# Scotland Excel

**To:** **Executive Sub-Committee**

**On:** **21 April 2023**

**Report by:**
**Chief Executive Scotland Excel**

**Employee Supporting Attendance Report**

## 1. Introduction and purpose of the report

1.1. In response to the Renfrewshire Council Internal Audit team recommendation, this report on organisational supporting attendance is submitted on a quarterly basis highlighting the absence rate in the organisation. The report also highlights some of the support mechanisms that the organisation has implemented to support staff members.

## 2. Scotland Excel Absence Management Target

2.1. The Joint Committee has previously agreed that Scotland Excel should work to an absence rate of below 4%. This target aligns Scotland Excel with partner organisations, supports good practice in this area and demonstrates the ongoing commitment to absence management as a key efficiency target.

## 3. Overview of Attendance

3.1 In line with audit recommendations, the attached report has been prepared for the Executive Sub Committee. The report details:

- Breakdown of current month, last six months and last 12 months absence figures
- Illustration of 12 months in days
- Illustration of last 12 months in percentages

3.2 The report includes the latest absence details for the 12-month period to 28 February 2023 in which the rate of absence across the organisation has been maintained below the 4% target.

3.3 The 3.5 % absence rate in March 2022, at the beginning of the period reported, was due to a rise in Covid-19 infections and long-term absences. This dropped significantly in April 2022 to 0.4% but then climbed steadily through to 1.9% in July 2022 because of a further increase in Covid-related cases, an occurrence that was reflected throughout the general population at that time. The percentage absence rate then dropped significantly to 0.2% in August 2022 as Covid cases cleared.

3.4     Within the reported period, an increase in long-term absences saw the percentage absence rate rise from 0.4% in September 2022 to 3.5% in December. In the first two months of 2023 that figure has begun to reduce steadily.

3.5     Overall, the rolling 6 and12 month, average absence rates have been maintained at or below 2.5%. The absence rates for the reporting periods as shown in appendix 1 are:

- previous 1 month to 2.8% (50 days)
- previous 6 months to 2.5% (278.5 days)
- previous 12 months to 1.9% (400.5 days)

3.6     The graph below shows average sickness days per employee within Scotland Excel over the past 5 years.

3.7     Average sickness days reached a peak of 6 days per employee in 2019/20 which coincided with the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic and a number of long-term absences related to mental ill health. The rate had been steadily decreasing since then. However, a number of long-term absences from October 2022 has resulted in an increase to February 2023. The initiatives described below, however, will continue to be utilised to support staff in maintaining attendance at work.
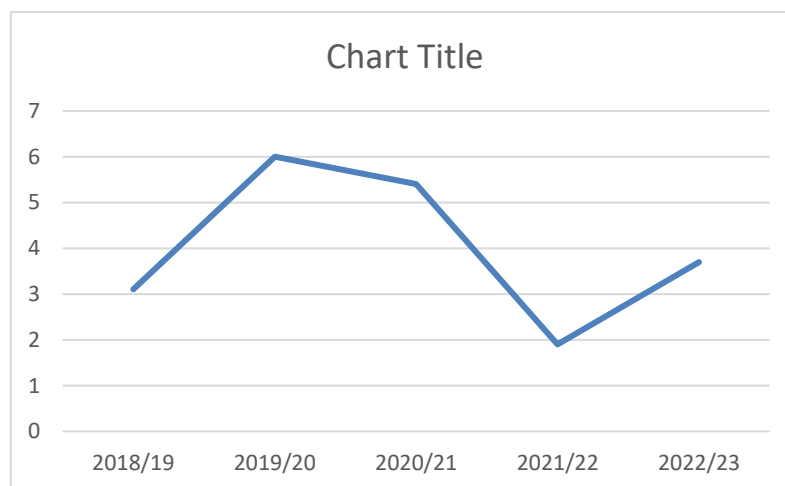


**4.     Overview of supporting attendance initiatives**

4.1.    In addition to actively supporting members of staff absent through ill health, Scotland Excel continues to implement positive early intervention practices including working with Occupational Health and other support services to maintain employee attendance and to support members of staff who may be experiencing difficulties while remaining at work. Scotland Excel continues to support a range of interventions for staff including Occupational Health referral, confidential counselling services, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) sessions and issuing wellbeing emails with further information on health initiatives that can be accessed independently by all staff.

4.2.    Scotland Excel recognises that positive mental health amongst staff members is an area that should be actively supported and encouraged. In addition to actively promoting good mental health practices and initiatives, the organisation has a number of staff (15) from across all operational areas and grades who have trained as accredited Mental Health First Aiders. In providing this confidential support opportunity to staff members it is hoped that any personal difficulties they may be experiencing can be addressed at an early stage with appropriate signposting to professional support.

4.3.    Given the growing interest among staff members about mental health, further training has been planned in the coming year for those wishing to become accredited Mental Health First Aiders.

4.4.    Scotland Excel has also implemented a Mental Health at Work Commitment Action Plan which is recognised as a comprehensive tool for adopting best practice in promoting and maintaining positive mental health within the organisation.

4.5.    **Trauma Informed Organisation** - Starting the journey to become a Trauma-informed organisation, Laura James, National Trauma Lead from the Improvement Service, presented to the whole Scotland Excel workforce at a face-to-face staff event on Wednesday 22 March 2023. The key message from Laura was that many of us have experienced trauma within our lives, indeed, research suggests that 1 in 7 adults in Scotland have experienced psychological trauma making it relevant to all organisations as, "…trauma is everyone's business."

4.6.    Laura also highlighted that, no one colleague, agency or organisation is solely responsible for responding to trauma. Joined-up multi-agency working where every colleague and every organisation understands their role helps to ensure that services and systems respond to trauma and its impact as early as possible, and provides a shared language and understanding for leaders, the workforce and people affected by trauma.

4.7.    Next steps for Scotland Excel will be to conduct a self-assessment exercise using the Quality Improvement Framework to be issued in Spring 2023.


**5.    Recommendation**

5.1    The Executive Sub Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

**Appendix 1.**



# HR Report - Absence as at:   February 2023

SCOTLAND EXCEL

| No of Employees During Period | Avg Absence Days per Employee | Absence Rate Last 12 Months |
|---|---|---|
| 108 | 3.7 | 1.9% |

**Absences Current Month**

| Self Certified | Covid | Doctor Certified | Total Absences | Average Absence Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8.0 | 0.0 | 42.0 | 50.0 | 2.8% |

**Absences Last 6 Months**

| Self Certified | Covid | Doctor Certified | Total Absences | Average Absence Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 82.5 | 23.0 | 173.0 | 278.5 | 2.5% |

**Absences Last 12 Months**

| Self Certified | Covid | Doctor Certified | Total Absences | Average Absence Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 110.5 | 95.0 | 195.0 | 400.5 | 1.9% |