

To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 19 March 2018

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Absence Statistics – 2017/18 Quarter 3

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board of the absence statistics for the period 1st October 2017 to 31st December 2017. The report details the absence statistics by service and by category of staff.
- 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 has also been compiled and details are included within the report. Information is also provided on supporting attendance activity and the costs of sick pay.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board notes the content of this report and that this report reflects the absence statistics for the period 1st October 2017 to 31st December 2017.
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3. Background

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Board agreed that absence levels will be reported on a quarterly basis. It was agreed that the report will include the following information relating to supporting attendance:-
- Absence statistics broken down by service and category of staff.
 - Reasons for absence broken down by service and category of staff.

- Progress made by services in relation to their supporting attendance action plans.

4. Absence Statistics - Quarter Ending 31st December 2017

- 4.1 Service and Council overall absence performance for the quarters are detailed in the table below. 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.

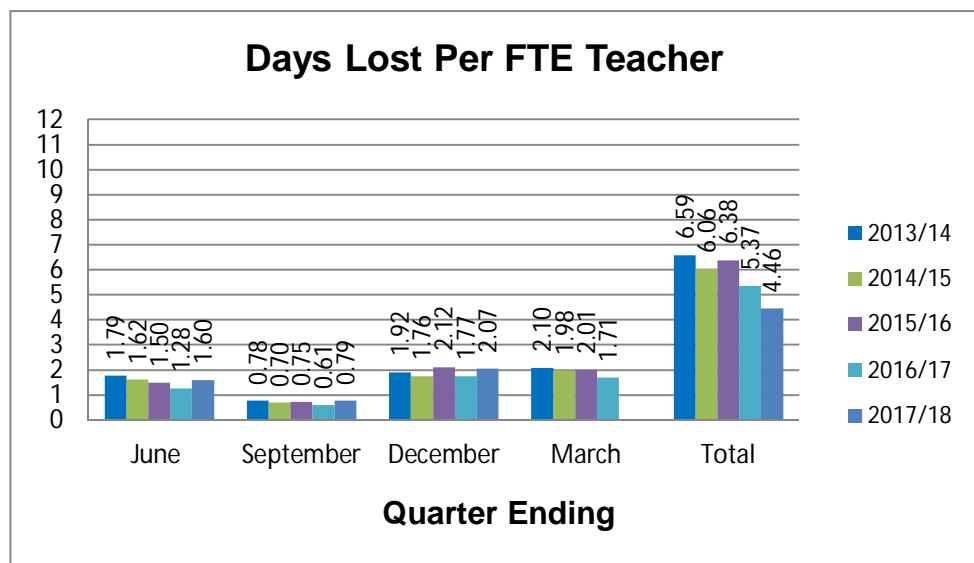
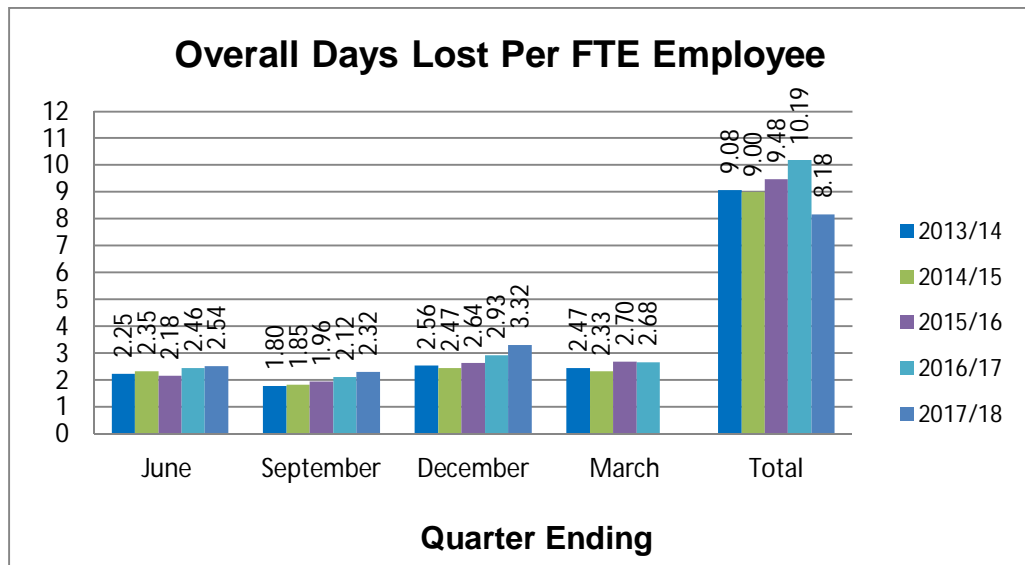
Service/Area	Quarter Ending December 2015	Quarter Ending 23 March 2016	Quarter Ending June 2016	Quarter Ending September 2016	Quarter Ending December 2016	Quarter Ending March 2017	Quarter Ending June 2017	Quarter Ending September 2017	Quarter Ending December 2017
Chief Executive's Services	0.67	0.77	1.17	1.82	1.72	3.41	1.78	2.90	2.16
Children's Services	2.20	2.50	1.85	1.16	2.29	2.17	2.07	1.35	2.35
Environment & Communities	2.88	2.79	2.96	2.49	3.75	3.34	3.67	3.28	4.33
Finance and Resources	2.69	2.73	2.02	2.29	2.59	2.37	2.29	2.16	2.20
Development and Housing Services	1.73	1.93	1.79	2.78	1.75	2.18	1.73	2.40	2.63
Health and Social Care Partnership	4.15	3.68	4.29	3.95	5.03	3.65	2.36	3.88	5.13
Council Overall	2.64	2.70	2.46	2.12	2.93	2.68	2.54	2.32	3.32
Council Overall targets	2.69	2.69	1.79	1.79	2.69	2.69	1.79	1.79	2.69

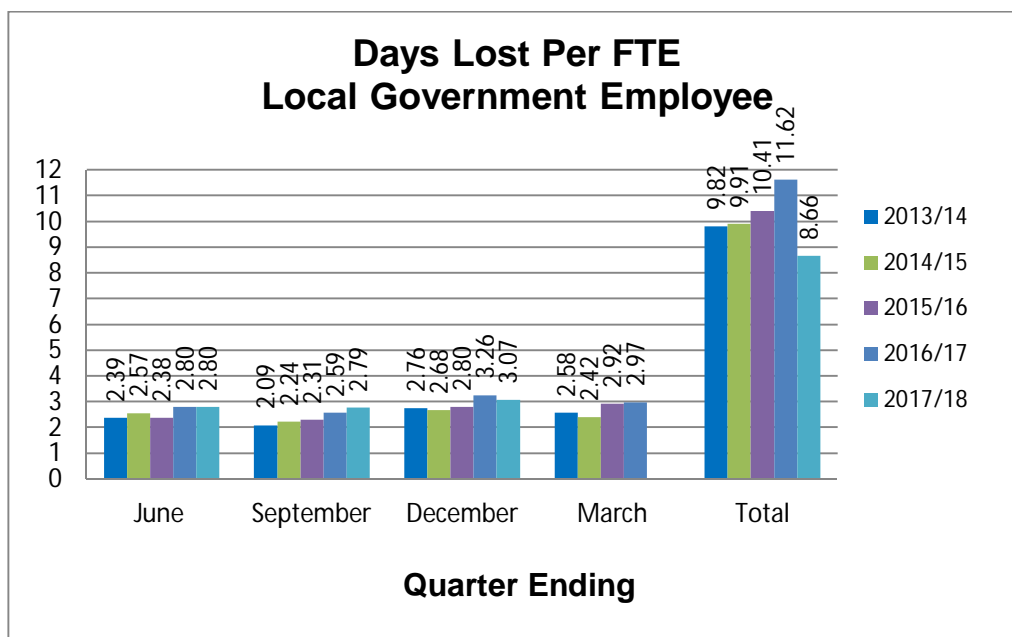
5. Analysis and Trends - Quarters Ending 31st December 2015 to 31st December 2017

- 5.1 The number of days lost per FTE employee due to absence is as follows:-

Quarter ended	Days lost per FTE	Quarter ended	Days lost per FTE	Variance
December 2015	2.64	December 2016	2.93	+0.29
March 2016	2.70	March 2017	2.68	- 0.02
June 2016	2.46	June 2017	2.54	+0.08
September 2016	2.12	September 2017	2.32	+0.20
December 2016	2.93	December 2017	3.32	+0.39

- 5.2 The following tables detail the percentage absence levels by employee category for the quarter ending 3rd December 2017 namely: overall, teachers and local government employees.





6. Absence Targets Analysis: Quarter 2, ending 31st December 2017.

- 6.1 **Appendix A** details the absence performance of services, the Council overall and employee groups against the set absence targets for quarter ending 31st December 2017.
- 6.2 The Council has recorded an overall absence rate of 3.32 days lost per FTE employee, which is 0.63 days **above** the target figure of 2.69 days.

In addition the Teacher absence level of 2.07 days lost per FTE employee is 0.23 days below the target of 2.30 days.

The absence performance of Local Government employees at 3.70 days lost per FTE employee is 1.87 days **above** the target of 1.92 days.

7. Reasons for Absence overview

- 7.1 The illness categories with the highest level of absence, compared to the same quarter in the previous year are as follows:

Quarter Ending	Illness categories
December 2016	Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders Psychological (non work related)
December 2017	Psychological (non work related) Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders

7.2 To address Psychological (non work related) absences the Council continue to provide a range of support services that employees can be referred to at an early stage for assistance.

'timefortalking', the council's employee counselling service provider, continues to be utilised. The service operates a flexible approach to appointments offering telephone consultations in the early mornings or evenings as well as throughout the day and face to face sessions at their offices in Paisley. Some of the presenting issues to the service relating to Psychological (non work related) include;

- Loss/Bereavement
- Stress/anxiety/panic
- Depression/Self-worth
- Family Relationships

If an employee suggests to their manager that they are experiencing Psychological (non work related) issues then they should be provided with the timefortalking service information. The intention is to relaunch the service globally across the council to raise awareness amongst managers and employees that the service can be accessed, confidentially by telephone, 24 hours a day 365 days a year. We will do this by working in partnership with the communications team to ensure we can utilise all the mediums available, for example Renfo, Email, posters, payslips.

There are also Council policies, guidance and training to assist managers and employees that are specific to stress related issues.

HR and OD continue to investigate the possible options for further training and interventions available, which could be offered to employees as a proactive measure or for those who are currently experiencing non work related stress.

Areas which we have explored include, but not limited to;

- Using our current counselling provider to continue to deliver mindfulness courses;
- Working with RAMH and the Project Management Unit to deliver the Scottish Mental Health First Aider courses; and
- Working with the NHS Choose Life team to offer safeTalk and ASIST on suicide awareness and prevention.

HR and OD continue to work with our NHS colleagues to promote the "doing well" service which helps people with depression and low moods. Addiction Awareness Training will also be considered as part of the council's induction programme for managers.

7.3 In relation to addressing musculoskeletal and joint disorders the Council offers a physiotherapy service through the Council's Occupational Health Provider, and this service can be accessed by all employees.

As part of the Council's Health and Safety Management system, occupations which include manual handling activities as part of the role, the task risk assessments are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that safe working practices are maintained.

8. Supporting Attendance Activity

8.1 Recent and planned actions to improve absence performance include the following:-

- HR operational teams continue to work closely with service's management teams to identify areas that require greater support. This will result in strategies to support the employees in those areas to return to work.
- A review of the current supporting attendance policies covering all staff, including teachers continues. Meetings have taken place with the respective trades unions to ensure this is a fully collaborative process.
- HR operational teams continue to proactively contact and support managers who have absence cases of 2 to 4 weeks in duration, to monitor action taken to date and proposed next steps.
- 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;
- Ongoing health promotion activities aimed at raising employee awareness of health issues continue.
- 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;
- Monthly meetings continue with Directors and their management teams to discuss their service's supporting attendance performance.

9. Costs of Sick Pay

9.1 The costs associated with sick pay are provided to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board. The table outlines the costs of sick pay by employee groups and overall:

Quarter/Year	Teachers (includes Supply Teachers)	All Other Employees	Overall
Quarter 1 of 2017/2018	£519,866	£1,323,694	£1,843,560
Quarter 2 of 2017/2018	£204,165	£1,128,009	£1,332,175
Quarter 3 of 2017/2018	£538,635	£1,470,938	£2,009,573
Year to date	£1,262,666	£3,922,641	£5,185,308

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** - none.
- 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.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** - none
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List of Background Papers - none.

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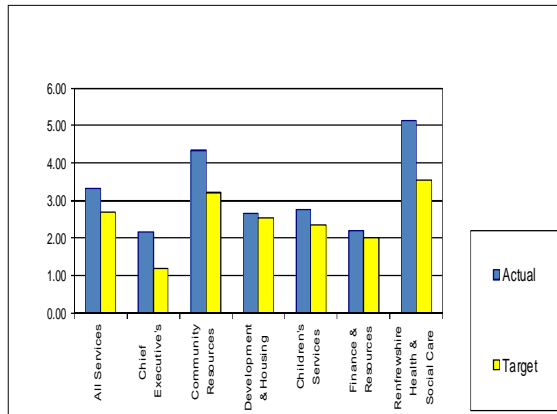
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| Appendix A | Graphs detailing trends in service, Council overall and employee group absence levels against targets for 2017/18 |
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PERFORMANCE V TARGETS 2017/2018

Quarter 3

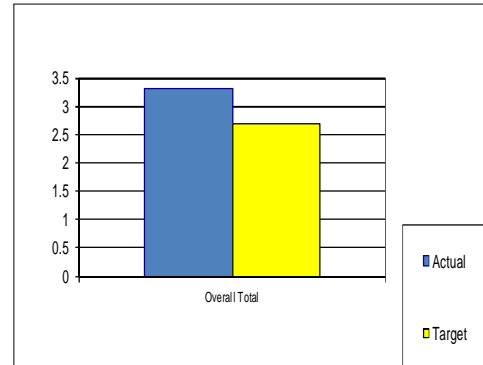
September 2017 - December 2017



	Actual	Target	Difference
All Services	3.32	2.69	0.63
Chief Executive's	2.16	1.20	0.96
Community Resources	4.33	3.22	1.11
Development & Housing	2.63	2.53	0.10
Children's Services	2.74	2.35	0.39
Finance & Resources	2.20	2.00	0.20
Renfrewshire Health & Social Care	5.13	3.54	1.59

Quarter 3

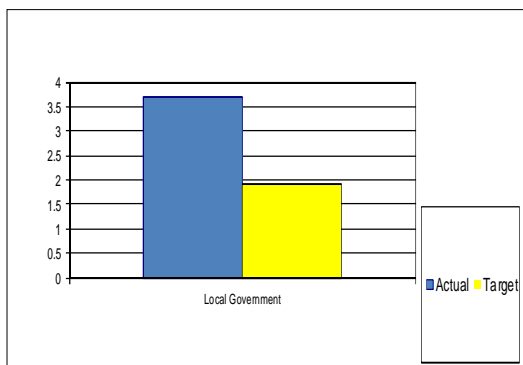
September 2017 - December 2017



	Actual	Target	Difference
Overall Total	3.32	2.69	0.63

Quarter 3

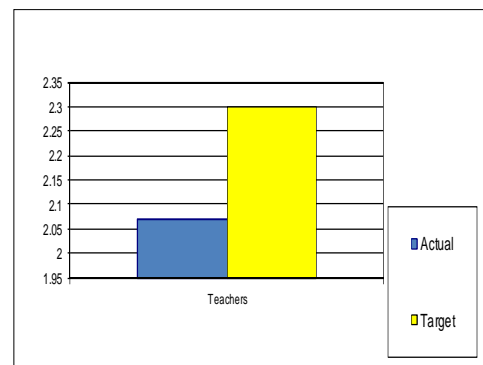
September 2017 - December 2017



	Actual	Target	Difference
Local Government	3.70	1.92	1.78

Quarter 3

September 2017 - December 2017



	Actual	Target	Difference
Teachers	2.07	2.30	-0.23