

Scotland Excel

To: Joint Committee

On: 21 June 2024

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

Supporting Attendance, Special Leave and Hospitality

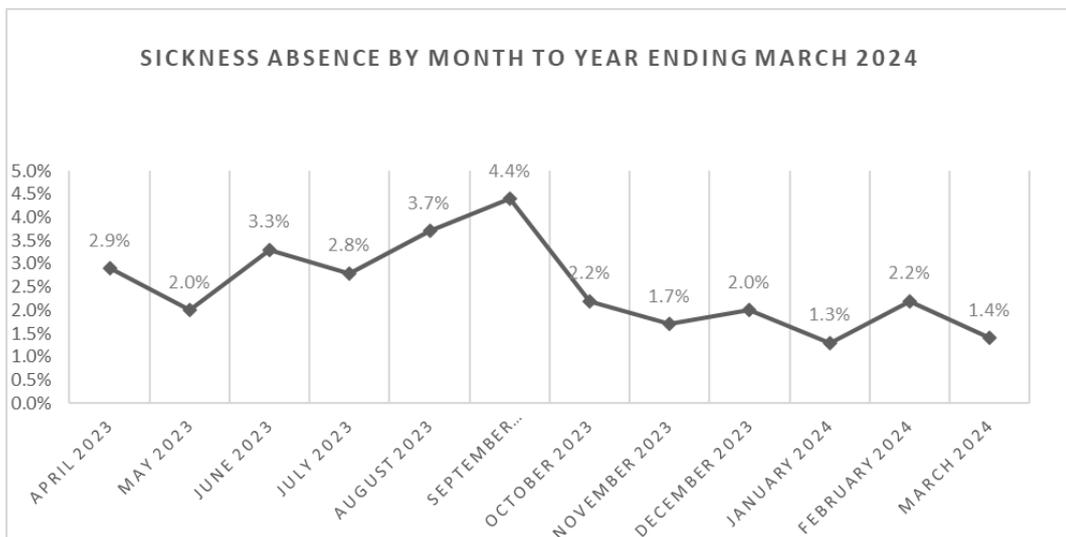
1. Introduction

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 2023/24 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 2023/24, the average sickness absence rate per full time equivalent member of staff has been 5.7 days. In total, 596.5 sickness leave days were reported across all staff during 2023/24 representing an average Sickness Absence Rate of 2.5%. The organisation will continue to monitor sickness absence to ensure that, where required, staff are given appropriate support to maintain their attendance at work and return to work. The following graph shows monthly percentage absence figures for staff during 2023/24.



3. 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 assist 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 24 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.

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.

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 know how to access support. An awareness session took place for all staff members in mid-April and support groups will be established during the coming year.

4. 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 126 days are recorded, all as paid leave against the undernoted categories.

Reason	Paid or Unpaid	Days
Support family dependants	Paid	7
Support family dependants	Unpaid	0
Bereavement	Paid	43
Exam / Study leave	Paid	65
Jury Duty	Unpaid	7.5
Hospital	Paid	3.5
Election Duties	Paid	0

5. 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 (2023/24) there was no spend.

6. Recommendation

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