

Scotland Excel

To: Executive Sub-Committee

On: 8 December 2023

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

Employee Supporting Attendance Report

1. Introduction and purpose of the report

- 1.1. In response to a 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 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

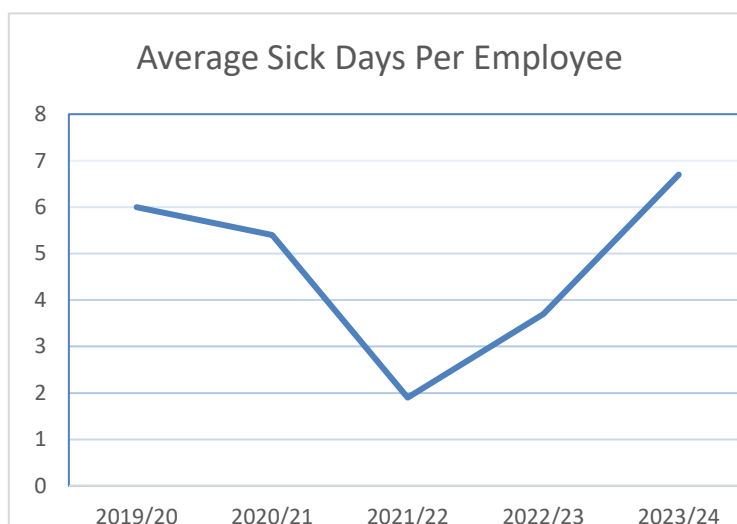
- 3.1 In line with audit recommendations, the attached report has been prepared for the Executive Sub Committee. The report details:
- Breakdown of current month, last six months and last 12 months absence figures
 - Illustration of 12 months in days
 - Illustration of last 12 months in percentages
- 3.2 The report includes the latest absence details for the 12-month period to October 2023 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 4.5% as illustrated in Appendix 1. Overall, however, the reported period shows an average rate of 3.1% which is within the target of 4% with a low of 2.0% recorded in November 2022.

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 3.1%. The absence rates for the reporting periods as shown in appendix 1 are:

- previous 1 month to 2.1% (47.0 days)
- previous 6 months to 3.1% (378.5 days)
- previous 12 months to 3.1% (728.5 days)

3.6 The graph below shows average sickness days per employee within Scotland Excel over the past 5 years. Average sickness days have reached a peak of 6.7 days per employee in 2022/23 which coincides with a number of long-term absences related to a variety of reasons, particularly in September 2023 as stated earlier in the report. 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 has a number 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 Given the growing interest among staff members on the subject of mental health, further training took place in November 2023 for those who wished to become accredited Scotland's Mental Health First Aiders and also as a refresher for those who were already accredited. Following completion of the training there are now 21 members of staff who are accredited in this potentially life-saving discipline.
- 4.4 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. This aims 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 know how to access support.

5. Recommendation

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

Appendix 1.

