

# **Report to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel**



## SCRUTINY



**Date of meeting: 20 November 2012**

**Subject:** Sickness Absence

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**Committee Secretary:** Adrian Hendry (01992 564246)

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Panel notes the report on sickness absence.**

### **Executive Summary**

1. This report provides information on the Council's absence figures for Q1 and Q2, 2012/2013; it includes absence figures by Directorate, the number of employees who have met the trigger level, those who have more than 4 weeks absence and reasons for absence.
2. The Council's target for sickness absence under KPI10 for 2012/2013 is an average of 7.5 days per employee.
3. The Council figures for Q1 and Q2 are 1.6 days and 1.78 days against targets of 1.84 days and 1.62 days respectively for these periods. Figures for each Directorate are set out in paragraph 12 of the report.
4. During Q1 3.9% of staff met the trigger levels or above, 21.5% had sickness absence but did not meet the triggers and 74.6% had no absence.
5. During Q2 3.9% of staff met the trigger levels or above, 21.6% had sickness absence but did not meet the triggers and 74.5% had no absence.
6. Currently, under the Council's Managing Absence Policy there are trigger levels for initiating management action in cases of excessive sickness absence. These are:
  - (i) during any 'rolling' twelve-month period an employee has had 5 or more separate occasions of absence; or
  - (ii) during any 'rolling' twelve-month period an employee has had at least 8 working days of any combination of un/self certificated, or medically certificated absences.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

To enable members make decisions regarding actions to continue to improve the Council's absence figures

### **Other Options for Action**

For future reports the Panel may wish to include other information or receive no report.

**Report:**

## Introduction

7. The latest figures published by the Industrial Relations Service (for 2011) show that the average number of days taken as sickness absence in public services was 7.6 days compared to 8.5 days in the not-for-profit sector, 5 days in the finance sector and 6.3 days in the construction sector.
8. Currently, under the Council's Managing Absence Policy there are trigger levels for initiating management action in cases of excessive sickness absence. These are:
  - (i) during any 'rolling' twelve-month period an employee has had 5 or more separate occasions of absence; or
  - (ii) during any 'rolling' twelve-month period an employee has had at least 8 working days of any combination of un/self certificated, or medically certificated absences.
9. In addition to the above a manager should consider referring an employee to Occupational Health when an employee has been absent from work for at least one month if there is no estimate when they will be fit to return, or if this is unlikely to be within a reasonable period.

## Quarterly Figures 2010/2011 – 2011/2012

10. The KPI target for sickness absence has been amended to 7.5 days for 2012/13. The Q1 figure of 1.6 days is below the target for this period of 1.84 days. However, the Q2 figure of 1.78 days is slightly above the target for this period of 1.62 days.
11. The cumulative total for Q1 and Q2 is 3.38 days which is below the target for this period of 3.46 days.

Table 1 below shows the absence figures for each quarter since 2010/2011.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Outturn	Target
<b>2010/2011</b>	1.88	1.81	2.15	2.01	7.85	8
<b>2011/2012</b>	1.86	1.64	1.87	2.21	7.58	7.75
<b>2012/2013</b>	1.6	1.78				7.5

Table 1

## Directorate Figures 2011/2012 – 2012/2013

12. Table 2 shows the average number of days lost per employee in each Directorate. The target figures for Q1 and Q2 are an average 1.84 days and 1.62 days respectively. In Q1 three Directorates were above this target, albeit 2 Directorates very slightly. In Q2, four Directorates were above the target.

Directorate	Ave FTE	Average Number of Days Absence 2011/2012				Total Ave No of Days 2011/12	Average Number of Days Absence 2012/2013				Total Ave No of Days 2012/13
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>Office of CE</b>	20.9	1.39	1.93	2.34	1.43	<b>7.09</b>	0.18	0.16			
<b>Office of DCE</b>	47	2.08	2.12	1.71	1.92	<b>7.83</b>	1.85	1.98			
<b>Corporate Support Services</b>	69.7	2.12	1.08	1.13	1.78	<b>6.11</b>	1.35	1.52			

Directorate	Ave FTE	Average Number of Days Absence 2011/2012				Total Ave No of Days 2011/12	Average Number of Days Absence 2012/2013				Total Ave No of Days 2012/13
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>Environment &amp; Street Scene</b>	113	1.25	1.75	1.53	2.17	<b>6.7</b>	1.86	1.89			
<b>Finance &amp; ICT</b>	115.6	1.72	1.79	2.71	2.76	<b>8.98</b>	1.37	1.28			
<b>Housing</b>	183.8	1.83	1.52	1.94	2.16	<b>7.45</b>	1.49	2.16			
<b>Planning</b>	68.2	2.75	1.75	1.60	2.41	<b>8.51</b>	2.43	2.10			

Table 2

13. This table is represented by a graph which can be found at appendix 1.

14. During Q2 in Housing, absence of 7 days or less resulted in 47.5% of time lost during this period compared to 24.3% in Q1. Long term absence decreased from 47.5% in Q1 to 24.4% in Q2. From Q1 to Q2 there was a significant increase in the number of days taken for 'other musculo-skeletal problems' and does include 2 employees who had accidents at work and 1 employee who had surgery.

15. During Q1 in Planning, 74.5% of time lost was due to long term absence compared to 31.6% in Q2. Three employees had long term absence, 2 have since returned to work, sadly the other employee passed away.

### Long Term Absence 2012/2013

16. For this purpose long term absence has been defined as 4 weeks or over. During Q1 a total of 13 employees had 4 weeks or more absence. Eleven employees had one continuous period of absence and 3 employees had two periods of absence.

17. During Q2 a total of 12 employees had 4 weeks or more absence. Nine employees had one continuous period of absence, 2 had two periods of absence and 1 had 4 periods.

Table 3 provides further detail on these employees.

2012/13 Quarter	Resigned	Returned to work	Dismissed	Proposed Return date	Still Absent	Deceased	Redundancy
<b>Q1</b>	7.7% (1)	61.5% (8)	0	0	15.4% (2)	15.4% (2)	0
<b>Q2</b>	8.3% (1)	50% (6)	0	16.7% (2)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)

Table 3

18. At appendix 2 there is a graph which sets out a breakdown of days lost to long term absence, those who met the trigger level and those below the trigger level. This graph shows that overall, 35% of lost time for Q1 was due to long term absence during Q2 this increased to 48.5%. During Q1, 15.5% of time lost met the trigger level (and above to 19 days) which increased slightly during Q2. In Q1 49.5% of sickness absence was due to short term absence which decreased to 35% in Q2.

### Reasons for Absence

19. Table 4 shows the reasons for absence, including the total number of days for 2012/13

Reason	Number of Days Q1	Number of Days Q2	Number of Days Q3	Number of Days Q4
	2012/2013	2012/2013	2012/2013	2012/2013
Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion; include diarrhoea, vomiting and other gastro illnesses	141.3	144.09		
Other musculo-skeletal problems; includes neck, legs or feet and arms or hands. Also include joint problems such as arthritis.	256	261.69		
Infections, including viral infections such as influenza, cold, cough and throat infections	166.6	147.14		
Depression, anxiety, mental health and fatigue. Includes mental illnesses such as anxiety and nervous debility/disorder (does not include stress)	0	19.09		
Work related stress	15	55		
Non Work related stress	20	102		
Chest, respiratory; including asthma, bronchitis, hay fever and chest infections	14.7	45		
Back problems	62.6	61.06		
Neurological; headaches and migraines	21	18.31		
Genito-urinary; menstrual problems	37.3	27.15		
Cancer, including all types of cancer and related treatments	105.10	86.90		
Eye, ear, nose and mouth, dental; sinusitis	10.38	34.54		
Pregnancy Related	1	1		
Heart, blood pressure, circulation	60.4	9		
RTA	0	5	6.6	
Endocrine conditions i.e. diabetes, thyroid conditions (New category)	0	3.54		

Table 4

20. Work related stress has been claimed by 1 employee in Q1 and is back at work. There were no vacancies in this team at the time which remains the case. Another employee had absence due to work related stress in Q2 due to significant changes to the delivery of their service area and as a result of the changes their post was redundant.

## Numbers of Absent Staff

21. Table 5 shows that there were fairly consistent numbers of staff who had no absence and those that had absence over the course of last year which has continued into this year. Approximately two-thirds of staff had no absence.

Quarter		Staff with no absence	Staff with 7 days or less	Staff with 8 days or more
1	2012/2013	74.6% (500)	21.5% (144)	3.9% (26)
2	2012/2013	74.5% (499)	21.6% (21.6)	3.9% (26)
3	2012/2013			
4	2012/2013			
1	2011/2012	71.2% (475)	23.7% (158)	5.1% (34)
2	2011/2012	73.3% (489)	22.8% (152)	3.9% (26)
3	2011/2012	66.6% (444)	29.5% (197)	3.9% (26)
4	2011/2012	65.8% (439)	28.3% (189)	5.9% (39)

Table 5

### Resource implications:

N/A

### Legal and Governance Implications

N/A

### Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications

N/A

### Consultation Undertaken

None

### Background Papers

N/A

### Risk Management

Failure to manage sickness absence results in loss productivity and if it is significantly high could adversely affect the reputation of the authority.

### Equality and Diversity

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?

No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?

N/A

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?

N/A