

The Highland Council

Resources Committee – 25 November 2015

Agenda Item	25
Report No	RES/116/15

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 2015/16.

1. Background

- 1.1 This report provides details of the Corporate Development Service's quarterly Sickness Absence Statutory Performance Indicator for quarter 2 of 2015/16. 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 2015/16 was 2.3 days. This is an increase of 0.5 days compared with the same period in 2014/15. The three most prevalent reasons for all absence in Corporate Development for the quarter were;

- Stress/Depression/Mental Health (24% of all days absence)
- Cancer (11% of all days absence)
- Operation/Hospitalisation (10% of all days absence)

Of all absence from Corporate Development that began during the quarter, 83% of the days lost are due to long term absence (28 days or more as defined in policy).

- 2.2 Due to the relative size of the Corporate Development workforce a small number of incidents of sickness absence can have a significant effect on the indicator. This has been the case in Quarter 2 leading to the increase of 0.5 days. These incidents have and are being managed and a reduction in the indicator is anticipated in the next quarter.

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 2015/16 was 2.0 days for non-teaching staff and 0.8 days for teaching staff. This has remained at the same level over the same period for 2014/15 for teaching staff and a decrease 0.2 days for non-teaching staff. The three most prevalent reasons for all absence across the Highland Council for the quarter were;

- Stress/Depression/Mental Health (22% of all days absence)
- Operation/Hospitalisation (12% of all days absence)
- Diarrhoea/Vomiting/Stomach Upset (10% of all days absence)

Of all absence from the Highland Council that began during the quarter, 77% 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 mental health and medical issues requiring operations or hospitalisation. 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 2015/16 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 In 2014/15 Highland Council was ranked 4th out of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities and, although overall Highland Council absence rates compare favourably with performance across Scottish Local Authorities, performance by Services and Sections within the Council does vary. Corporate Development is currently supporting a number of initiatives to identify good practice in relation to attendance management and action this across all Council Services.

4. Implications

4.1 There are no financial, risk, legal, equalities, 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:

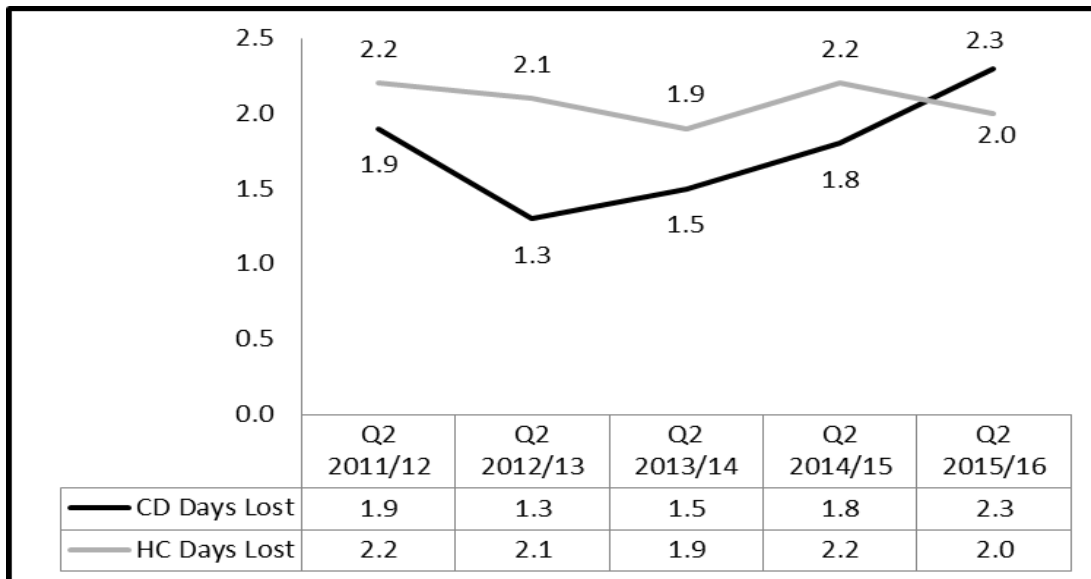
Designation: Depute Chief Executive /
Director of Corporate Development

Date: 14 November 2015

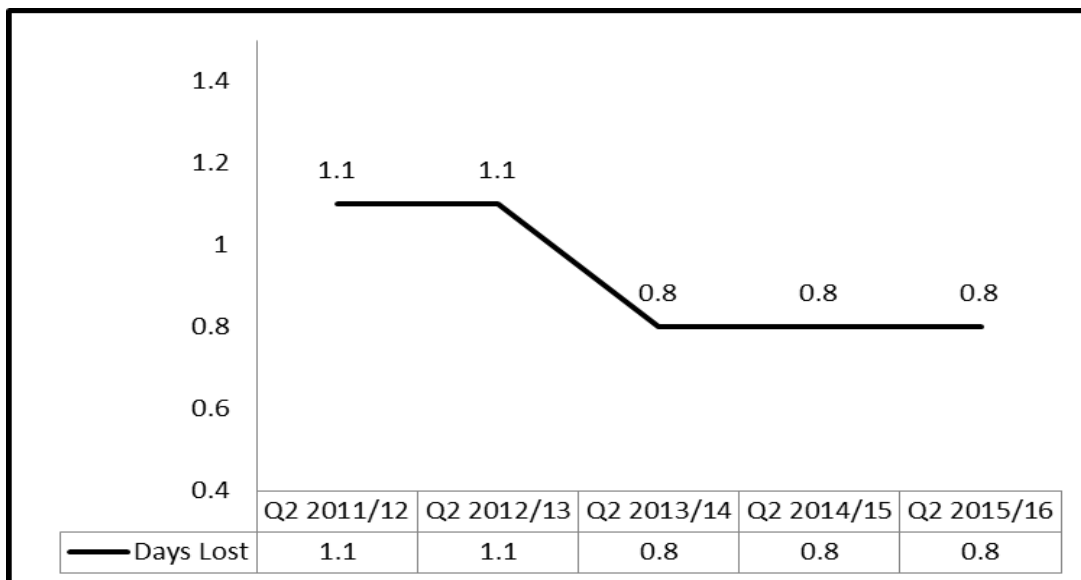
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Absence Statutory Performance Indicators – Data Trends

(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 2015-16

	FTE	Total Days Absence	Short Term Absence (%)	Long Term Absence (%)
Non-Teaching Staff				
Care & Learning	3399	5752	21%	79%
Community Services	1317	3710	31%	69%
Corporate Development	293	671	17%	83%
Development & Infrastructure	380	787	21%	79%
Finance	597	1176	30%	70%
Teaching Staff				
Care & Learning	3066	2536	23%	77%