Renfrewshire Council

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

On: **06 June 2018**

Report by: **Director of Finance and Resources**

Heading: **Absence Statistics – 2017/18 Quarter 4**

---

1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Joint Consultative Board: Non-Teaching of the absence statistics for the period 1st January 2018 to 31st March 2018. The report details the absence statistics by service and by category of staff.

1.2 The report provides information in relation to absence targets and how services have performed against them. An analysis of the reasons for absence has also been compiled and details are included within the report. Information is also provided on supporting attendance activity and the costs of sick pay.

---

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Board notes the content of this report and that this report reflects the absence statistics for the period 1st January 2018 to 31st March 2018.

---

3. Background

3.1 The Scrutiny Board agreed that absence levels will be reported on a quarterly basis. It was agreed that the report will include the following information relating to supporting attendance: -

- Absence statistics broken down by service and category of staff.

- Reasons for absence broken down by service and category of staff.
- Progress made by services in relation to their supporting attendance action plans.

4. Absence Statistics - Quarter Ending 31s March 2018

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.

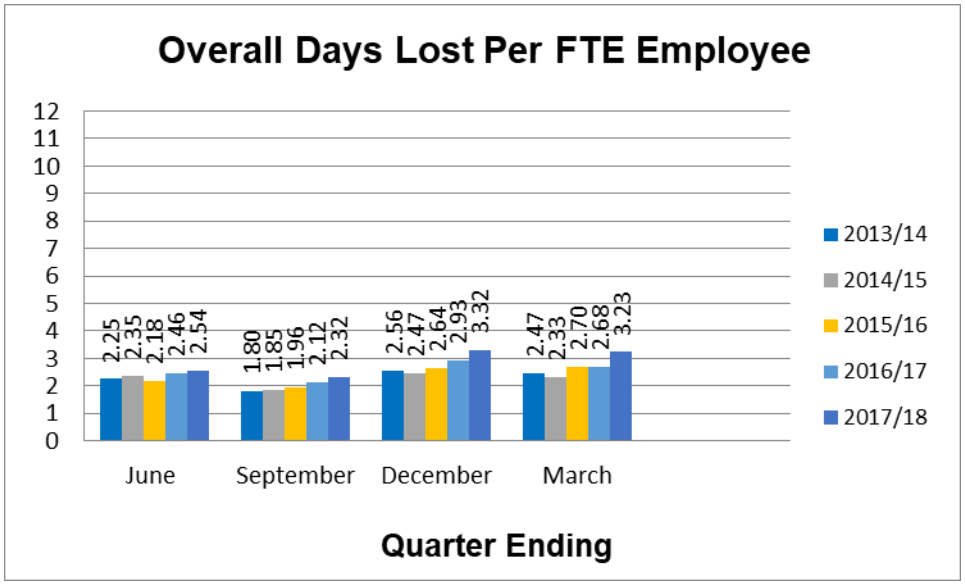
Service/Area	Quarter Ending 23 March 2016	Quarter Ending June 2016	Quarter Ending September 2016	Quarter Ending December 2016	Quarter Ending March 2017	Quarter Ending June 2017	Quarter Ending September 2017	Quarter Ending December 2017	Quarter Ending March 2018
Chief Executive's Services	0.77	1.17	1.82	1.72	3.41	1.78	2.90	2.16	2.78
Children's Services	2.50	1.85	1.16	2.29	2.17	2.07	1.35	2.35	2.71
Environment & Communities	2.79	2.96	2.49	3.75	3.34	3.67	3.28	4.33	4.49
Finance and Resources	2.73	2.02	2.29	2.59	2.37	2.29	2.16	2.20	2.59
Development and Housing Services	1.93	1.79	2.78	1.75	2.18	1.73	2.40	2.63	1.88
Health and Social Care Partnership	3.68	4.29	3.95	5.03	3.65	2.36	3.88	5.13	4.34
Council Overall	**2.70**	**2.46**	**2.12**	**2.93**	**2.68**	**2.54**	**2.32**	**3.32**	**3.23**
Council Overall targets	**2.69**	**1.79**	**1.79**	**2.69**	**2.69**	**1.79**	**1.79**	**2.69**	**2.69**

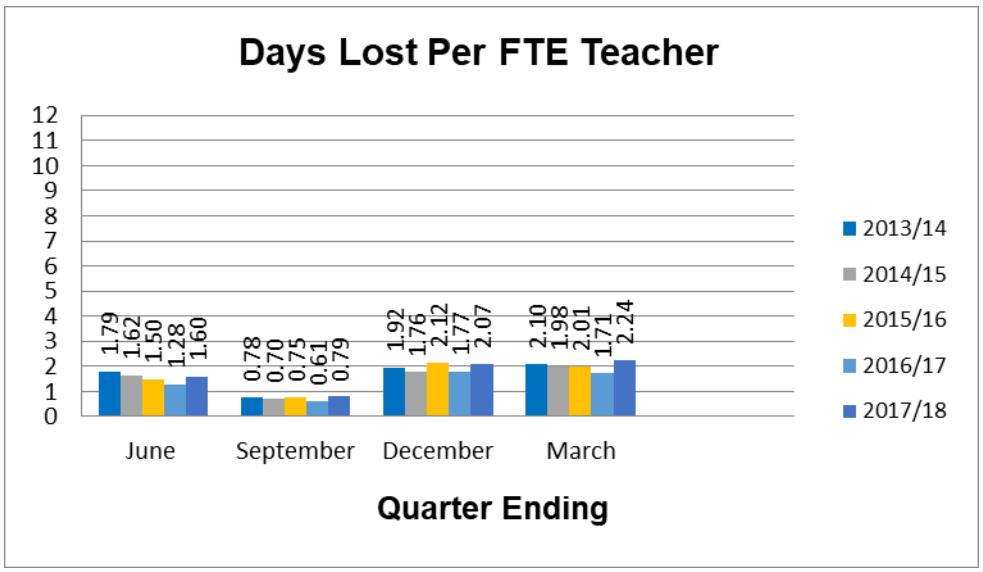
5. Analysis and Trends - Quarter Ending 31st March 2018

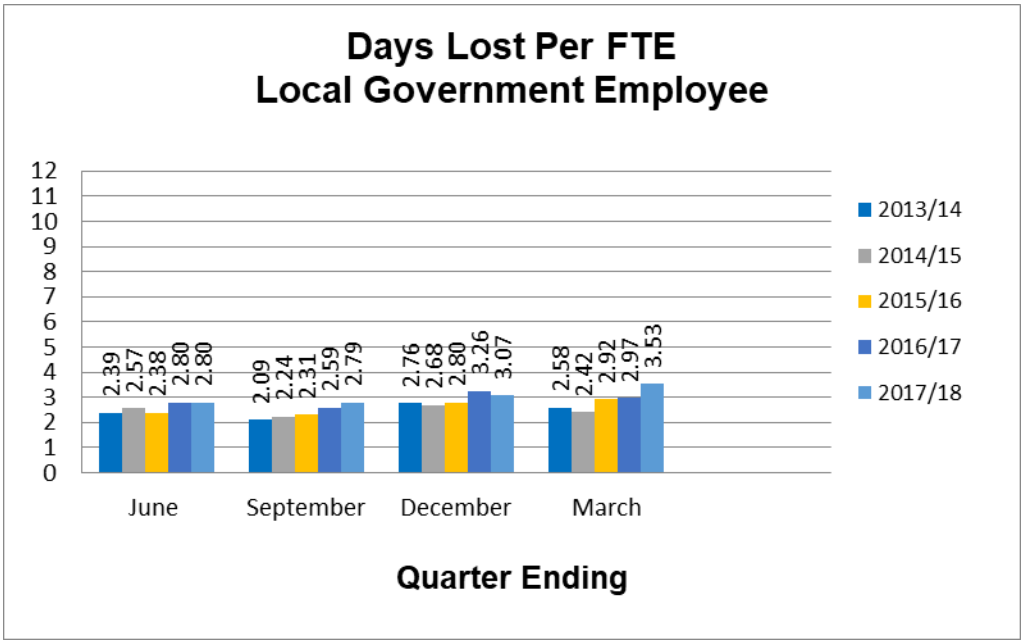
5.1 The number of days lost per FTE employee due to absence is as follows: -

Quarter ended	Days lost per FTE	Quarter ended	Days lost per FTE	Variance
March 2016	2.70	March 2017	2.68	- 0.02
June 2016	2.46	June 2017	2.54	+0.08
September 2016	2.12	September 2017	2.32	+0.20
December 2016	2.93	December 2017	3.32	+0.39
March 2017	2.68	March 2018	3.23	+0.55

5.2 The following tables detail the percentage absence levels by employee category for the quarter ending 3rd March 2018 namely: overall, teachers and local government employees.







6. Absence Targets Analysis: Quarter 3, ending 31st March 2018.

6.1 **Appendix A** details the absence performance of services, the Council overall and employee groups against the set absence targets for quarter ending 31st March 2018.

6.2 The Council has recorded an overall absence rate of 3.23 days lost per FTE employee, which is 0.54 days **above** the target figure of 2.69 days.

In addition, the Teacher absence level of 2.24 days lost per FTE employee is 0.06 days below the target of 2.30 days.

The absence performance of Local Government employees at 3.53 days lost per FTE employee is 1.61 days **above** the target of 1.92 days.

7. Reasons for Absence overview

7.1 The illness categories with the highest level of absence, compared to the same quarter in the previous year are as follows:

Quarter Ending	Illness categories
March 2017	Psychological (non work related) – 22.1% Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders – 18.2%.
March 2018	Psychological (non work related) – 22.4% Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders -19.4%

7.2 To address Psychological (non work related) absences the Council continue to provide a range of support services that employees can be referred to at an early stage for assistance. 'timefortalking', the Council's employee counselling service provider, continues to be utilised. The service operates a flexible approach to appointments offering telephone consultations in the early mornings or evenings as well as throughout the day and face to face sessions at their offices in Paisley. Some of the presenting issues to the service relating to Psychological (non work related) include;

- Loss/Bereavement
- Stress/anxiety/panic
- Depression/Self-worth
- Family Relationships

If an employee suggests to their manager that they are experiencing Psychological (non work related) issues then they should be provided with the timefortalking service information.

Further to this, the Council are using timefortalking to continue to deliver mindfulness courses. Courses are open to all employees and have been planned until June 2018. Further dates will be agreed. Feedback from those employees who have attended the courses has been very positive.

There are also Council policies, guidance and training to assist managers and employees that are specific to stress related issues.

HR and OD continue to investigate the practical options for further training and interventions available, which could be offered to employees as a proactive measure or for those who are currently experiencing non-work-related stress. One such area is to deliver the Scottish Mental Health First Aider courses, these will start in line with the new course planner.

HR and OD continue to promote the NHS Choose Life team, who offer safeTalk and ASIST on suicide awareness and prevention.

HR and OD continue to work with our NHS colleagues to promote the "doing well" service which helps people with depression and low moods.

7.3 In relation to addressing musculoskeletal and joint disorders the Council offers a physiotherapy service through the Council's Occupational Health Provider, and 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 are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that safe working practices are maintained.

HR and OD continue to investigate the practical options for further training and interventions available that may reduce the impact of musculoskeletal and joint disorders.

8. Supporting Attendance Activity

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

- HR operational teams continue to work closely with service's management teams on supporting attendance activity, HR operational teams continue to proactively contact and support managers who have absence cases of 2 to 4 weeks in duration, to monitor action taken to date and proposed next steps.

- A review of the current supporting attendance policies covering all staff, including teachers continues. Meetings have taken place with the respective trades unions to ensure this is a fully collaborative process.

- 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 aimed at raising employee awareness of health issues continue.

- 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;

- Meetings continue with Directors and their management teams to discuss their service's supporting attendance performance**.**

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.

12. **Cosla Policy Position -** none

List of Background Papers - none.

The contact officer within the service is Steven Fanning, Principal HR and OD Adviser, telephone 0141 618 7284, e-mail steven.fanning@renfrewshire.gov.uk

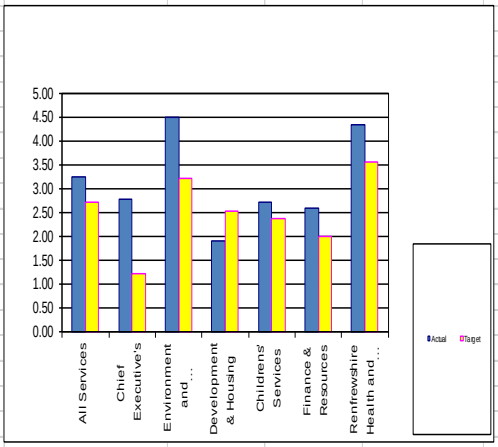
Author: Steven Fanning, Principal HR and OD Adviser,
Finance and Resources,
telephone 0141 618 7284,
e-mail steven.fanning@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Index of Appendices

Graphs detailing trends in service, Council overall and employee group absence levels against targets for 2017/18

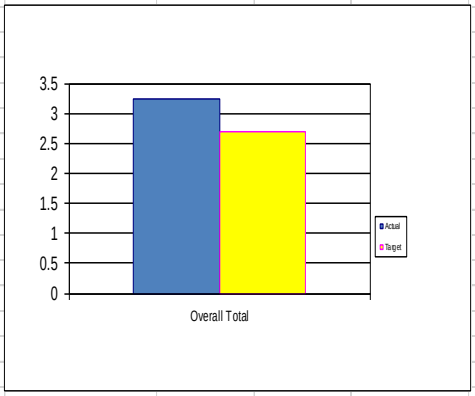
PERFORMANCE V TARGETS 2017/2018

Quarter 4 **January 2018 - March 2018**



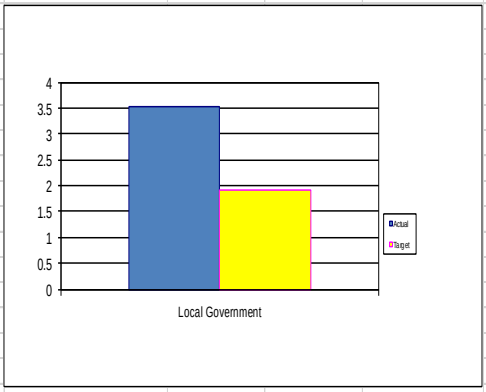
	Actual	Target	Difference
All Services	**3.23**	**2.69**	**0.54**
Chief Executive's	2.78	1.20	**1.58**
Environment and Communities	4.49	3.22	**1.27**
Development & Housing	1.88	2.53	**-0.65**
Childrens' Services	2.71	2.35	**0.36**
Finance & Resources	2.59	2.00	**0.59**
Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership	4.34	3.54	**0.80**

Quarter 4 **January 2018 - March 2018**



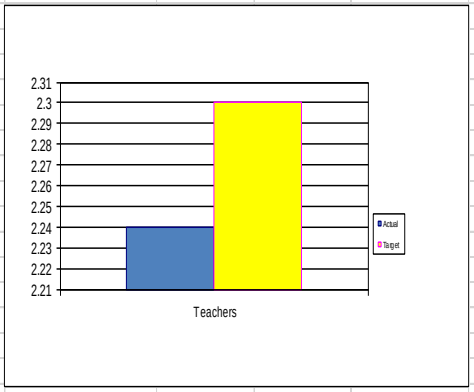
	Actual	Target	Difference
Overall Total	**3.23**	**2.69**	**0.54**

Quarter 4 **January 2018 - March 2018**



	Actual	Target	Difference
Local Government	**3.53**	**1.92**	**1.61**

Quarter 4 **January 2018 - March 2018**



	Actual	Target	Difference
Teachers	**2.24**	**2.3**	**-0.06**