

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 23 AUGUST 2016

SICKNESS ABSENCE 2015/16

REPORT BY SHARON FAULKNER, HEAD OF HR, IT & OD

ABSTRACT

This report analyses sickness absence within the council during the 2015/16 financial year.

1. RECOMMENDATION

The committee considers the terms of this report.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

This report contributes to the achievement of the following priority contained within the Council Plan:

Transformational Change

- review our workforce to ensure it is led and managed effectively, is the right size and shape, is motivated and has the skills, knowledge and tools needed.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 As the committee is aware, as part of the council's performance management arrangements, it receives reports on sickness absence. Each year these reports are aggregated to give an annual summary.

3.2 This report summarises and analyses absence data for the 2015/16 financial year.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The figures are given for two employee categories: local government employees (which includes chief officers) and teachers.

4.2 Average Days Lost per Employee

Table 1 identifies the average days lost per employee in each quarter, and overall, for 2015/16. The table also shows, in italics, the quarterly and annual figures for 2014/15.

<i>Table 1</i>	Apr – Jun 15	Jul – Sept 15	Oct – Dec 15	Jan – Mar 16	Total	<i>Total 14/15</i>
LGE	2.2	2.3	2.6	4.0	10.6	<i>10.1</i>
Teachers	1.4	0.8	1.5	2.0	5.8	<i>5.8</i>
Total	2.0	1.9	2.3	3.3	9.4	<i>9.1</i>
<i>Total 14/15</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>9.1</i>	

As the comparison shows, there has been an overall increase of 0.3 days per employee from 2014/15 to 2015/16.

Appendix 1a illustrates the above information in graph format.

The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence in each of the last five years is shown below.

<i>Table 2</i>	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Average days lost	9.3	9.7	8.7	9.1	9.4

This measure is a statutory performance indicator for both a) local government employees (including chief officers) and b) teachers. The council's figures for these two categories as reported to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) for 2015/16 were 10 and 5.8 respectively

The LGBF publishes annual statutory performance indicator information in the latter part of 2016 at which point comparison with other councils will be possible. The Scottish average figures in 2014/15 were 10.8 (non-teachers) and 6.28 (teachers). The council's performance in that year improved on the previous year and was better than the national average.

4.3 **Percentage of Working Days Lost**

Table 3 shows the number of days lost through sickness absence as a percentage of available working days. The table also shows, in italics, the quarterly and annual figures for 2014/15.

<i>Table 3</i>	Apr – Jun 15	Jul – Sept 15	Oct – Dec 15	Jan – Mar 16	Total	<i>Total 14/15</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
LGE	4.61	5.15	5.63	5.83	5.29	<i>5.25</i>
Teachers	3.26	2.63	3.49	3.92	3.40	<i>3.21</i>
Total	4.31	4.71	5.13	5.34	4.87	<i>4.81</i>
<i>Total 14/15</i>	<i>4.14</i>	<i>4.63</i>	<i>5.19</i>	<i>5.25</i>	<i>4.81</i>	

As the comparison shows, the overall percentage of days lost has increased from 4.81% in 2014/15 to 4.87% in 2015/16.

Appendix 1b illustrates the above information in graph format.

The overall percentage of working days lost due to sickness absence in each of the last five years is as follows.

<i>Table 4</i>	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Percentage days lost	4.92	5.12	4.61	4.81	4.87

4.4 **Incidence of Absence**

Appendix 2 gives a breakdown of absence figures illustrating in percentage terms (a) the total number of days lost through absences of 1 day, 2 to 5 days, 5 to 20 days and more than 20 days and (b) the incidence of absences of these same periods.

Comparative information for 2014/15 is also included.

4.5 **Cost of Sickness Absence**

In 2015/16 the direct cost of employees' sickness absence ie the cost of sick pay, was £3,726,576 compared with £3,734,550 in 2014/15 – a decrease of £7,974 (0.21%).

The cost of direct sick pay represented 3.1% of total salary costs (3.21% in 2014/15).

4.6 **Reasons for Sickness Absence**

Analysis of the reasons for sickness absence in the council in 2015/16, detailed at Appendix 3, shows that the major causes of absences, are stress-related, stomach conditions, lower limb, respiratory/circulatory, back, and colds and flu problems.

Stress-related absence (work and non-work related) accounts for approximately one in four of days lost and remains the single largest cause of absence. This is a pattern common to almost all local authorities, public bodies and indeed all employers.

As a matter of priority the council strives to reduce stress-related absence and to support employees suffering from such conditions through its various absence management measures and the introduction of additional employee well-being support.

5. **COMMENT**

5.1 Human Resources Advisers continue to support managers to address their responsibilities for staff who are absent from work. This is through direct one-to-one support, training and coaching.

Support for the management of absence includes the implementation of a Day 1 reporting procedure via the council's occupational health provider where employees report their absence directly to a health professional, who can provide immediate help and guidance to facilitate the earliest possible return to work.

Human Resources have also discussed with directorates any needs for information to support the management of absence, to ensure managers are clear about their responsibilities and to ensure appropriate monitoring of absence levels is in place. In addition a concentrated piece of work is currently being undertaken with services in relation to long term absence cases.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with the terms of this report. As members will know from the council's financial results for 2015/16, staff costs (including sickness absence) have been met from the existing budgets set.

7. **CONSULTATION**

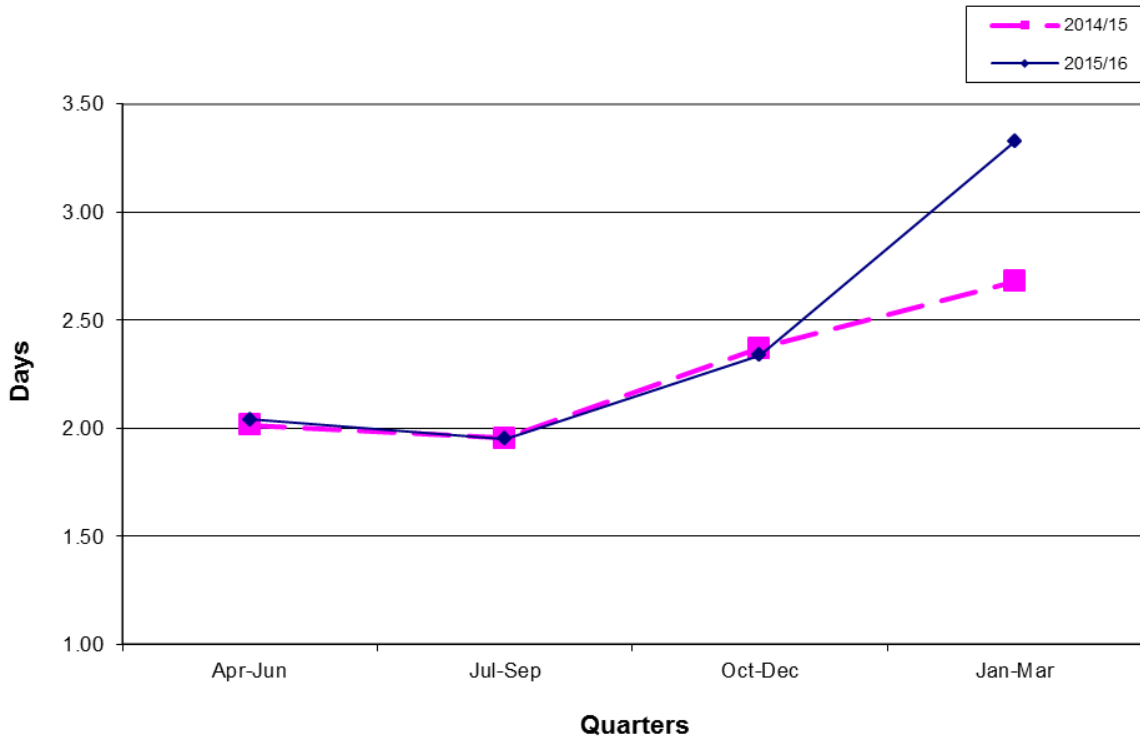
7.1 The Chief Executive, Strategic Director – Resources, Strategic Director – Communities, Strategic Director – Children and Learning, Head of Corporate Improvement & Finance and Head of Legal & Democratic Services have been consulted on the terms of this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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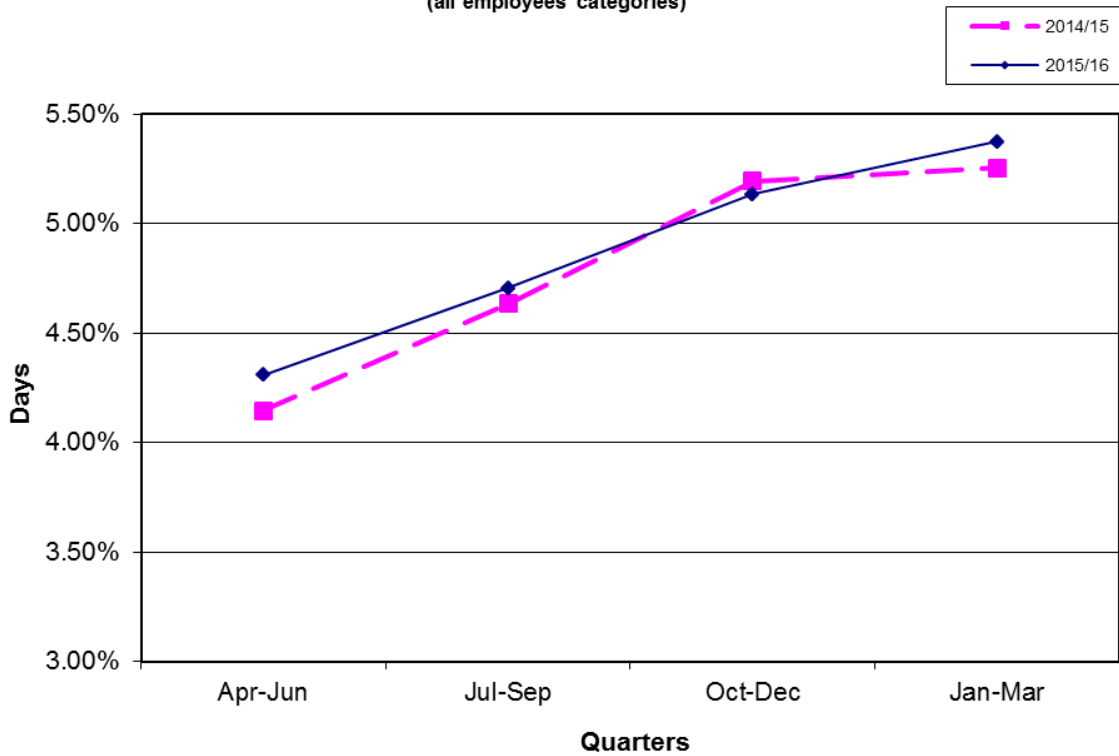
ANGUS COUNCIL
Average days lost per employee
(all employee categories)

Appendix 1a



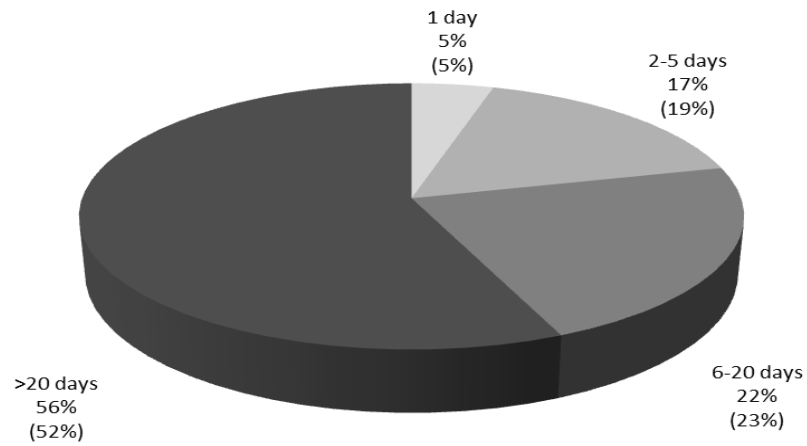
Angus Council
Percentage days lost per employee
(all employees categories)

Appendix 1b

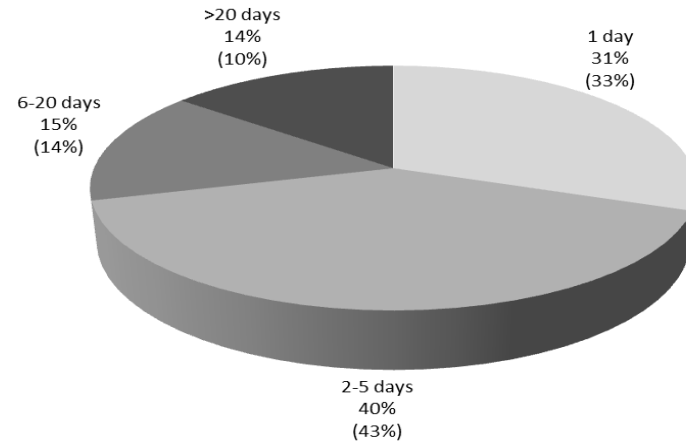


ANGUS COUNCIL
Breakdown of Absence 2015/16

Total days lost through absence
(all employee categories)



Incidence of absence
(all employee categories)



Figures in brackets relate to 2014/15

REASONS FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE

Reason	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Stress Related	23.28	21.91	23.74	22.66	21.47	18.65
Stomach	9.31	11.01	12.16	10.83	9.52	10.19
Lower Limb	7.16	7.55	7.03	6.93	6.94	8.28
Back	6.76	7.72	6.25	6.42	6.58	8.03
Cold/Flu	6.62	7.13	5.78	7.67	6.09	7.76
Respiratory/Circulatory/Heart	6.09	7.60	6.53	7.28	6.87	8.02
Upper Body	4.40	2.66	1.54	1.45	3.97	3.10
Ear/Nose/Throat	3.21	3.97	3.04	3.54	3.15	2.91
Upper Limb	2.40	2.32	2.81	3.34	3.73	4.79
Headache	2.33	2.71	2.68	2.17	2.44	2.07
Eye/Face	1.12	0.90	0.77	0.90	0.71	0.85
Other Medical Reasons	27.32	24.52	27.65	26.82	28.54	25.16