

Scotland Excel

To: Joint Committee

On: 16 June 2023

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

Supporting Attendance, Special Leave and Hospitality

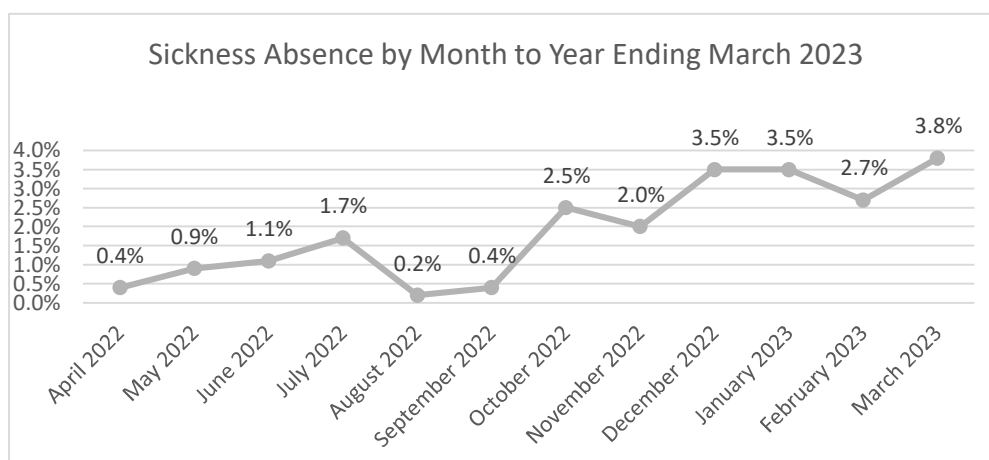
1. Introduction

As part of the governance process, members of the Joint Committee are advised on an annual basis of staff absence rates, special leave given to staff and hospitality granted by the organisation. The information for the 2022/23 financial year is detailed below.

2. Scotland Excel Staff Absence

The Joint Committee has previously agreed that Scotland Excel target 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. Quarterly reports on Staff Absence are also presented to the Executive Sub Committee.

During 2022/23, the average sickness absence rate per full time equivalent member of staff has been 4.0 days. In total, 428.5 sickness leave days were reported across all staff during 2022/23 representing an average Sickness Absence Rate of 2.0%. The organisation will continue to monitor this and ensure that, where required, staff are given appropriate support to maintain their attendance. The following graph shows monthly percentage absence figures for staff during 2022/23.



Overview of supporting attendance initiatives

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 support members of staff who may be experiencing difficulties while at work. Interventions available to staff - whether at work or absent - include physiotherapy, confidential counselling services, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Time for Talking and, Wellbeing emails issued to all staff with further information on health initiatives that can be accessed independently by all staff.

Scotland Excel recognises that positive mental health amongst staff members is an area that must be supported and encouraged. In addition to active promotion of good mental health practices and initiatives, the organisation has 15 staff 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 as appropriate.

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

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

Trauma Informed Organisation

Scotland Excel has started the journey to become a Trauma-informed organisation. Laura James, National Trauma Lead from the Improvement Service, presented to the workforce at a face-to-face staff event in 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."

During the presentation, it was 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, providing a shared language and understanding for leaders, the workforce and people affected by trauma. Next steps for Scotland Excel will be to carry out a self-assessment exercise using the Quality Improvement Framework.

3. Special Leave

Under item 6.2(w) of the Scheme of Delegation, the Chief Executive has the authority to permit any member of staff to absent themselves occasionally and temporarily during business hours to attend to duties or services of a civic honour, charitable, academic or social nature provided that these do not interfere with the efficient discharge of the functions of Scotland Excel and to grant special leave, in accordance with the lead authority's special leave policy.

Scotland Excel follows the HR policies and procedures of the lead authority, Renfrewshire Council. When approving requests for special leave, consideration is always given to the operational requirements of Scotland Excel together with requests that may have been previously granted and outstanding annual leave. Categories of special leave include some medical appointments, illness of family dependants, bereavements, civic duties and exam / study leave. A total of 46 days are recorded, 41 days paid leave and 5 days unpaid leave, against the undernoted categories.

Reason	Paid or Unpaid	Days
Support family dependants	Paid	8.5
Support family dependants	Unpaid	5
Bereavement	Paid	17
Exam / Study leave	Paid	12
Jury Duty	Unpaid	0
Hospital	Paid	2.5
Election Duties	Paid	1

4. Hospitality

Under Item 6.2(e) of the Scheme of Delegation, the Chief Executive has the authority to approve the provision of reasonable hospitality to a maximum of £1,000 in relation to one occasion where this is thought to be in the interests of Scotland Excel.

In the last financial year (2022/23) there was no spend.

5. Recommendation

The Joint Committee is requested to note the contents of report.