

---

**To:            Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board**

**On:            1 June 2015**

---

**Report by:   Director of Finance and Resources**

---

**Heading:    Absence Statistics**

---

## **1.      Summary**

- 1.1    The purpose of this report is to advise the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board of sickness absence performance for the period 24 March 2014 to 23 March 2015. The report breaks down the absence statistics by service and by category of staff. Attached to this report are Appendices A-B described in the index of appendices at the end of this report.
- 1.2    The report provides information in relation to absence targets and how services have performed against them. An analysis of the reasons for absence for the latest quarter has also been compiled and details are included within the report. Information is also provided on managing absence activity and the costs of sick pay.
- 

## **2.      Recommendations**

- 2.1    It is recommended that the Board notes the content of this report.
-

### 3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 25 June 2002 the Scrutiny Board agreed that absence levels will be reported to the Scrutiny Board (now Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board) on a quarterly basis. It was agreed that the report will include the following information relating to maximising attendance:-
- Absence statistics broken down by department and category of staff.
  - Reasons for absence broken down by department and category of staff.
  - Progress on implementation of departmental maximising attendance action plans.

---

### 4. Absence Statistics - Quarters Ending 22 June 2014, 21 September 2014, 31 December 2014 and 23 March 2015

- 4.1 Please find service and Council overall absence performance for quarter endings 22 June 2014, 21 September 2014, 31 December 2014 and 23 March 2014 against target given in the tables to follow. In line with the reporting requirements for Scottish Councils absence is expressed as a number of work days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) employee. The absence performance for the equivalent quarters in the previous year has also been included in the tables for comparison purposes.

Service/Area	Quarter Ending 23 June 2013	Quarter Ending 22 June 2014	Quarter Ending 22 June 2014 Target
Chief Executive's Services	1.54	1.79	0.80
Education and Leisure Services	2.19	1.84	1.56
Community Resources	2.56	2.95	2.15
Finance and Resources	1.54	2.06	1.34
Development and Housing Services	1.71	2.10	1.69
Social Work Services	2.94	3.21	2.36
<b>Council Overall</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>1.79</b>

Service/Area	Quarter Ending 22 September 2013	Quarter Ending 21 September 2014	Quarter Ending 21 September 2014 Target
Chief Executive's Services	1.88	0.74	0.80
Education and Leisure Services	1.25	2.48	1.56
Community Resources	2.39	2.29	2.15
Finance and Resources	1.45	1.86	1.34
Development and Housing Services	1.36	1.86	1.69
Social Work Services	2.80	3.27	2.36
<b>Council Overall</b>	<b>1.80</b>	<b>1.85</b>	<b>1.79</b>

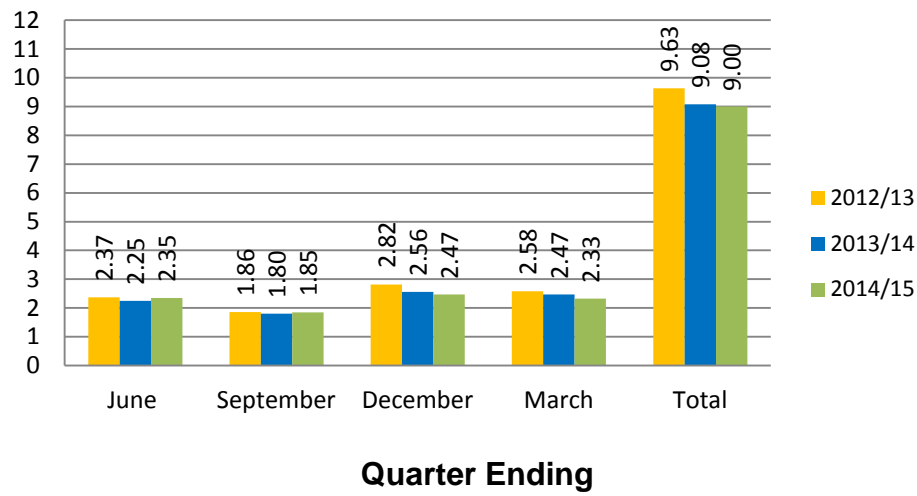
Service/Area	Quarter Ending 31 December 2013	Quarter Ending 31 December 2014	Quarter Ending 31 December 2014 Target
Chief Executive's Services	1.38	0.19	1.20
Education and Leisure Services	2.31	2.07	2.35
Community Resources	2.73	2.90	3.22
Finance and Resources	2.01	1.90	2.00
Development and Housing Services	2.02	1.91	2.53
Social Work Services	3.66	3.70	3.54
<b>Council Overall</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>2.69</b>

Service/Area	Quarter Ending 23 March 2014	Quarter Ending 23 March 2015	Quarter Ending 23 March 2015 Target
Chief Executive's Services	1.03	1.14	1.20
Education and Leisure Services	2.32	2.12	2.35
Community Resources	3.12	2.75	3.22
Finance and Resources	2.32	1.88	2.00
Development and Housing Services	1.46	1.66	2.53
Social Work Services	2.93	3.09	3.54
<b>Council Overall</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>2.69</b>

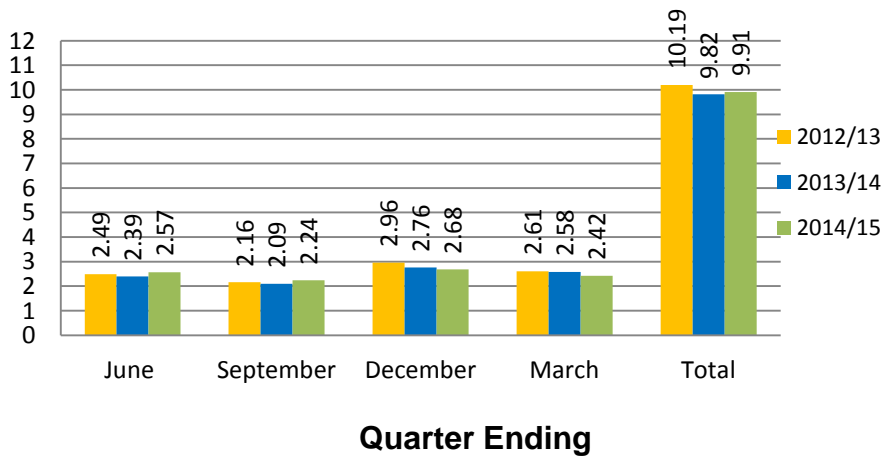
**5. Analysis and Trends - Quarters Ending 22 June 2014, 21 September 2014, 31 December 2014 and 23 March 2015**

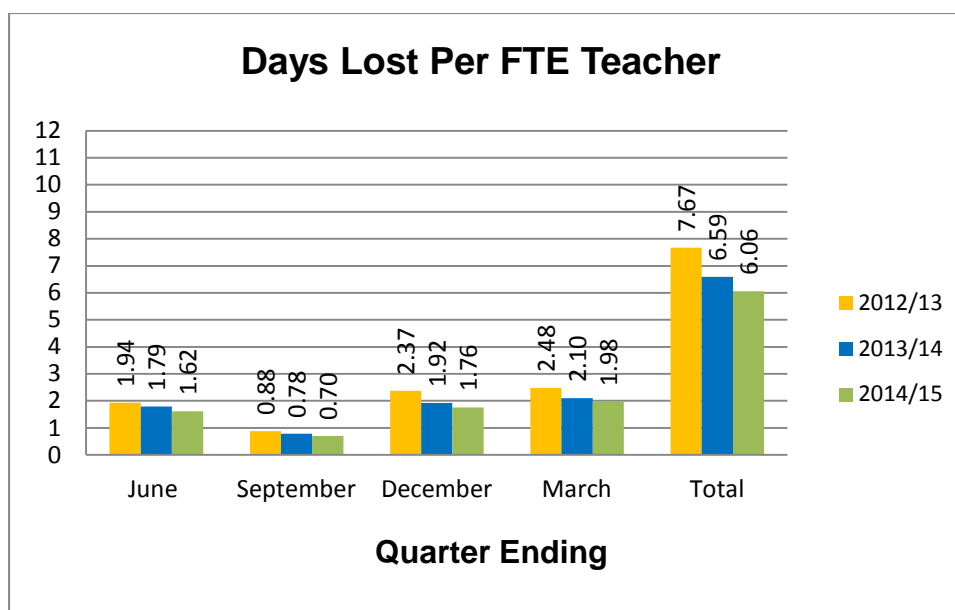
- 5.1 The number of days lost per FTE employee due to absence decreased from 2.35 to 1.85 between quarters ending 22 June 2014 and 21 September 2014. This was followed by an increase to 2.47 days lost per FTE employee during quarter ending 31 December 2014, before a fall to 2.33 in quarter ending 23 March 2015.
- 5.2 Overall Council absence performance in quarter ending 31 December 2014 and 23 March 2015 improved by 0.09 days and 0.14 days respectively per FTE employee compared to the equivalent quarters in 2013/2014. Also, overall Council absence performance was below the quarterly absence targets in quarters ending 31 December 2014 and 23 March 2015.
- 5.3 The following tables detail the absence levels for the Council overall and by employee group for 2014/2015 and for the equivalent quarters in 2012/2013 and 2013/2014:-

### Overall Days Lost Per FTE Employee



### Days Lost Per FTE Local Government Employee





## 6. Absence Targets 2014/2015 and Ranking Information

- 6.1 The absence performance of services, the Council overall and employee groups against the set absence targets for 2014/2015 is shown at **Appendix A**.
- 6.2 Please see **Appendix B** for trends in Council overall and employee group absence performance in recent years, in comparison to other Scottish Councils. The ranking information for 2014/2015 will not be available until later this year.
- 6.3 The Council has recorded an overall absence rate of 9.00 days lost per FTE employee for 2014/2015 which is 0.03 days above the annual target figure of 8.97 days. This represents a 0.08 days per FTE employee improvement in absence when compared to 2013/2014. In addition the absence performance of Teachers improved by 0.53 days per FTE employee in 2014/2015 compared to 2013/2014 and was 1.62 days below the annual target of 7.68 days. The absence performance of Local Government Employees was 0.31 days per FTE employee above the 9.60 day annual target, and experienced a 0.09 days per FTE employee increase in the absence levels reported for 2013/2014.
- 6.4 It should be noted that in 2013/2014 the absence performance reported for the Council overall and Local Government Employees was above the respective Scottish Council average. Also, when compared to other Scottish Councils the Council's overall and Teacher absence performance rankings improved between 2012/2013 and 2013/2014. This resulted in Council overall absence performance improving from 13<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> position and Teacher absence moving from 25<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> place. During the same timescale the absence of Local Government employees fell from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> position despite the reduction in days lost per FTE employee this category achieved in

2013/2014. However, the absence performance of this employee group still compared favourably to a significant number of other Scottish Councils.

- 6.5 It is hoped that the improved absence performance of the Council overall as well as the Teacher employee group in 2014/2015 will secure a further improvement in the Council's absence performance when compared to other Scottish Councils.

## **7. Reasons for Absence**

- 7.1 The category with the highest level of absence in quarter ending 23 March 2015 is 'Psychological' - 27.24% (non work related - 23.75%, work related - 3.49%), with the second highest being 'Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders' - 20.87%. This compares with quarter ending 31 December 2014 when the category with the highest level of absence was 'Psychological' - 30.46% (non work related - 26.33%, work related - 4.13%), with the second highest being 'Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders' - 20.80%.

## **8. Managing Absence Activity**

- 8.1 Recent and planned actions to improve absence performance include the following:-
- Proactively contacting managers who have absence cases of 2 to 4 weeks in duration, to monitor action taken to date and proposed next steps. This is to ensure that managers intervene early in absence cases and keep in regular contact with absent employees. In turn, discussion is facilitated around the employee's progress, any support that may be required and allows flexible return to work options to be explored.
  - Ongoing promotion of the Occupational Health Service Early Intervention Helpline for managers. The aim is to ensure managers receive prompt medical guidance and employees can be quickly referred to support services, where appropriate.
  - The introduction of an electronic referral management system in February 2015 operated by the new Occupational Health Service provider, People Asset Management (PAM). This system will simplify the referral process, facilitate early intervention in cases and increase the speed with which medical guidance is received. It will also enable Occupational Health Service appointment details to be sent directly to an employee's mobile telephone number, where made available.
  - Continued delivery of supporting attendance training at a corporate level for managers, with the provision of tailored training for managers and employees at a service level on request.
  - Seasonal flu vaccination programme.
  - Ongoing health promotion activities including smoking cessation, mental health awareness, events aimed at raising employee awareness of health issues and providing opportunities to try different sport/exercise activities. A number of taster activities have been offered to employees including free swims, blood pressure and mini fitness checks.

- Ongoing work to improve the absence information available to managers, and to streamline supporting attendance related processes to facilitate prompt absence reporting, recording and updating of relevant systems.

## 9. Costs of Sick Pay

9.1 The costs associated with sick pay are provided to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board. The table to follow outlines the costs of sick pay by employee group and overall for 2012/2013, 2013/2014 and 2014/2015:-

### Details of Occupational Sick Pay and Statutory Sick Pay Costs Per Employee Group and Overall for 2012/2013, 2013/2014 and 2014/2015

Quarter/Year	Teachers (includes Supply Teachers)	All Other Employees	Overall
Quarter 1 of 2012/2013	£483,649	£949,844	£1,433,493
Quarter 2 of 2012/2013	£236,309	£924,081	£1,160,390
Quarter 3 of 2012/2013	£600,498	£1,162,759	£1,763,257
Quarter 4 of 2012/2013	£655,080	£1,046,319	£1,701,399
<b>2012/2013 Overall</b>	<b>£1,975,536</b>	<b>£4,083,003</b>	<b>£6,058,539</b>
Quarter 1 of 2013/2014	£435,957	£1,051,161	£1,487,118
Quarter 2 of 2013/2014	£182,746	£1,113,298	£1,296,044
Quarter 3 of 2013/2014	£506,725	£1,067,816	£1,574,541
Quarter 4 of 2013/2014	£632,567	£944,631	£1,577,198
<b>2013/2014 Overall</b>	<b>£1,757,995</b>	<b>£4,176,906</b>	<b>£5,934,901</b>
Quarter 1 of 2014/2015	£490,739	£1,085,444	£1,576,183
Quarter 2 of 2014/2015	£231,365	£1,108,770	£1,340,135
Quarter 3 of 2014/2015	£396,512	£999,266	£1,395,778
Quarter 4 of 2013/2014	£552,457	£944,041	£1,496,498
<b>2014/2015 Overall</b>	<b>£1,671,073</b>	<b>£4,137,521</b>	<b>£5,808,594</b>



---

## Implications of this Report

- 1     **Financial Implications** - Improvement in attendance impacts on the financial costs of absence.
- 2     **HR and Organisational Development Implications** - HR and Organisational Development Practitioners will continue to work with service managers and consult with the Trade Unions, on the implementation of the Supporting Attendance at Work Policy and Guidance and initiatives detailed in this report.
- 3     **Community Planning**  
  
Children and Young People - none.  
  
Jobs and the Economy - none.  
  
Community care, health and wellbeing - provides for continuous improvement in health and attendance.  
  
Safer and Stronger - provides for improved service performance across the Council.  
  
Greener - none.  
  
Empowering our Communities - none.
- 4     **Legal Implications** - none.
- 5     **Property/Asset Implications** - none.
- 6     **Information Technology Implications** - none.
- 7     **Equality and Human Rights Implications** - the recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
- 8     **Health and Safety Implications** - it is integral to the Council's aim of securing the health and well being of employees.
- 9     **Procurement Implications** - none.

- 10 **Risk Implications** - Without continued effective supporting attendance focus, there is a risk that sickness absence levels will adversely impact on the Council both financially and in terms of service delivery. Consequently supporting attendance activities are monitored via the Corporate Risk Register.
- 11 **Privacy Impact Implications** - none.
- 

**List of Background Papers** - none.

---

**Author:** Morna Armstrong, Senior Human Resource Adviser,  
Finance and Corporate Services,  
telephone 01416187329,e-mail [morna.armstrong@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:morna.armstrong@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

---

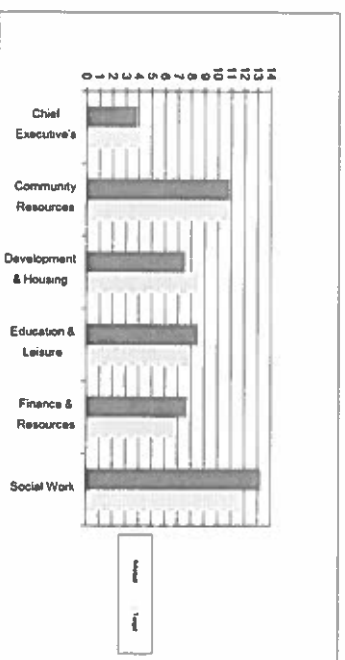
## INDEX OF APPENDICES

- |            |                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| APPENDIX A | Graphs detailing trends in service, Council overall and employee group absence levels against targets for 2014/2015.                                            |
| APPENDIX B | Graphs detailing trends in Council overall and employee group absence performance as well as sick pay costs, for the years 2010/2011 to 2014/2015 year to date. |
-

ABSENCE (DAYS LOST PER FTE EMPLOYEE) V TARGETS 2014/2015

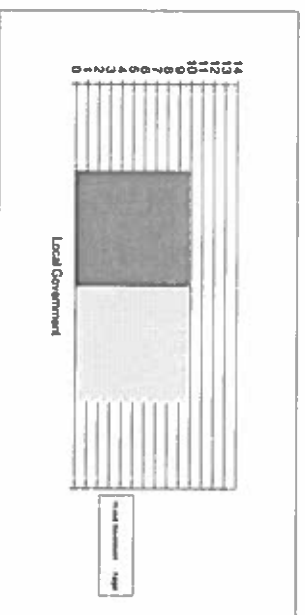
APPENDIX A

Services



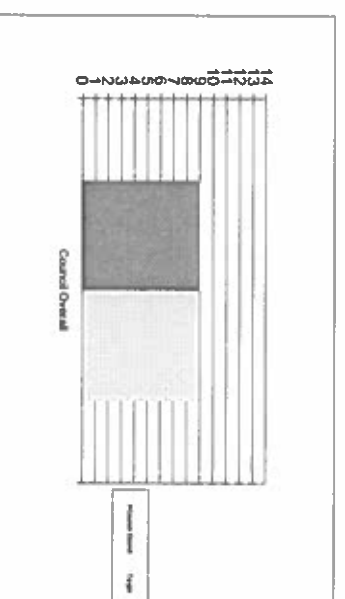
Service	Actual	Target	Difference
Chief Executive's	3.86	4.00	-0.14
Community Resources	10.89	10.73	0.16
Development & Housing	7.53	8.44	-0.91
Education & Leisure	8.51	7.82	0.69
Finance & Resources	7.70	6.68	1.02
Social Work	13.27	11.80	1.47

Local Government Employees



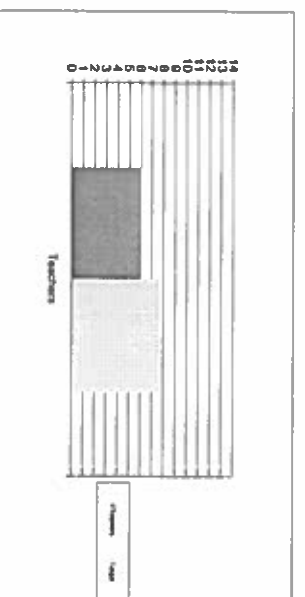
Employee Group	Actual	Target	Difference
Local Government	9.91	9.60	0.31

Council Overall



Employee Group	Actual	Target	Difference
Council Overall	9.00	8.97	0.03

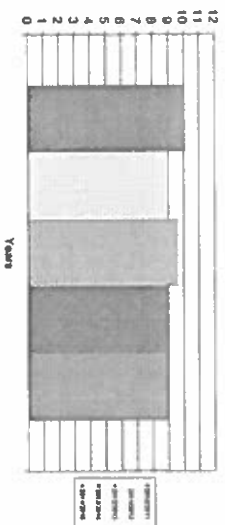
Teachers



Employee Group	Actual	Target	Difference
Teachers	6.06	7.68	-1.62

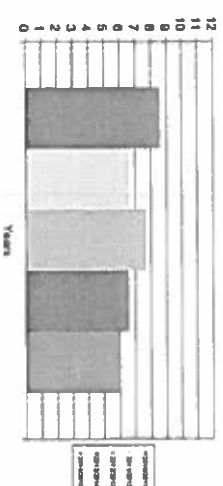
ABSENCE (DAYS LOST PER FTE EMPLOYEE) V OTHER SCOTTISH COUNCILS AND SICK PAY COSTS 2010/2011 TO 2014/2015

Council Overall



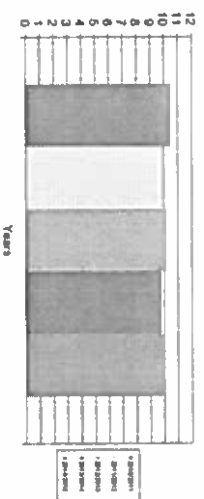
Year	Actual	Ranking	Costs (£)
2010/2011	10.12	23rd	6,882,454
2011/2012	8.90	11th	6,146,251
2012/2013	9.63	13th	6,058,539
2013/2014	9.08	12th	5,934,901
2014/2015	9.00	Not known yet	5,808,594

Teachers



Year	Actual	Ranking	Costs (£)
2010/2011	8.60	28th	1,953,383
2011/2012	6.60	16th	1,683,343
2012/2013	7.70	25th	1,975,536
2013/2014	6.59	20th	1,757,995
2014/2015	6.06	Not known yet	1,671,073

Local Government Employees



Year	Actual	Ranking	Costs (£)
2010/2011	10.50	15th	4,929,071
2011/2012	9.60	7th	4,462,908
2012/2013	10.20	8th	4,083,003
2013/2014	9.82	10th	4,176,906
2014/2015	9.91	Not known yet	4,137,521