

**MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE: COUNCIL PERFORMANCE 2015/16**

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**1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 For the period April 2015 – March 2016 there has been a 4.6% decrease in the Council actual average days lost per FTE employee decreasing from 10.56 in 2014/15 to 10.07 in 2015/16. In respect of the split between Teachers and LGE staff groups there has been a significant decrease from 8.2 to 6.86 for teachers and a slight decrease from 11.2 to 11.05 for LGE staff. This is a positive result overall given the climate of uncertainty faced by many posts due to the Council's Service Choices process.
- 1.2 Out of the thirteen services (Education is split into Non-Teaching and Teaching for the purposes of reporting) seven failed to meet their targets – however, Strategic Finance only very narrowly missed their target. This is a similar trend to last year.
- 1.3 The main reasons for sickness absence across the Council during 2015/16 were Stress, depression and mental health (23.6%), Medical treatment/ operations (14.0%) and Stomach, Liver, Kidneys and Digestion (10.6%). This demonstrated no significant change from 2014/15.
- 1.4 Stress remains the main cause of sickness absence and initiatives have been put in place to address this. A new Stress at Work Policy has been developed and will soon be through the Committee approval process. Mandatory Stress Awareness Training has been rolled out across the Council for all managers and staff. An additional management report has also been added to the suite of management reports sent to Heads of Service and Directors which highlights every instance of absence due to Stress to provide a further reminder to managers to have an Attendance Review Meeting and it also gives senior managers an overall picture of the volume of absences due to Stress per month.
- 1.5 Overall, The Chief Executives Unit, Customer Services and Community Services have increased the percentage of return to work interviews completed this financial year. However, Development & Infrastructure have experienced a slight decrease.
- 1.6 The report also details progress made with the corporate actions to maximise attendance and identifies future actions.
- 1.7 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 on Maximising Attendance during the period April 2015- March 2016.

**3. RECOMMENDATION**

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

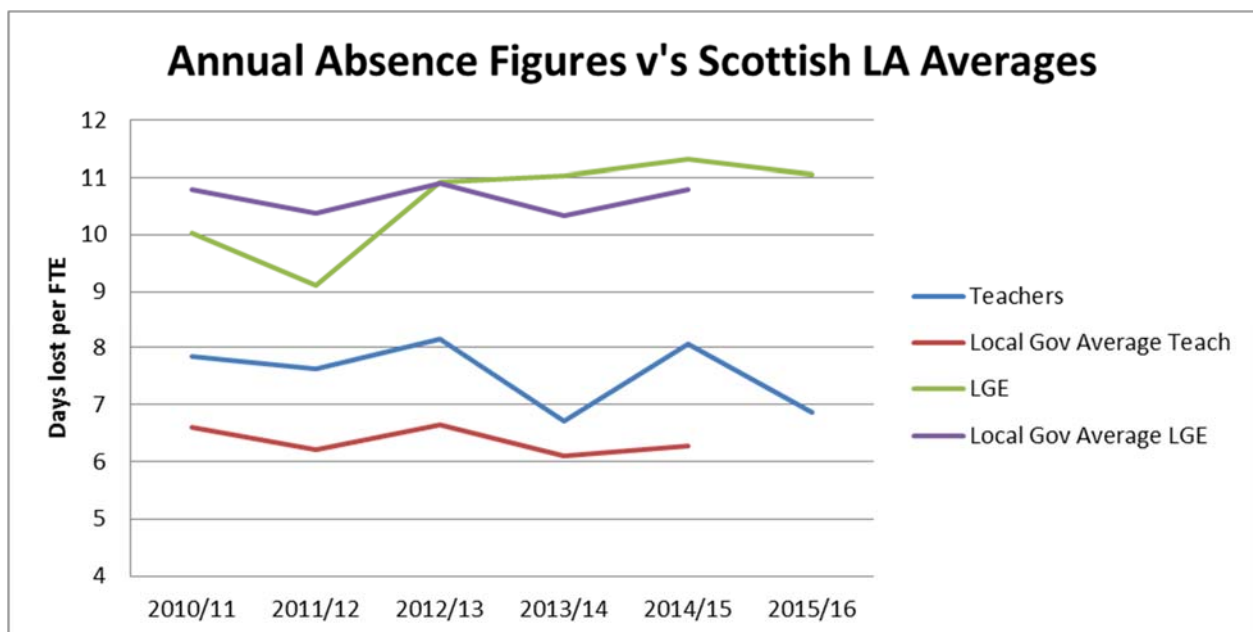
**4. DETAIL**

4.1. Table One and Graph One below shows the Council's Performance indicator figures over the last three years showing there has been a significant improvement in absence over the last year from 8.2 to 6.86 for Teachers and a slight improvement from 11.2 to 11.05 for LGE staff, this is a positive trend.

**TABLE ONE: TRENDS IN SPI FIGURES (Average Work days lost per FTE employee)**

Staff Group	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Teachers	6.7	8.2	6.86
LGE	11.6	11.2	11.05

**GRAPH ONE: COUNCIL ABSENCE FIGURES TREND**



Graph One details the Council's absence figures against the Scottish Local Authority Averages over the last 6 years. It should be noted as has previously been reported that when the Council introduced direct absence reporting 2011/12 the accuracy of our absence recording improved and ensured that absence that previously would not have been recorded is now captured in our absence data.

Benchmarking these results against the 2014/15 figures for all Scottish authorities would see our ranking improve from 28<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> for Teachers attendance and an improvement from 21<sup>st</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> for Local Government employees (non-teaching).

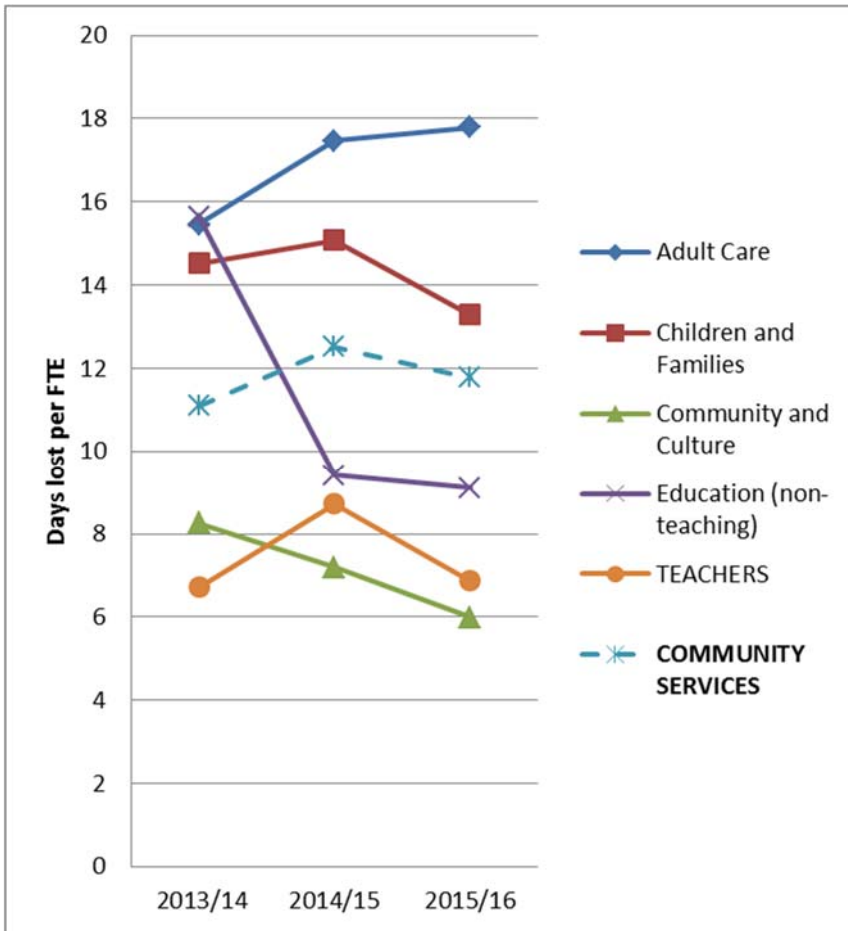
This is a positive outcome given the level of stress and uncertainty that many posts within the Council have faced over the last year due to the impact of the Service Choices process to meet the ongoing cuts in Council Budget.

4.2. Table Two and Graphs Two to Four below outline the performance of each service against the targets set during the first quarter of the year and overall trends. Out of the thirteen services (Education is split into Non-Teaching and Teaching for the purposes of reporting) seven failed to meet their targets – however, Strategic Finance (including Directorate) only very narrowly missed their target.

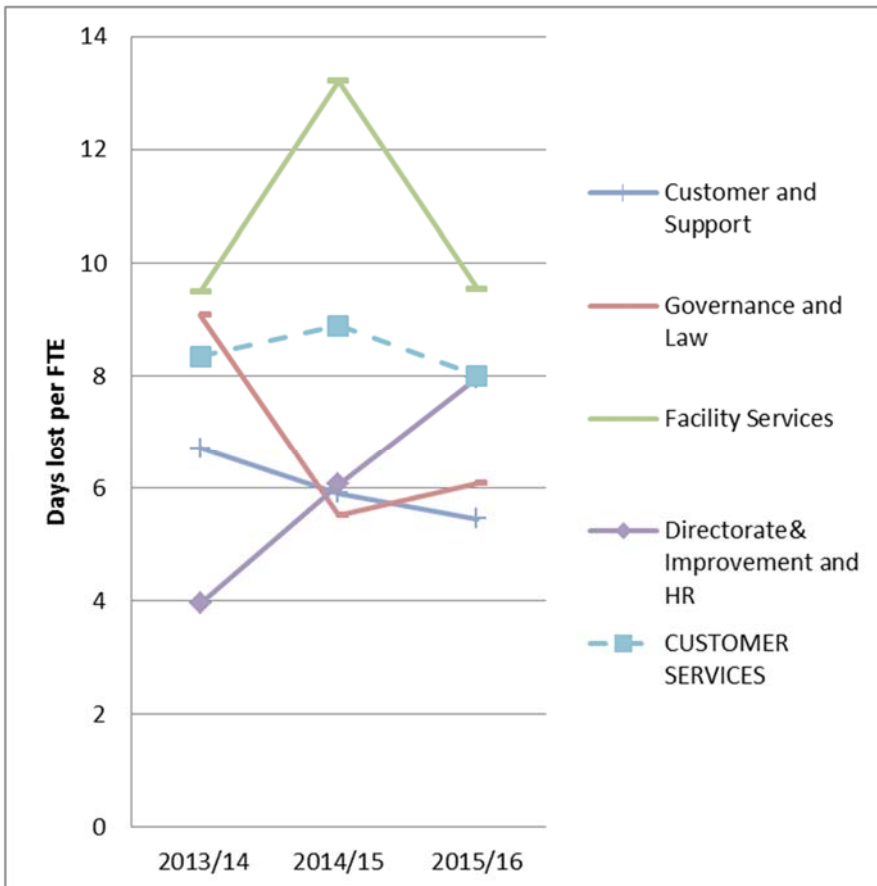
**TABLE TWO: PERFORMANCE 2014/15**

	Actual Average days lost per FTE employee 2015/16	Target Days lost per FTE Employee 2015/2016	Actual Average days lost per FTE employee 2014/15
Adult Care	17.79	14.92	17.46
Children and Families	13.28	13.92	15.08
Community and Culture	5.99	8.32	7.19
Education (non-teaching)	9.10	11.40	9.41
<b>COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>	<b>11.77</b>	<b>12.48</b>	<b>12.51</b>
<b>TEACHERS</b>	<b>6.86</b>	<b>7.00</b>	<b>8.71</b>
Customer and Support	5.45	6.40	5.91
Governance and Law	6.09	6.12	5.52
Facility Services	9.55	9.20	13.21
Directorate & Improvement and HR	7.97	6.00	6.07
<b>CUSTOMER SERVICES</b>	<b>8.01</b>	<b>7.52</b>	<b>8.89</b>
Economic Development	6.48	6.00	8.78
Planning and Regulatory	9.55	9.00	5.77
Roads & Amenity Services (including Performance & Business Improvement)	15.49	12.00	19.72
<b>DEVELOPMENT &amp; INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	<b>13.39</b>	<b>10.16</b>	<b>11.71</b>
<b>CHIEF EXEC</b> incl. Strategic Finance	<b>6.24</b>	<b>6.20</b>	<b>6.17</b>
<b>COUNCIL TOTAL</b>	<b>10.07</b>	<b>9.80</b>	<b>10.56</b>

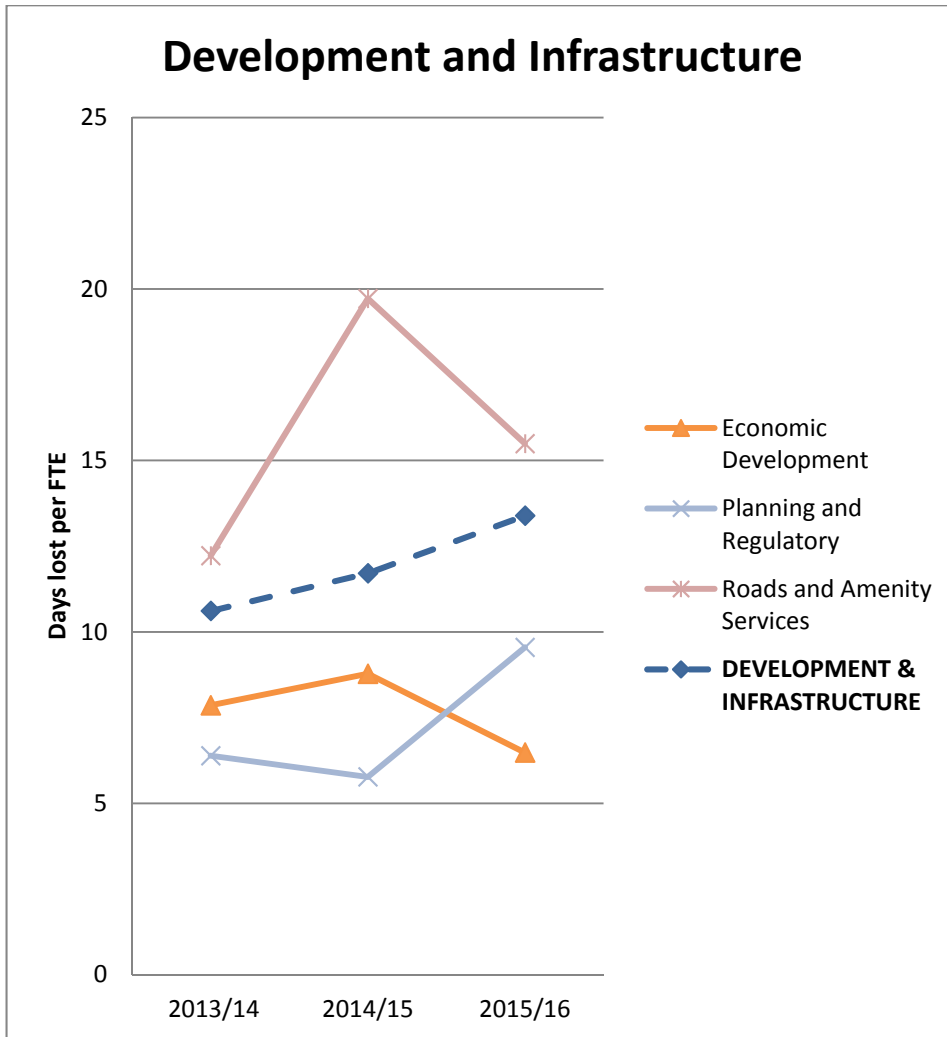
**GRAPH TWO: COMMUNITY SERVICES ABSENCE TREND**



**GRAPH THREE: CUSTOMER SERVICES ABSENCE TREND**



**GRAPH FOUR: DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES ABSENCE TREND**



4.3. Of those seven Services who failed to meet their targets all bar two saw an increase in their actual average days lost per FTE employee from the previous financial year and those that made their target all saw a decrease.

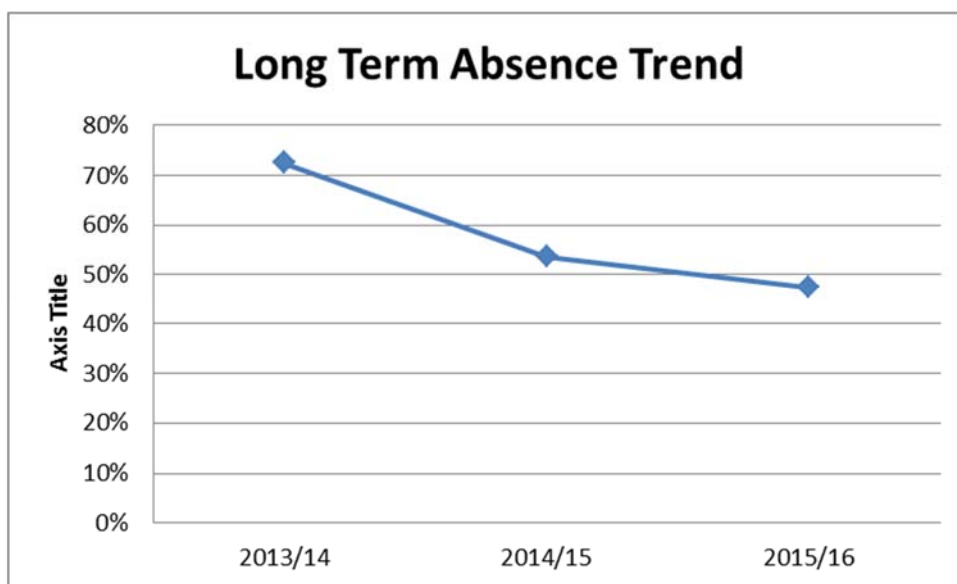
4.4. Looking at the trends across Departments, Community Services demonstrates ongoing improvement in all areas bar Adult Care. Customer and Support Services also demonstrates a positive trend overall, whereas IHR has shown a steady increase and Governance and Law a slight increase. Development and Infrastructure exhibits an ongoing negative trend with Economic Development and Roads and Amenity Services showing significant improvement over the previous year. Roads and Amenity have significantly reversed a negative trend with a 21% improvement in their figure.

4.5. Overall, there has been a decrease in the Council actual average days lost per FTE employee decreasing from 10.56 in 2014/15 to 10.07 in 2015/16, which is a positive outturn for the Council. As outlined above when you consider the split between Teachers and LGE staff groups there has been a significant decrease from 8.2 to 6.86 for teachers and a slight decrease from 11.2 to 11.05 for LGE staff.

4.6. The significant reduction in days lost for teaching staff from the years 2014/15 to 2015/16 reverses what had occurred the previous year.

4.7. Long term absence accounted for 53.66% of all absence in 2014/15 but this has decreased to 47.42% in 2014/15. This is now beginning to show results from the targeted approach to dealing with long term absence. The Maximising Attendance policy is focused on early intervention when dealing with long term absence. Managers are required to have the first Attendance Review meetings during the first 4-8 weeks of sickness absence. However, the proportion of absence due to short term absences has increased to 46.34%. The Maximising Attendance policy focuses on a series of meetings and cautions to improve attendance for short term frequent absences.

**GRAPH FIVE: LONG TERM ABSENCE TREND**



**4.8. Proportion of Absence**

4.8.1. It is expected that the percentage of work days lost should be proportionate to the size of the service, i.e. larger services will be responsible for a larger proportion of the Council's total work days lost. Services where the % Absence is higher than the %FTE represent higher than expected levels of absence. The services where absence is higher than expected will be targeted for specific improvement based on detailed analysis of management information. Table six below shows the percentage FTE for each service against the percentage of the Council's total work days lost that it accounts for. Those services in red indicate higher than expected absence levels.

4.8.2. In performance year 2015/16 there were three services whose absence was higher than their % FTE and this year that figure remains the same. Roads and Amenity, Adult Care and Children and Families have a history of very high absence levels. The nature of the work of these groups will result in higher absence levels: If working with vulnerable clients, you cannot risk exposing them to viruses or illness. The nature of the heavy manual work carried out by Roads and Amenity staff also makes attendance more difficult for back problems or any debilitating illness.

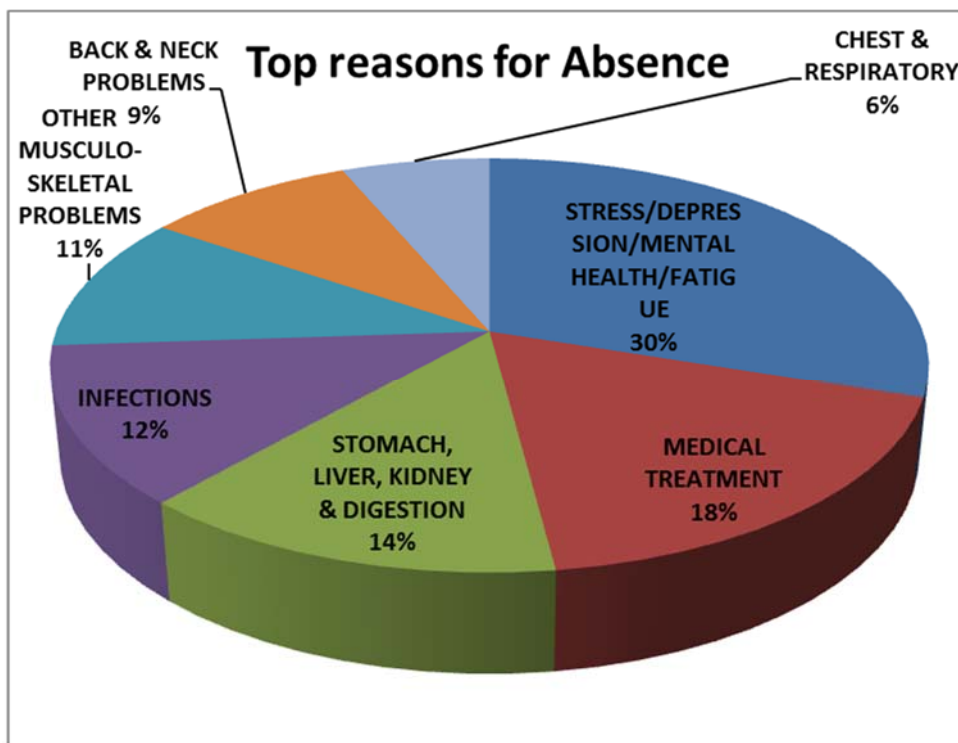
**TABLE SIX: % ABSENCE AND % FTE BY SERVICE**

Service	%Absence	%FTE
Adult Care	18.90%	10.70%
Children and Families	7.19%	5.45%
Community and Culture	3.10%	5.21%
Education (non-teaching)	14.36%	15.89%
Teachers	15.95%	23.43%
Customer and Support	2.96%	5.47%
Governance and Law	0.78%	1.28%
Facility Services	10.25%	10.80%
Economic Development	1.50%	2.33%
Improvement and HR	1.70%	2.15%
Planning and Regulatory Services	2.60%	2.74%
Roads and Amenity Services (including PBI)	19.59%	12.73%
Strategic Finance	1.13%	1.83%

**4.9. Reasons for Absence**

4.9.1. The main reasons for sickness absence across the Council during 2015/16 were Stress, depression and mental health (23.6%), Medical treatment/ operations (14.0%) and Stomach, Liver, Kidneys and Digestion (10.6%). In comparison with last year the rank order has slightly changed – Stress, depression and mental health was also the number one reason last year, the percentage has remained at a similar level at 23.53% Medical Treatment/Operations has now overtaken Stomach, Liver, Kidneys and Digestion which was last year’s number two reason for absence.

**GRAPH FIVE: TOP ABSENCE REASONS OVER 5%**



- 4.9.2. Stress remains the main cause of sickness absence and initiatives have been put in place to address this. A new Stress at Work Policy has been developed and will soon be through the Committee approval process. Mandatory Stress Awareness Training has been rolled out across the Council for all managers and staff. An additional management report has also been added to the suite of management reports sent to Heads of Service and Directors which highlights every instance of absence due to Stress to provide a further reminder to managers to have an Attendance Review Meeting and it also gives senior managers an overall picture of the volume of absences due to Stress per month. Long Term absences account for 64.6% of the instances of Stress related absences.
- 4.9.3. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) most recent Annual Absence Management Survey Report (2016) reported that “Two-fifths of respondents report that stress related absence has increased over the past year, although this rises to half of public sector organisations.” 77% of public service organisations reported stress as their number one cause of long term absence in manual workers and 79% as their number one reason for non-manual workers. This is very similar set of results to what was reported in the last Q4 report.
- 4.9.4. Table Seven shows the percentage of absence due to Stress related reasons per service. Three of the Services in the top 7 this year were not in the top 7 last year, of those still in the top seven all show a decrease from the previous year. The council average for Stress related absences is 23.53%, the same as the previous year.

**TABLE SEVEN: % of Absence due to Stress per Service**

<b>Service</b>	<b>% Stress Absence 2014/15</b>	<b>% Stress Absence 2015/16</b>
Planning & Regulatory	22.0%	<b>42.3%</b>
Improvement & HR	35.5%	<b>32.1%</b>
Customer & Support Services	34.8%	<b>30.7%</b>
Community & Culture	21.0%	<b>28.2%</b>
Economic Development	36.7%	<b>25.6%</b>
Adult Care	24.0%	<b>24.2%</b>
Facility Services	16.2%	<b>24.0%</b>
Education	27.2%	23.3%
Children & Families	26.9%	20.9%
Roads & Amenity Services (including PBI)	20.9%	19.8%
Strategic Finance	38.0%	19.4%
Governance & Law	10.9%	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>



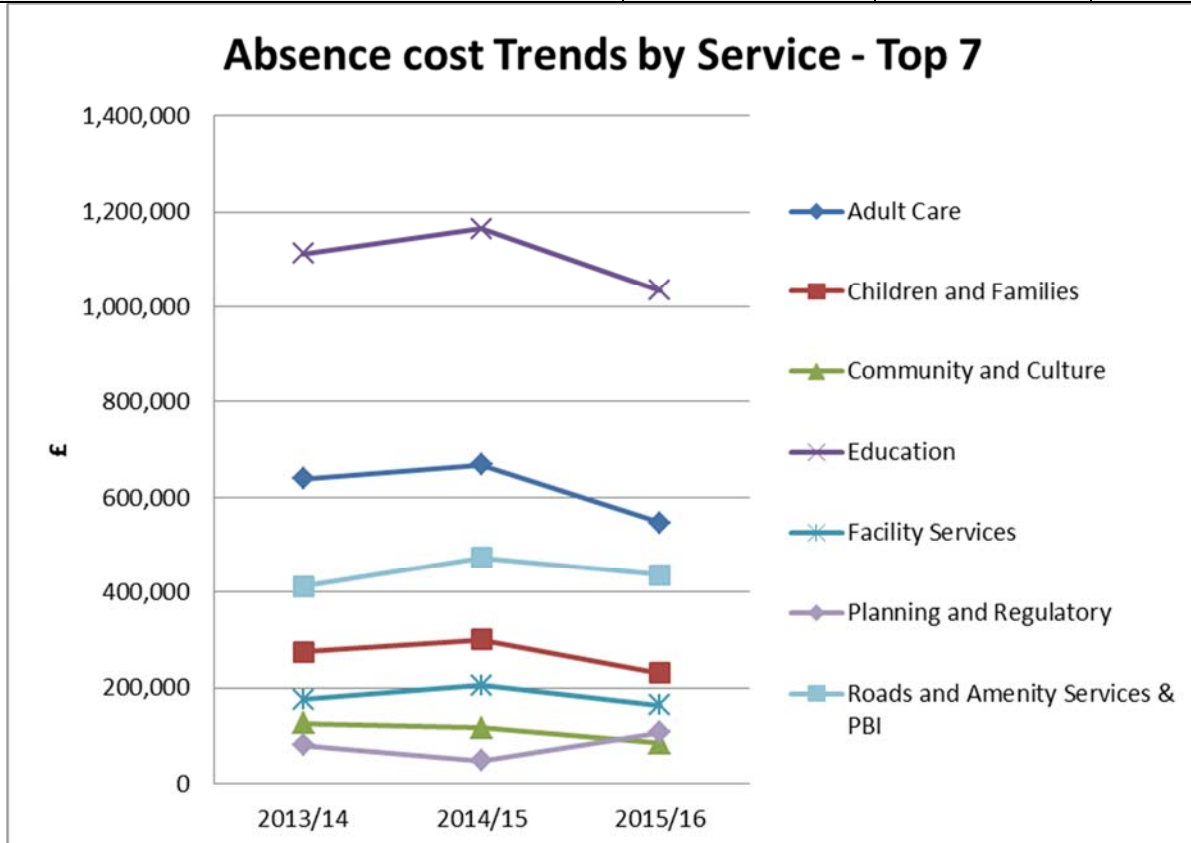
4.9.5. Stress continues to be the most prevalent cause of absence followed by Medical Treatment then Stomach, liver, kidneys and digestive problems.

#### 4.10. Cost of Sickness Absence

4.10.1. Table Eight below outlines the actual cost of sick pay paid by each service of the Council and a comparison with previous two year's. There has been a £344k or 10.7% decrease in the cost of sickness absence in this financial year.

**TABLE EIGHT: ABSENCE COST BY SERVICE**

Service	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Adult Care	639,886	669,382	547,259
Children and Families	275,912	301,327	230,465
Community and Culture	126,313	117,126	84,231
Education	1,112,359	1,164,595	1,033,813
Community Services Total	2,154,470	2,252,430	1,895,768
Facility Services	176,253	206,182	164,375
Governance and Law	28,050	16,904	24,357
Customer and Support	109,409	87,347	82,609
Improvement and HR	41,299	47,106	68,415
Customer Services Total	355,011	357,539	339,756
Economic Development	69,904	53,002	46,838
Planning and Regulatory	80,391	48,692	107,286
Roads and Amenity Services & PBI	413,064	472,483	436,470
Development and Infrastructure Total	563,359	574,177	590,594
Chief Exec+Strategic Finance	34,516	26,921	40,882
Grand Total	3,107,356	3,211,067	2,867,000



#### 4.11. Return to Work interviews

4.11.1. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) view return to work interviews as the single most effective tool in managing absence. When carried out in accordance with the Council's procedures the return to work interview allows managers and employees to review the cause of each absence, check that the employee is fit to return to work and put in place any measures required to support the employee back to work. Particularly where the employee has been off on long term sickness absence the return to work interview is a good opportunity to catch up on changes that they may have missed and reintegrate them back into the workplace. Most importantly the return to work interview indicates to the employee that their attendance at work is valued and that they were missed during their absence.

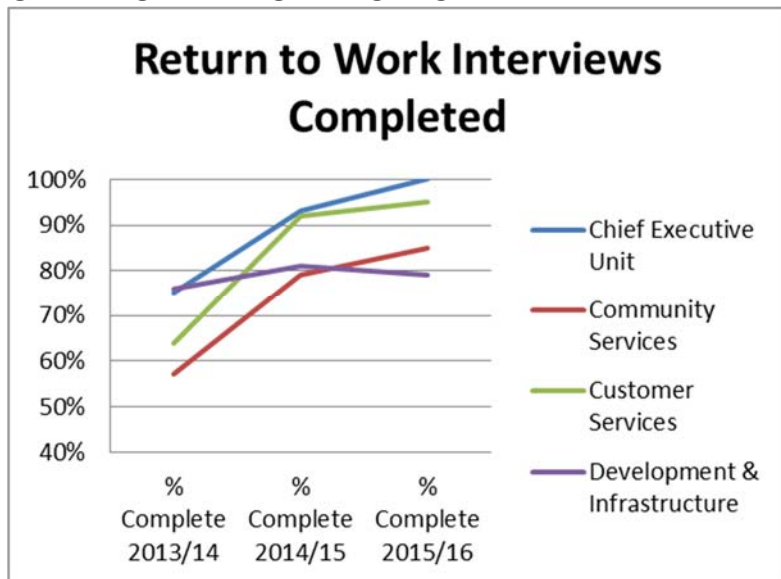
4.11.2. In order to be most effective return to work interviews should ideally take place on the day the employee returns to work or at least within three working days of their return. Services have a 100% target for completion of return to work interviews. Table Nine and Graph Six below outline the performance by department. The final column on Table Nine shows last year's performance for comparison. Overall, the Chief Executives unit, Customer Services and Community Services have increased the percentage of return to work interviews completed. However, Development & Infrastructure have experienced a slight decrease.

**Table Nine: % Return to work interviews completed by department April 2015-March 2016**

Dept.	Return to work interviews expected	Completed RTWI's	% Complete 2015/16	Average time to complete (calendar days)	% Complete 2014/15
Chief Executive Unit	34	34	100%	5.6	93%
Community Services	2895	2465	85%	6	79%
Customer Services	706	668	95%	2.8	92%
Development & Infrastructure	612	485	79%	3.6	81%

Graph Six shows a positive trend across all departments except Development and Infrastructure which has decreased slightly.

## GRAPH SIX: RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW TRENDS



### 4.12. Performance 2015/16

4.12.1. Throughout the year the following measures have continued to support services in achieving their maximising attendance targets:

- Online guidance and resources on the Hub including guidance on how to conduct attendance review meetings and how to implement reasonable adjustments and phased returns to work.
- Issue of monthly management information reports to Heads of Service and Directors outlining performance on return to work interviews and employees who have met attendance triggers.
- Occupational Health support including provision for periodic local clinics
- Support and guidance from the HR advice line and HR Officers where appropriate. This includes the opportunity to talk through what managers might want to cover before holding any meetings with employees or what they might want to put in an OHP referral as well as attendance at meetings in a coaching role where appropriate.
- Emails to notify managers when an employee has met a trigger and what action is required
- Emails to notify managers when an employee begins/ ends sick leave
- An additional HR Assistant was appointed to support Community Services with their absence. This post commenced during November 2013 and provides case management advice and training to managers in Community Services. From April 2016 this resource has been shared with Development and Infrastructure and will no longer support the Services transferred to the new Health and Social Care Partnership.
- The Council's Healthy Working Lives group have coordinated an infection control initiative to raise general awareness amongst staff of measures that can reduce the spread of infections. They have also added additional resources to the Hub to support employees through change relating to recognising stress and personal resilience. They have also added some related training on LEON, the ELearning platform.

- A new e-learning module for the Maximising Attendance procedures has been developed and launched on the new ELearning platform LEON.
- A Council Stress audit was completed and a subsequent action plan approved and implemented.

#### 4.13. Targets 2016/17

4.13.1. Targets for maximising attendance during 2016/17 will be agreed by the Council's Strategic Management Team for entry onto the Council's performance reporting system, Pyramid in June 2016.

#### 4.14. Achieving 2016/17 Targets

4.14.1. Due to resource issues within HR over the last year, the planned update to the Maximising Attendance procedures and the review on the use of temporary redeployments for staff on long term sick have not been implemented. These will be part of the departments 2016/17 work plan.

4.14.2. In addition to the specific corporate and HR support continuing from 2015/16 the following are due to be implemented during the course of 2016/17:

- A new stress at work policy is in draft format and will be agreed and implemented during the course of 2016/17. This draft policy proposes to introduce a risk assessment framework with clear guidelines for managing stress at work
- A group has been set up with representatives from each department and the Trades Unions to review the Maximising Attendance procedures with a view to clarifying areas of ambiguity and further improving guidance and tools for managers and staff.
- The Council is to pilot Mental Health first aiders with a view to rolling out across the Council. This would involve staff trained on mental health issues to support staff in a similar manner to First Aiders for physical health issues.

## 5 CONCLUSION

5.1 In conclusion this report has outlined the Council's performance on Attendance Management for the period 2015-16. Overall, there has been a decrease in the total number of days lost in comparison to last year. Teacher's absence has decreased significantly while LGE Employee absence has slightly decreased.

## 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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