	1
Probation	1
Place	21
Attendance Management	7
Disciplinary	7
Grievance	7
Resources	12
Attendance Management	5
Disciplinary	2
Flexible Working Appeal	1
Grievance	3
Performance	1
Grand Total	72



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2. Summary of Key Quarter 2 Casework Data (1 Jul 2023 to 30 Sept 2023)

- 2.1 There were 72 cases handled in total in this period (9 more than the total for Quarter 1). At the end of the period, 36 cases were open and 35 had been closed by 30 September 2023.
- 2.2 There is an increasing trend in the number of cases being managed over the period. This is largely due to the increase in attendance management cases, particularly in Waste Service and Contract Services. Historically, these areas have not been well managed and have high levels of sickness absence so we have been working closely with managers to address this.
- 2.3. Looking overall at cases by type, attendance management and grievances were the highest (23 attendance management and 23 grievances). There were also 12 disciplinaries, 7 flexible working appeals, 5 performance cases, and 2 probation cases. The attendance management cases account for the greatest increase since Q4 22-23.
- 2.4. Of the 23 grievances (2 collective and 21 individual), 6 grievances relate to concerns about line managers, 9 relate to complaints about other colleagues, 4 relate to verbal abuse/inappropriate behaviour, 3 relate to terms and conditions, and 1 relates to sexual harassment. Of the 23 grievances, 16 were opened before Q2 (1 July 2023).
- 2.5. Of the 12 disciplinaries, 2 were alleged misconduct cases, 10 were gross misconduct cases. 7 cases were in Place and the rest spread across other Directorates. 6 disciplinaries were still open at the end of the reporting period. 3 disciplinaries cases were closed. Of those 6 closed there was 1 dismissal, 2 first warnings, 1 was upheld and 1 case was resolved informally.
- 2.6. 90% of the cases were closed well within the target benchmark of 120 days to close a case from its receipt to a final outcome. The benchmark of 120 days is a reasonable and realistic timeframe for a council, where complex cases are the norm and thorough investigations undertaken by independent in-house investigators are time consuming. 35 cases were closed in this period, and the average length of time to resolve the cases was 120.9 calendar days.
- 2.7. 2 cases involved suspension, related to potential gross misconduct. The 2 suspensions were in Place.
- 2.8. In addition to support for formal cases the HR team also deal with informal queries that come through the corporate in boxes and many cases are handled informally with the guidance of HR.
- 2.9. For this period, there were 21 live ET cases. The legal department report on this separately at the Statutory Officers meeting. A review of ET cases is taking place to establish if any can be resolved without the need for a tribunal hearing.
- 2.10. Equalities data is reported annually.

3. Policy Development

- 3.3. The Job Evaluation Policy is currently under review with the trade unions. The revised policy will reflect the use of a new automated job evaluation system, called Compensate, which is approved by the GLPC. The new process involves a joint panel with HR and the trade unions and will invite managers to answer questions to enable an accurate assessment of each grade factor. The local conventions are also being reviewed with the trade unions. Having a centralised system of job evaluation data will enable the Council to build a body of data that can be monitored, reported on and give oversight on the consistency of evaluations for each grade. It will also mean that we have accurate data to ensure that we have equal pay for jobs of equal value. As part of this exercise, we are also consulting with the trade unions about how we can implement Grade N. This is a grade that is not currently used as it has no evaluation points allocated to it but it is needed to address some anomalies in pay arising out of the change to the grade structure in 2020 and to reward staff that have taken on additional responsibilities.
- 3.4. Paternity Leave Procedure: the paternity leave provision used to be part of the Maternity Policy. This is now a stand-alone Paternity Leave Procedure to assist staff locating details regarding this specific provision. There is no change to the entitlement. Staff are entitled to have 2 weeks paid leave following the birth of a child. The policy also incorporates entitlements in respect of adoption leave and babies born through surrogacy.
- 3.5. Supporting staff following miscarriage: The Policy team were asked to produce guidance on miscarriage. This is currently in the consultation stage with the trade unions and staff networks.
- 3.6. Special Leave Policy: This now contains a new clause which addresses the need for leave that is related miscarriage. A member of staff can be granted one week's paid leave on compassionate grounds. Additionally, leave for Justices of the Peace (magistrates) has been reworded to clarify that magistrates are required to be in court for 13 days each year.
- 3.7. Maternity Leave: There has been amendment to the Procedure for clause 13.3 to include new mothers expressing breast milk. Additionally, there is a new FAQ in the maternity leave FAQ section on the Bridge to specifically cite breastfeeding and expressing and the support available for staff. Maternity leave (towerhamlets.gov.uk)
- 3.8. Work is ongoing on automating the People Resourcing Board forms.
- 3.9. Following recent audit reports, the DBS and DOI Policy and processes have been subject to review.