

**To:** Joint Consultative Board: Non-Teaching

**On:** 14 June 2017

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**Report by:** Tinu Olowe, Interim Head of HR

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**Heading:** Annual Absence Report 2016/17

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## 1. **Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Joint Consultative Board: Non-Teaching of the annual absence statistics for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. The report details the absence statistics by service and by category of staff.
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## 2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board notes the content of this report and that this report reflects the annual absence statistics for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.
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## 3. **Background**

### **Absence Statistics - Quarters Ending 30th June 2016 to 31st March 2017**

- 4.1 Service and Council overall absence performance for the quarters are detailed in the table below. In line with the reporting requirements for Scottish Councils, absence is expressed as a number of work days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) employee.

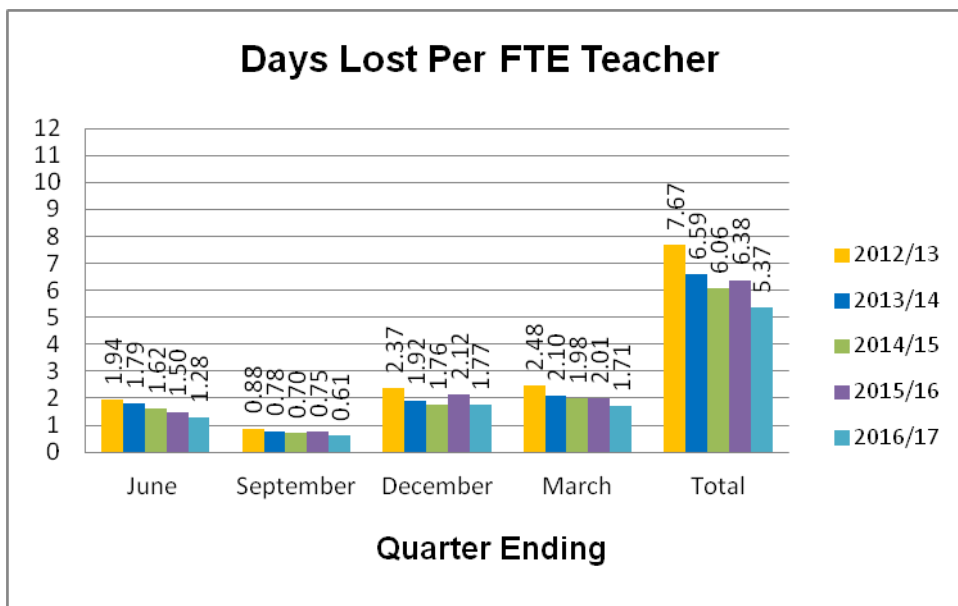
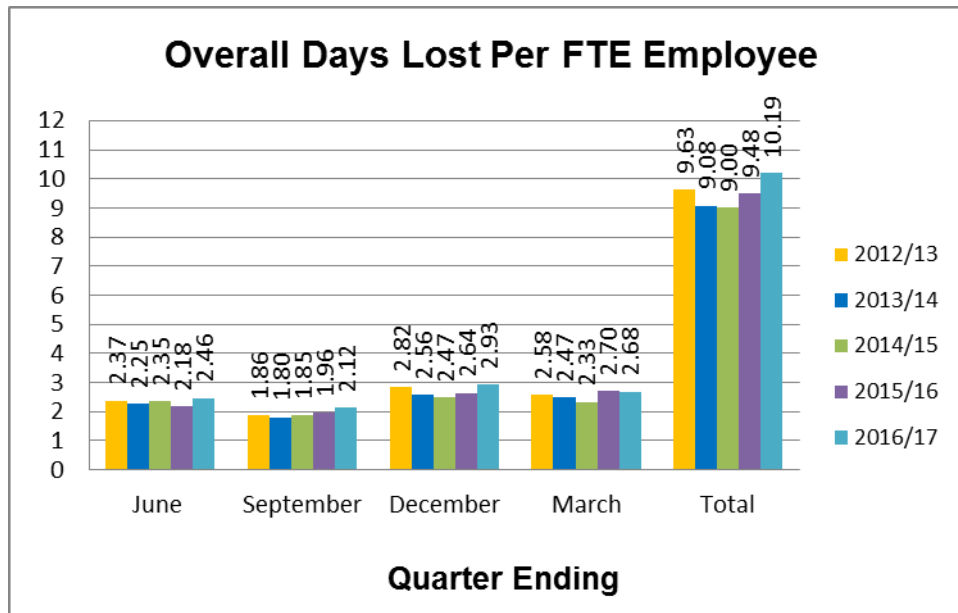
Service/Area	Quarter Ending June 2015	Quarter Ending September 2015	Quarter Ending December 2015	Quarter Ending 23 March 2016	Quarter Ending June 2016	Quarter Ending September 2016	Quarter Ending December 2016	Quarter Ending March 2017
Chief Executive's Services	2.10	1.70	0.67	0.77	1.17	1.82	1.72	3.41
Education and Leisure Services	1.79	1.04	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children's Services	0	0	2.20	2.50	1.85	1.16	2.29	2.17
Community Resources	2.62	2.26	2.88	2.79	2.96	2.49	3.75	3.34
Finance and Resources	1.85	2.25	2.69	2.73	2.02	2.29	2.59	2.37
Development and Housing Services	1.52	1.26	1.73	1.93	1.79	2.78	1.75	2.18
Health and Social Care Partnership	0	0	4.15	3.68	4.29	3.95	5.03	3.65
Social Work Services	3.15	3.48	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Council Overall</b>	<b>2.18</b>	<b>1.96</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>2.12</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>2.68</b>
<b>Council Overall targets</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>2.69</b>

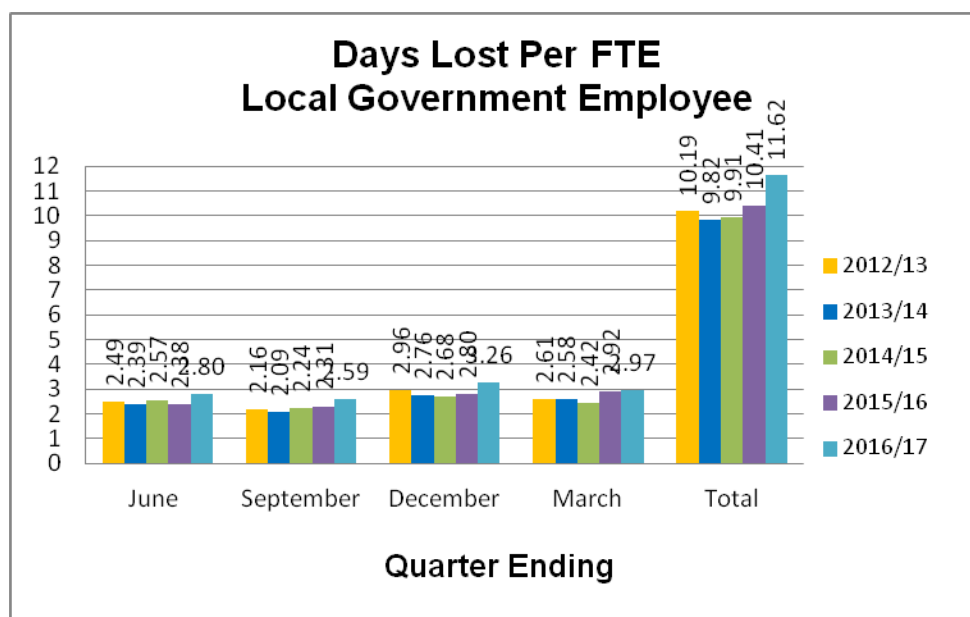
## 5. Analysis and Trends - Quarters Ending 30th June 2015 to 31st March 2017

5.1 The number of days lost per FTE employee due to absence is as follows:-

Quarter ended	Days lost per FTE	Quarter ended	Days lost per FTE	Variance
June 2015	2.18	June 2016	2.46	+0.28
September 2015	1.96	September 2016	2.12	+0.16
December 2015	2.64	December 2016	2.93	+0.29
March 2016	2.70	March 2017	2.68	-0.02

5.2 The following tables detail the percentage absence levels by employee category for 2016/17 year namely overall; teachers and local government employees.





## 6. Absence Targets 2016/2017 and Ranking Information

6.1 **Appendix A** details the absence performance of services, the Council overall and employee groups against the set absence targets for quarters ending 30th June 2016 to 31st March 2017.

6.2 The Council has recorded an overall absence rate of 10.19 days lost per FTE employee for the quarters ending 30th June 2016 to 31st March 2017, which is 1.23 days **above** the target figure of 8.96 days.

In addition the Teacher absence level of 5.37 days lost per FTE employee is also 2.31 days **below** the target of 7.68 days.

The absence performance of Local Government employees at 11.62 days lost per FTE employee is 2.02 days **above** the target of 9.60 days.

6.3 **Appendix B** identifies the trends in Council overall and employee group absence performance in recent years, in comparison to other Scottish Councils.

6.4 At the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board meeting on 6 June 2016 there was an action to provide additional comparative information for other Scottish local authorities in relation to their absence statistics.

6.5 **Appendix C** identifies the Scottish Council absence performance of Teachers for 2010/2011 to 2015/2016.

**Appendix D** identifies the Scottish Council absence performance of Local Government for 2010/2011 to 2015/2016.

- 6.6 The ranking information for 2014/ 2015 showed an improvement in both Teachers (from 20<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>) and Local Government Employees (from 10<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>). However this performance has not been sustained for 2015/16. Teachers now rank 18<sup>th</sup> and Local Government Employees to 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **7. Reasons for Absence annual overview**

- 7.1 The illness categories with the highest level of absence throughout the year are as follows:

<b>Quarter Ending</b>	<b>Illness categories</b>
June 2016	Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders – 26.3%. Psychological (non work related) – 23.6%,
September 2016	Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders – 25.5%. Psychological(non work related) – 22.7%,
December 2016	Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders – 20%. Psychological (non work related) – 21.1%,
March 2017	Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders – 18.2%. Psychological (non work related) – 22.1%,

- 7.2 To address Psychological (non work related) absences the Council has a range of support services that employees can be referred to at an early stage for assistance, including the Time for Talking counselling service and the Occupational Health Service which also provides access to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. There are also Council policies, guidance and training to assist managers and employees that are specific to stress related issues

In addition, a revised mental health first aid course was delivered to project managers and representatives from HR and OD as well as procurement. This will equip the officers with the skills to identify the early stages of someone who may be suffering from mental health issues and also provide them with support mechanisms in the workplace.

- 7.3 In relation to addressing musculoskeletal and joint disorders the Council offers a physiotherapy service through the Council's Occupational Health Provider, this service can be accessed by all employees.

As part of the Council's Health and Safety Management system, occupations which include manual handling activities as part of the role, the task risk assessments have been reviewed and as part of their ongoing training a number of courses and interventions to ensure that safe working practices are maintained.

## **8. Supporting Attendance Activity**

- 8.1 Recent and planned actions to improve absence performance include the following:-

- Proactively contacting managers who have absence cases of 2 to 4 weeks in duration, to monitor action taken to date and proposed next steps. This is to

ensure that managers intervene early in absence cases and keep in regular contact with absent employees. In turn, discussion is facilitated around the employee's progress, any support that may be required and allows flexible return to work options to be explored;

- Ongoing promotion of the Occupational Health Service Early Intervention Helpline for managers. The aim is to ensure managers receive prompt medical guidance and employees can be quickly referred to support services, where appropriate;
- Continued delivery of supporting attendance training at a corporate level for managers, with the provision of tailored training for managers and employees at a service level on request;
- Ongoing health promotion activities including smoking cessation, mental health awareness and events aimed at raising employee awareness of health issues;
- Ongoing work to improve the absence information available to managers and to streamline supporting attendance related processes to facilitate prompt absence reporting, recording and updating of relevant systems;
- Exploring further use of the employee counselling service to deliver mindfulness training at key points in the calendar year e.g. Christmas and end of summer holidays; and
- Monthly meetings continue with Directors to discuss their service's supporting attendance performance.

## **9. Costs of Sick Pay**

- 9.1 The costs associated with sick pay are provided to the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board. The table below outlines the costs of sick pay by employee group and overall for 2014/2015 to 2016/2017:-

**Details of Occupational Sick Pay and Statutory Sick Pay Costs Per Employee Group and Overall for 2014/2015 to 2016/2017**

<b>Quarter/Year</b>	<b>Teachers (includes Supply Teachers)</b>	<b>All Other Employees</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Quarter 1 of 2014/2015	£490,739	£1,085,444	£1,576,183
Quarter 2 of 2014/2015	£231,365	£1,108,770	£1,340,135
Quarter 3 of 2014/2015	£396,512	£999,266	£1,395,778
Quarter 4 of 2014/2015	£552,457	£944,041	£1,496,498
<b>2014/2015 Overall</b>	<b>£1,671,073</b>	<b>£4,137,521</b>	<b>£5,808,594</b>
Quarter 1 of 2015/2016	£393,394	£935,284	£1,328,678
Quarter 2 of 2015/2016	£125,710	£1,286,198	£1,411,908
Quarter 3 of 2015/2016	£546,844	£1,089,060	£1,635,904
Quarter 4 of 2015/2016	£468,848	£1,188,264	£1,657,112
<b>2015/2016 Overall</b>	<b>£1,534,796</b>	<b>£4,498,806</b>	<b>£6,033,602</b>
Quarter 1 of 2016/2017	£352,501	£1,196,057	£1,548,558
<b>2016/2017 Year To Date</b>	<b>£352,501</b>	<b>£1,196,057</b>	<b>£1,548,558</b>

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## **Implications of this Report**

**1 Financial Implications** - Improvement in attendance impacts on the financial costs of absence.

**2 HR and Organisational Development Implications** - HR and Organisational Development Practitioners will continue to work with service managers and consult with the Trade Unions, on the implementation of the Supporting Attendance at Work Policy and Guidance and initiatives detailed in this report.

### **3 Community Planning**

**Children and Young People** - none.

**Jobs and the Economy** - none.

**Community care, health and wellbeing** - provides for continuous improvement in health and attendance.

**Safer and Stronger** - provides for improved service performance across the Council.

**Greener** - none.

**Empowering our Communities** - none.

**4 Legal Implications** - none.

**5 Property/Asset Implications** - none.

**6 Information Technology Implications** - none.

**7 Equality and Human Rights Implications** - none.

**8 Health and Safety Implications** - it is integral to the Council's aim of securing the health and well being of employees.

**9 Procurement Implications** - none.

**10 Risk Implications** - Without continued effective supporting attendance focus, there is a risk that sickness absence levels will adversely impact on the Council both financially and in terms of service delivery. Consequently supporting attendance activities are monitored via the Corporate Risk Register.

**11 Privacy Impact Implications** : none

### **List of Background Papers**

(a) None

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