ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee

CUSTOMER SERVICES

25 February 2016

MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE: COUNCIL PERFORMANCE Oct - Dec 2015

1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   For the period October - December 2015 there has been a slight improvement in attendance figures from the same quarter of the previous year (October - December 2014) which reported the average days lost per FTE employee as 2.75 compared with this quarter (October - December 2015) which reports 2.45.

1.2   In comparison with the previous quarter (July – September 2015) there has been a slight increase in the average days lost per FTE employee from 2.23 to 2.45.

1.3   The cost of sick pay in the period October - December 2015 was £983,929 compared with £749,792 in the previous quarter of this year and £865,840 in the same quarter the previous year. This 13.6% increase is largely attributable to the increased cost of teachers' absence.

1.4   The percentage of return to work interviews completed this quarter is 87% showing an improvement over the 84% achieved the previous quarter, moving closer to the council target of 100% completion of return to work interviews.

1.5   The report also details progress made with the corporate actions to maximise attendance.

1.6   It is recommended that the PRS Committee note the content of this report.

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2   INTRODUCTION

2.1   The purpose of this report is to update the Performance Review and Scrutiny (PRS) Committee on the Council's performance against targets and performance indicators for Maximising Attendance during the period October - December 2015.

3   RECOMMENDATION

3.1   It is recommended that the PRS Committee note the content of this report.

4   DETAIL

4.1   Table one outlines the performance of each service against the quarterly targets set at the beginning of the year. It should be noted that absence trends show fluctuations across the quarters. Historically, council-wide absence figures have dipped in quarter two and peaked in quarter four with the exception of services dominated by term-time staff.

4.2   Overall table one shows a positive outcome: the Council overall FTE days lost per employee at 2.45 show a reduction compared to the same quarter in 2014/15 when the average was 2.75 and the figure is only 0.001 days off the 2.45 target.

4.3   As in the quarter 2 report, Community Services is performing particularly well against their 2.58 target at 2.35 - this is 9% better than target. Only Adult Care and Teachers are not meeting target, though the quarter's figures still show a positive improvement over the equivalent quarter from 2014/15 of 14% and 25% respectively.

4.4   Customer Services is bettering target by almost 3%. The only service failing to meet target is Facility Services, a particularly complex service to manage attendance due to its flat management structure and high volume of part time staff working outwith office hours. This figure is still a 29% improvement over the same quarter of the previous year.

4.5   The Chief Executive's Unit is within target.

4.6   Development and Infrastructure is failing to meet target by over 37% and showing a 14% increase over the comparable quarter in 2014/15. Within Development and Infrastructure, Roads & Amenity Services is significantly missing target, though it should be noted that this quarter's figures are a 9% improvement over the same quarter last year. Within Roads & Amenity Services a monthly meeting has been initiated between the Head of Service and third tier managers with HR, where attendance data is reviewed and any exceptions reviewed with the relevant supervisor or manager. As identified in the previous quarter's report Development and Infrastructure have agreed with

Community Services to share their approach and resource from April 2016. Performance & Business Improvement is showing a significant variance from target of 125% and an increase of 24% over the same quarter last year (note that last year's performance was a combined figure with Roads & Amenity). This is a relatively small section (39FTE) that has had 4 long term absences that has influenced their figure. Three of the four cases have resolutions identified.

Table One: Performance October - December 2015

	Average days lost per FTE employee in Q3 2015/16		Target Days lost per FTE Employee per quarter 2015/16	Average days lost in Q3 2014/15
Adult Care	3.86	↑	3.73	4.49
Children & Families	3.35	↓	3.48	3.52
Community & Culture	1.11	↓	2.08	1.01
Education (non-teaching)	2.13	↓	2.85	2.33
COMMUNITY SERVICES (not including teaching)	**2.66**	↓	**3.12**	**2.98**
Teachers	1.86	↑	1.75	2.49
COMMUNITY SERVICES (including teaching)	**2.35**	↓	**2.58**	**2.79**
Customer & Support	0.65	↓	1.6	1.31
Governance & Law	1.42	↓	1.53	1.65
Facility Services	2.75	↑	2.3	3.9
Improvement & HR & Directorate	1.33	↓	1.5	1.26
CUSTOMER SERVICES	**1.83**	↓	**1.88**	**2.35**
Economic Development	2.07	↓	1.88	1.45
Planning & Regulatory	3.35	↑	1.5	0.71
Roads & Amenity Services	3.61	↑	2.25	3.97
Performance & Business Improvement	5.09	↑	3	3.84
DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE	**3.51**	↑	**2.54**	**3.08**
Strategic Finance	1.43	↓	1.55	1.04
Directorates	1.76	↑	1.55	
TOTAL CHIEF EXEC UNIT	**1.54**	↓	**1.76**	
COUNCIL TOTAL	**2.45**	↓	**2.45**	**2.75**

4.7   Table two outlines the cost of sick pay paid by service during Oct-Dec 2015. It highlights those services with the highest cost and cost per FTE indicating comparative costs between services.

4.8   The cost of absence at just under £984k is significantly increased from the £750k of the previous quarter and slightly down on the comparable quarter for 2014/15 at £866k. The highest costs reflect the largest services: Adult Care, Education and Roads & Amenity Services. The cost per FTE indicates the proportion of absence and relative salary of the absent staff.

Table Two: Sick pay by Service October - December 2015

Service	Cost £	Cost per FTE £	Q3 2014/15 Cost £
Adult Care	179,564	£439	173,357
Children & Families	98,961	£458	71,392
Community & Culture	24,590	£120	12,518
Education (non-teaching)	87,044	£140	62,133
Teachers	301,963	£329	286,485
Community Services Total	**692,122**	**£292**	**605,885**
Customer & Support	14,568	£68	19,671
Governance & Law	5,427	£106	2,200
Facility Services	50,893	£151	59,381
Improvement & HR & Directorate	15,803	£189	18,837
Customer Services Total	**86,691**	**£127**	**100,089**
Economic Development	19,394	£294	14,589
Planning & Regulatory	39,040	£363	6,971
Roads & Amenity Services (including Performance & Business Imp)	141,215	£284	133,669
Development & Infrastructure Total	**199,649**	**£290**	**155,229**
Strategic Finance	5,467	£112	4,637
COUNCIL TOTAL	**983,929**	**£251**	**865,840**

4.9   The most significant increase in absence costs is for teaching staff where there is a 164% increase over the previous quarter and a 5% increase over the same quarter the previous year. From investigating the figures, there were a number of absence reworks from the previous quarter included in this quarter. The mix of staff absent had a high proportion of Head Teachers, and Principal Teachers hence despite a 58% increase in absence rate compared to the quarter

covering much of the summer shut down, there is a proportionately higher 164% increase in cost.

Return to work interviews completed by Service October - December 2015

4.10 A return to work interview is an informal meeting held between an employee and line manager following a period of sickness absence which allows the manager to welcome the employee back to work in a private setting, discuss the reason for their period of absence, acknowledge any issues in relation to the employee's attendance record over the past 12 months and let the employee catch up with any changes or updates that have taken place at work during their period of absence.

4.11 In accordance with the Council's Maximising Attendance procedures a return to work interview must be carried out by the line manager after every instance of sickness absence. Services therefore have a 100% target when it comes to completion of return to work interviews. In order that a return to work interview is meaningful it should ideally be carried out on the day the employee returns to work or as soon as possible thereafter and certainly within three days of the employee's return to work.

4.12 Table three outlines each service's monthly performance with respect to percentage of return to work interviews carried out, there is no significant change from Q2 to Q3 with a 3% improvement in the overall total.

Table Three: % return to work interviews completed by Service Oct-Dec 2015

	2015/16	FQ1	FQ2	FQ3
	Service	**% complete**	**% complete**	**% complete**
Community Services	Adult Care	75	79	83
	Children and Families	94	77	88
	Community and Culture	97	90	98
	Education	87	81	89
	Directorate	**n/a**	**100**	**100**
	Total	**84**	**81**	**88**
Customer Services	Customer and Support	98	96	95
	Facility Services	93	94	92
	Governance and Law	86	100	67
	Directorate/Special Projects	100	Na	0
	Improvement and HR	94	95	89
	Total	**94**	**95**	**91**
Development and Infrastructure	Economic Development	88	73	89
	Planning and Reg. Services	91	94	87
	Roads and Amenity Services	84	84	78
	Directorate/ Performance and Business Improvement	100	100	100
	Total	**87**	**85**	**81**
Chief Executives	Directorate	Na	Na	100
	Strategic Finance	100	100	100

Unit	Total	100	100	100
	Council Total	86	84	87

4.13 Table four outlines the main categories of absence in the first three quarters of 2015/16. It clearly illustrates that there is a consistency in the proportion of absence relating to the top categories across all three quarters.

Table Four: % Reason for absence Q1, Q2 and Q3 2015/16

Reason for Absence	Q1 Council Total %	Q2 Council Total %	Q3 Council Total %
STRESS/DEPRESSION/MENTALHEALTH/FATIGUE	25%	25%	23%
MEDICAL TREATMENT	14%	15%	17%
STOMACH, LIVER, KIDNEY & DIGESTION	11%	11%	11%
OTHER MUSCULO-SKELETAL PROBLEMS	9%	9%	8%
BACK & NECK PROBLEMS	6%	8%	9%
INFECTIONS	7%	6%	9%
HEART, BLOOD PRESSURE & CIRCULATION	5%	5%	3%
NEUROLOGICAL	4%	4%	4%
INJURY/ACCIDENT	4%	4%	4%
CHEST & RESPIRATORY	6%	4%	3%
GENITO-URINARY/GYNAECOLOGICAL	2%	3%	2%
PREGNANCY RELATED	1%	1%	1%
SKIN	1%	1%	1%

Correlation between Untaken Leave and Stress Absence

4.14 Further to the previous Attendance Report, the Committee asked if there was a relationship between staff not taking annual leave and stress related absence. A report was obtained of all staff with over half a day's leave untaken at year end, which accounted for 487 employees. This was then compared with the stress absence data report, finding 53 (10.9%) of these employees had been absent due to a stress related illness. Further work is required to consider this topic to discover causality.

Specific Corporate Actions to Maximise Attendance

4.15 Progress has been made on a number of initiatives supporting managing attendance:

4.16 A new comprehensive Stress at Work policy has been presented to SMT, some changes will be made by HR based on feedback from the Chief Executive and then the updated policy will be resubmitted to SMT for approval. This policy introduces a risk assessment framework with clear guidelines for managing stress at work.

4.17 PAM Assist are now providing a 24 hour telephone service and a face to face service providing confidential support to employees. Methods more effectively communicating this service to employees are currently being considered following feedback from Trade Unions.

4.18 Staff who have not taken all annual leave from last year to be specifically targeted with information on recognition and support for stress. Managers to be

advised of staff who have not taken all their annual leave last year to ensure that their leave is planned this year.

4.19 As identified in previous report it is noted that Community Services is the only Service to employ an HR Assistant to specifically support managing attendance, in particular providing a high level of support to managers in terms of training and advising on implementation of policy and best practice to support staff back to work. The Executive Director of Community Services has taken a keen interest in attendance management and has regular review meetings with the attendance HR Assistant, such that mangers within his department are aware that there is a high level of scrutiny of how they are managing particular cases. Recognising the success of this model Development & Infrastructure has agreed to share this support from April 2016 and will implement the same model.

4.20 The Healthy Working Lives group are working on a number of initiatives:

4.20.1 Following a proposal to the HR Board, a range of materials have been added to the hub supporting stress management: self-assessment tools, e-learning training and details of how to access specific support.

4.20.2 Researching the role of Mental Health First Aiders within organisations, and whether this is something that the Council could incorporate/promote is on the agenda for their next meeting.

4.20.3 Consideration being given to changing the function of the Healthy Working Lives group to considering strategic issues with area groups responsible for running events and local activity.

4.21 Ongoing from previous report it is recognised that the Council is currently facing significant change and potential job losses, both of which are known stressors. The Council will take cognisance of this situation to ensure that this stress is minimised where possible by ensuring clear and regular communication with affected staff.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 In conclusion this report has outlined the Council's performance against targets and performance indicators for the period October - December 2015.

6 IMPLICATIONS

Policy	This complies with the Council's Maximising Attendance Policy
Financial	Failure to achieve targets in relation to maximising attendance is likely to have financial implications with respect to the cost of sick pay
HR	Failure to maximise attendance is likely to have an impact on workforce productivity
Legal	None
Equal Opportunities	This complies with the Council's Equalities policy
Risk	High levels of absence present risk to organisational efficiencies
Customer Service	High levels of absence will impact on customer service

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