Scotland Excel

To: **Executive Sub-Committee**

On: **22 April 2022**

Report by:
Chief Executive of Scotland Excel

Employee Supporting Attendance Report

1. Introduction and purpose of the report

In response to the Renfrewshire Council Internal Audit team recommendation, this report on organisational supporting attendance is submitted on a quarterly basis highlighting the absence rate in the organisation. The report also highlights the support mechanisms that the organisation has implemented to support staff members.

2. Scotland Excel Absence Management Target

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 supporting employee attendance.

3. Overview of Attendance

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

The report includes the latest absence details for the 12-month period to 31 March 2022.The rate of absence across the organisation has generally been maintained at or below the 4% target, except for April 2021 where the absence rate rose to 4.2% due to several long-term absences. The absence rate reduced steadily throughout 2021/22 to a low of 0.4% in February 2022.
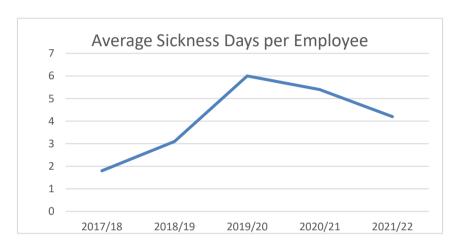
While Scotland Excel has been successful in reducing the absence rate during 2021/22, in March 2022 the rise in COVID-19 infections throughout the general population has been reflected in our own organisation with a number of employees reporting Covid-related illnesses. Those, together with some longer-term absences, resulted in a spike in the % rate to 3.1%.

However, overall, the rolling 6-month 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 3.1% (51 days)
- previous 6 months to 1.5% (152 days)
- previous 12 months to 2.2% (427days)

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 days per employee in 2019/20 which coincided with the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic and a number of long-term absences related to mental ill health. The rate has been steadily decreasing since then and the initiatives described below will continue to be utilised to support staff in maintaining attendance at work.

4. 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 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, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) sessions and issuing wellbeing emails 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 should be actively supported and encouraged. In addition to actively promoting good mental health practices and initiatives, the organisation has fifteen 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.

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

5. Recommendation

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

Appendix 1.

HR Report - Absence as at: March 2022

SCOTLAND EXCEL

No of Employees During Period	Avg Absence Days per Employee	Absence Rate Last 12 Months
101	**4.2**	**2.2%**

Absences Current Month			
Self Certified	Doctor Certified	Total Absences	Average Absence Rate
29.0	22.0	51.0	3.1%

Absences Last 6 Months			
Self Certified	Doctor Certified	Total Absences	Average Absence Rate
70.0	82.0	152.0	1.5%

Absences Last 12 Months			
Self Certified	Doctor Certified	Total Absences	Average Absence Rate
121.0	306.0	427.0	2.2%