

**Resources Committee
23rd November 2016**

Agenda Item	16
Report No	RES/ 85/16

Corporate Development – Sickness Absence Statutory Performance Indicator,
Quarterly Performance Report

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development

Summary

This report provides quarterly details of the Sickness Absence Statutory Performance Indicator for Quarter 2 of 2016/17.

1. Background

- 1.1 This report provides details of the Corporate Development Service's quarterly Sickness Absence Statutory Performance Indicator for quarter 2 of 2016/17. The report also provides supporting analysis, data trends relating to sickness absence for all Council Services as per Appendices 1 and 2.

2. Sickness Absence – Corporate Development

- 2.1 The average number of days lost per employee for Corporate Development for the second quarter of 2016/17 was 1.5 days. This is a decrease of 0.8 days compared with the same period in 2015/16. The three most prevalent reasons for all absence in Corporate Development for the quarter were;
- Anxiety or Depression (27% of all days absence)
 - Skin Conditions (20% of all days absence)
 - Back Pain/Sciatica (14% of all days absence)
- 2.2 Of all absence from Corporate Development that began during the quarter, 80% of the days lost are due to long term absence (28 days or more as defined in policy).

3. Sickness Absence – Highland Council

- 3.1 Across the Highland Council the average number of working days lost per employee for the second quarter of 2016/17 was 2.3 days for non-teaching staff and 1.2 days for teaching staff. This is an increase of 0.4 days compared with

same period for 2015/16 for teaching staff and an increase 0.3 days for non-teaching staff. The three most prevalent reasons for all absence across the Highland Council for the quarter were;

- Stress (15% of all days absence)
- Back Pain/Sciatica (11% of all days absence)
- Musculoskeletal Conditions (9% of all days absence)

Of all absence from the Highland Council that began during the quarter, 86% of the days lost are due to long term absence (28 days or more as defined in policy).

- 3.2 All Services will report absence statistics to the relevant Strategic Committees. Annual data trends relating to the sickness absence indicator for Q2 (July - September) are shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 It can be noted that the days lost due to absence are significantly lower for teachers than for non-teaching staff. This has historically been the case and is a pattern that is replicated across all 32 Scottish Local Authorities. (Academic studies have shown that this is the case across the UK). There is no clear explanation for this difference in absence rate. Analysis of the data shows that teachers and non-teachers who are absent from work are generally absent for the same period of time. Teachers are not returning to work any earlier. Also teachers are absent for the same reasons as non-teaching staff and the occurrence of long term and short term absence is almost identical. Both staff groups are subject to the same policies, procedures and guidance and managers are all offered the same training.
- 3.4 Across the Council, the most prevalent reasons for long term absence are related to stress and back pain. Episodes of long term absence are managed in accordance with Highland Council policy and with guidance from medical practitioners and the occupational health service. A statistical breakdown of absence type by Service and employee group for Q2 of 2016/17 is shown in Appendix 2.
- 3.5 Detailed statistics are used to highlight repetitive absences and to manage long term and repetitive absences. Line managers, supported by HR Services, meet with individual employees whose absences are giving cause for concern. These meetings are designed to be supportive to individual staff, and to ensure that any specific actions are identified, such as a referral to Occupational Health.
- 3.6 A number of new actions and initiatives have been agreed to improve attendance at work, support employees' return to work and reduce the cost of absence.

- A new half day attendance management course has been developed in partnership with the trade unions. This is being delivered to all managers, supplemented by an e-learning package. The course has been made available across the Highlands and at times to suit service needs, including targeted training events for head teachers. To date 289 managers have been trained and a further 278 are booked to attend.
- An Attendance Support Officer has be employed to prioritise attendance management problem areas and actively engage with managers, provide additional guidance, support employees back to work and minimise sickness absence costs. Where appropriate, the Attendance Support Officer provides direct support to employees.
- Two additional attendance indicators have been developed and made available to Directors for scrutiny through the quarterly performance reviews. These identify potential issues early and allow managers to focus interventions.

4. Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial, risk, equalities or climate change/carbon clever, Gaelic or rural implications arising from this report.

5. Recommendations:

Resources Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the performance in relation to sickness absence.

Signature:

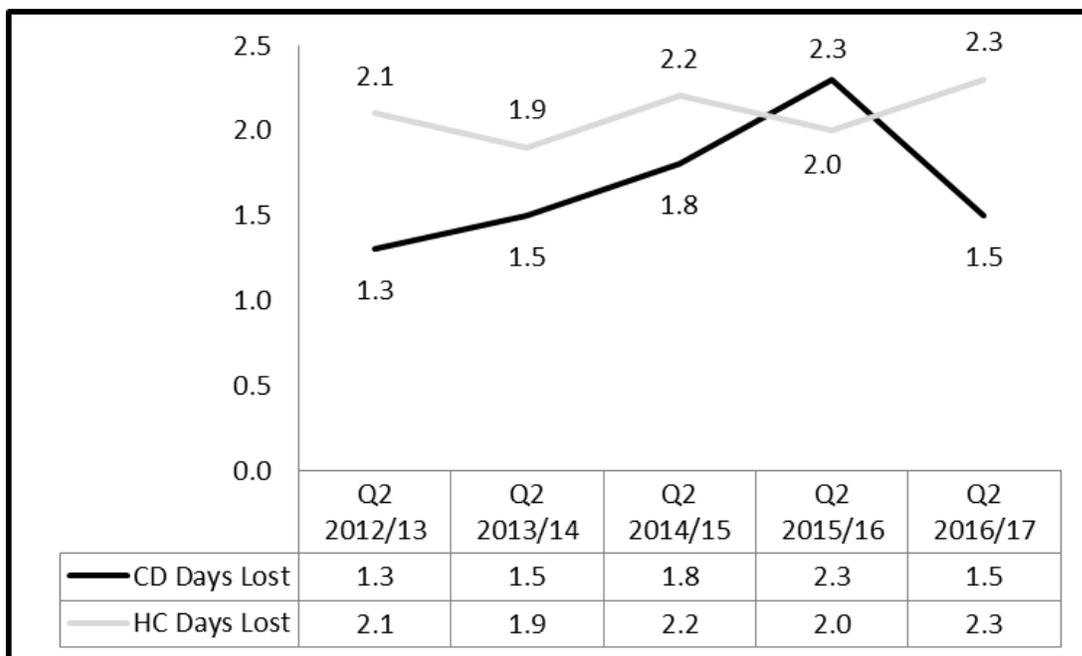
Designation: Depute Chief Executive /
Director of Corporate Development

Date: 8 November 2016

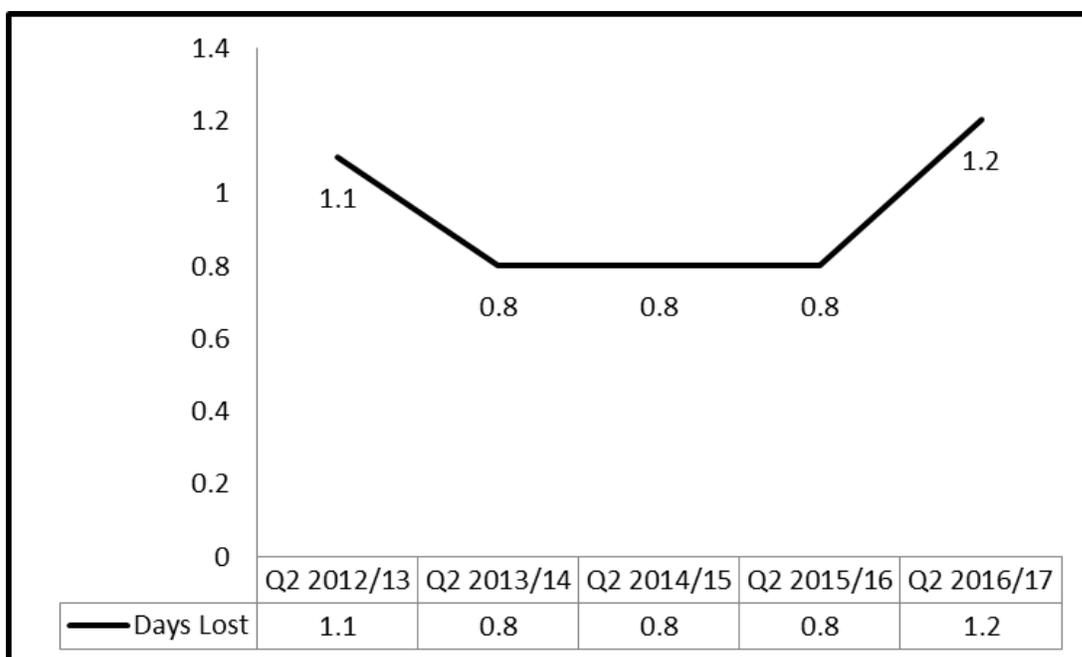
Authors: J Murdo MacDonald, HR Manager
Craig Rankin, HR Adviser

Absence Statutory Performance Indicators – Data Trends

(i) Q2 (July – September) Sickness Absence Indicator (Non-Teaching Staff)



(ii) Q2 (July - September) Sickness Absence Indicator (Teaching Staff)



Absence Data Analysis – Nature of Absence Q2 2016-17

	FTE	Total Days Absence	Short Term Absence (%)	Long Term Absence (%)
Non-Teaching Staff				
Care & Learning	2908.0	6945.6	10%	90%
Community Services	1216.3	3565.1	25%	75%
Corporate Development	223.7	335.6	20%	80%
Development & Infrastructure	325.4	507.2	11%	89%
Finance	510.4	664.3	27%	73%
Teaching Staff				
Care & Learning	2506.0	2536	9%	91%