Scotland Excel

To: **Executive Sub-Committee**

On: **19 April 2024**

Report by:
Chief Executive of 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 supporting attendance is submitted on a quarterly basis highlighting the absence rate in the organisation. The report also highlights some of the support mechanisms 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 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 March 2024 in which the rate of absence across the organisation has, with one exception, been maintained below the 4% target.

3.3 During the reporting period a number of long-term absences have had a significant effect on the percentage absence rate. These reached a peak in September 2023 when the absence rate reached 4.4% as illustrated in

Appendix 1. Overall, however, the reported period shows an average rate of 2.5% which is within the target of 4% with a low of 1.3% recorded in January 2024.

3.4   During this period, short-term absences have been comparatively low with effective, early intervention and supporting attendance procedures put in place to support staff members in maintaining attendance at work.

3.5   Overall, the rolling 6 and 12 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 1.4% (26 days)
- previous 6 months to 1.8% (211 days)
- previous 12 months to 2.5% (596.5 days)

3.6   The graph below shows average sickness days per employee within Scotland Excel over the past 5 years. Average sickness days reached a peak of 6.0 days per employee in 2019/20 which coincides with a number of long-term absences related to a variety of reasons including COVID. The lowest rate within the reported 5-year period was 1.9 days in 2021/22. The initiatives described below, however, will continue to be utilised to support staff in maintaining attendance at work.
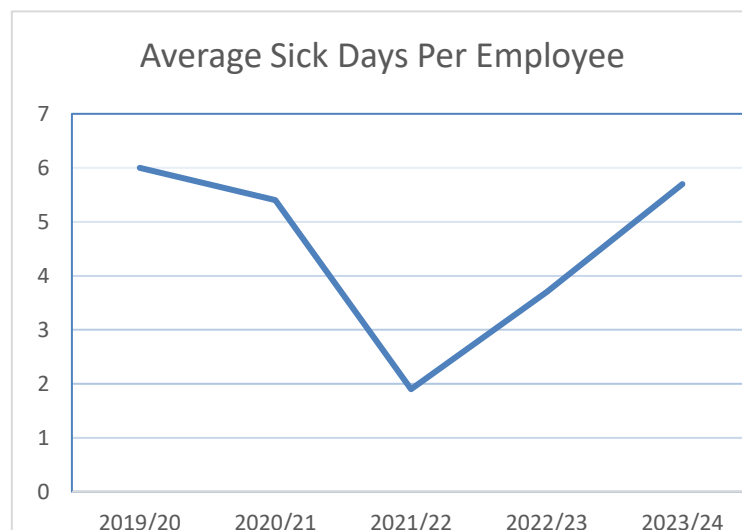
4.   Overview of supporting attendance initiatives

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 (Time For Talking), Cognitive Behavioral

Therapy (CBT) sessions, Physiotherapy sessions and, issuing regular wellbeing emails which provide 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 now has 21 members of 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.

4.3   In addition to supporting staff members with their mental wellbeing, Scotland Excel is implementing a programme of awareness and support for those who may be experiencing difficulties through menopause. The aim is to raise awareness of the subject across all staff members and put in place measures where those affected feel able to discuss any concerns and can access support. An awareness session is planned for all staff members in mid-April and it is proposed that support groups will be established following this.

5.   Recommendation

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

Appendix 1.

Sickness Absences By Month Year To Date: March 2024

SCOTLAND EXCEL

No of Employees in Reporting Period	Average Absence Days per Employee	Average Absence Rate Last 12 Months
105	5.7	2.5%

Sickness Absences Current Month

Self Certified	Doctor Certified	Covid	Total Absences	Average Absence Rate
7.0	19.0	0.0	26.0	1.4%

Sickness Absences Last 6 Months

Self Certified	Doctor Certified	Covid	Total Absences	Average Absence Rate
69.0	140.0	2.0	211.0	1.8%

Sickness Absences Last 12 Months

Self Certified	Doctor Certified	Covid	Total Absences	Average Absence Rate
138.5	432.0	26.0	596.5	2.5%

Sickness Absences by Month

● Self Certified ● Doctor Certified ● Covid

Month End	Self Certified	Doctor Certified	Covid
April 2023	16.0	30.0	
May 2023		38.0	
June 2023	21.0	43.0	
July 2023		51.0	5.0
August 2023	21.0	54.0	9.0
September 2023	5.0	76.0	10.0
October 2023		47.0	
November 2023	17.0	20.0	
December 2023	11.0	24.0	
January 2024	9.0	13.0	
February 2024	24.0	17.0	
March 2024	7.0	19.0	

Sickness Absence Rate by Month

Month End	Average of Absence Rate
April 2023	2.8%
May 2023	2.0%
June 2023	3.3%
July 2023	2.8%
August 2023	3.7%
September 2023	4.4%
October 2023	2.2%
November 2023	1.7%
December 2023	2.0%
January 2024	1.3%
February 2024	2.2%
March 2024	1.4%