

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 27 JANUARY 2005

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT – QUARTER 3 2004

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of staff absence rates for Social Services, including Resource Support, for the quarterly period ending 30 September 2004.

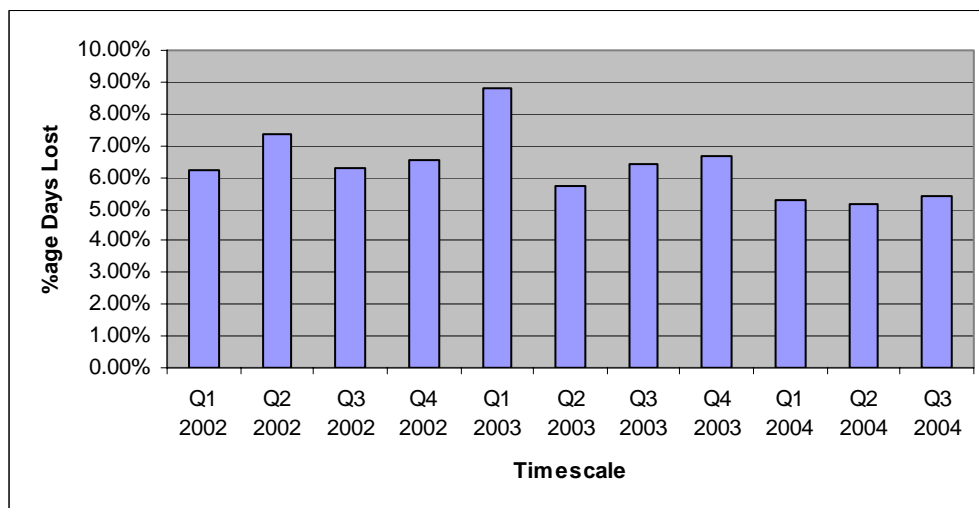
2. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 Historical data for the current reporting period is detailed in tabular form in Appendix 1 to assist members in considering absence rates.

3. ANALYSIS OF QUARTERLY ABSENCE RATES

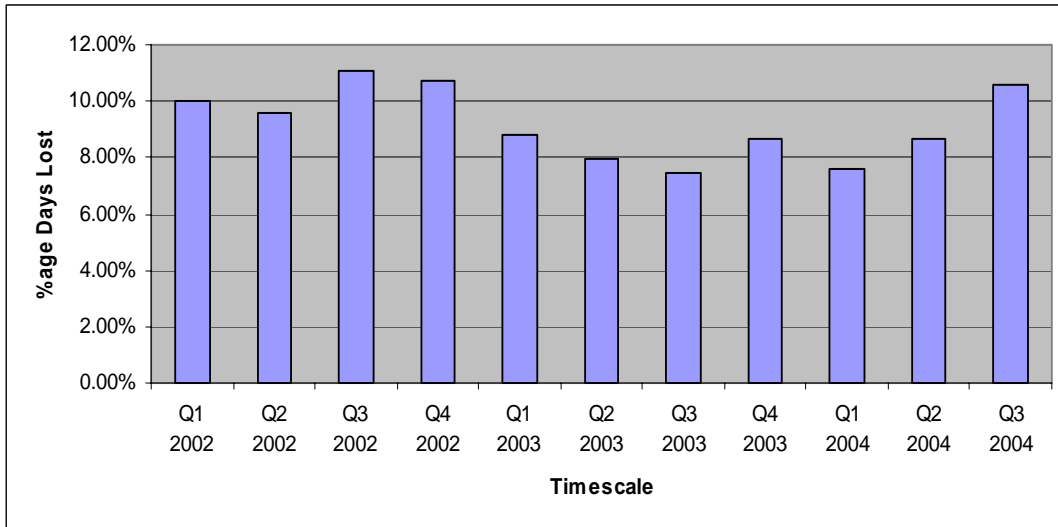
- 3.1 The Council target for APT & C absence rates is 4%. Analysis of information gathered through the corporate personnel system highlights a total absence rate for Social Services and Resource Support of 5.41% for Quarter 3. Graph 1 (below) compares this with previous quarters in 2002, 2003 and 2004.
- 3.2 For Quarter 3 a total of 1,970 working days were lost which is an increase of 43 days on Quarter 2. Of this figure 1,118 days were lost for medically certified absences covering a period of more than 4 weeks.

Graph 1 – APT & C Absence Rates for 2002 – 2004



3.3 The Council target for Manual absence rate has been set at 5%. The statistics for Quarter 3 show an actual absence rate of 10.56% for this group of staff.

3.4 **Graph 2 – Manual Employees Absence Rate for 2002 – 2004**



3.5 For Quarter 3 a total of 2,417 days were lost, which represents an overall increase in Manual staff absences of 412 days. Of this total 1,717 days lost were for medically certified absences covering more than 4 weeks.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

4.1 Long term absence remains a significant issue within the Department.

As previously reported the predominant causes of absence continue to relate to musculo-skeletal, stress and recovery from operations. These issues are similar to previous quarters, however Members will also note that 221 working days have also been lost as a result of heart problems. This is an increase of 66 days on Quarter 2.

4.2 Following the appointment of a Managing Absence Co-ordinator, within Personnel who has the responsibility for supporting line managers in their absence monitoring role, a number of initiatives have been implemented and are targeted towards the areas of greatest difficulty. These include:-

4.2.1 Home Care

- from, 10 January a Home Care Task Force has been established with a remit to investigate and address the high levels of reported absences within this staff group. The Task Force has direct contact with frontline staff and management to consider the impact of:
 - current working practices
 - current working patterns
 - and any relevance these may have in relation to absence.

- the group will also look at variances in absence levels across the service and benchmark in this area with other local authorities;
- the group is subsequently tasked to develop an action plan to address issues arising, with an overall outcome to reduce absence within homecare;

4.2.2 Residential Care

- Service managers have been charged with tackling absence in each of their units in an increasingly focused way with a potential for targets linked to budgets being currently explored.

4.2.3 Front Line Managers

- Have all been briefed in respect of their roles and responsibilities.
- It is recognised that a clear communication strategy may assist consistency across the department and this is currently being developed.

4.3 In addition we will continue with:

- the development of toolbox talks which provide advice for staff and managers by raising awareness and advising of monitoring and clarifying roles and responsibilities.

5. FINANCIAL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 As there is no budget within Social Services to provide cover for absent staff, and services must be maintained, costs are managed within the total resources available.

5.2 Absenteeism within Educational and Social Services is being actively managed in accordance with Council policy and employment legislation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
7 January 2005
Enc (1)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Any member wishing further information should contact Euan Couperwhite, Head of Resource Support at (01563) 576090.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER : EUAN COUPERWHITE

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 29 JANUARY 2005
ABSENCE MANAGEMENT REPORT – QUARTER 3 2004
HISTORICAL DATA

Comparison between Quarter 2 2004 and Quarter 3 2004

SECTION	Q2 2004 DAYS LOST	Q3 2004 DAYS LOST	% INCREASE/ DECREASE
Community Care	3,035	3,435	+ 13.31%
Children & Families	341	417	+ 22.28%
Criminal Justice	67	89	+ 33.84%
Performance and Development	392	308	- 21.43%
Resource Support	95	136	+ 43.16%

Comparison between Quarter 3 2003 and Quarter 3 2004

SECTION	Q3 2003 DAYS LOST	Q3 2004 DAYS LOST	% INCREASE/ DECREASE
Community Care	2,755	3,435	+ 24.68%
Children & Families	446	417	- 6.50%
Criminal Justice	289	89	- 69.20%
Performance and Development	269	308	+ 14.50%
Resource Support	73	136	+ 86.30%