

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

### SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 18 MARCH 2004

#### ABSENCE MANAGEMENT – QUARTER 4 2004

##### Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

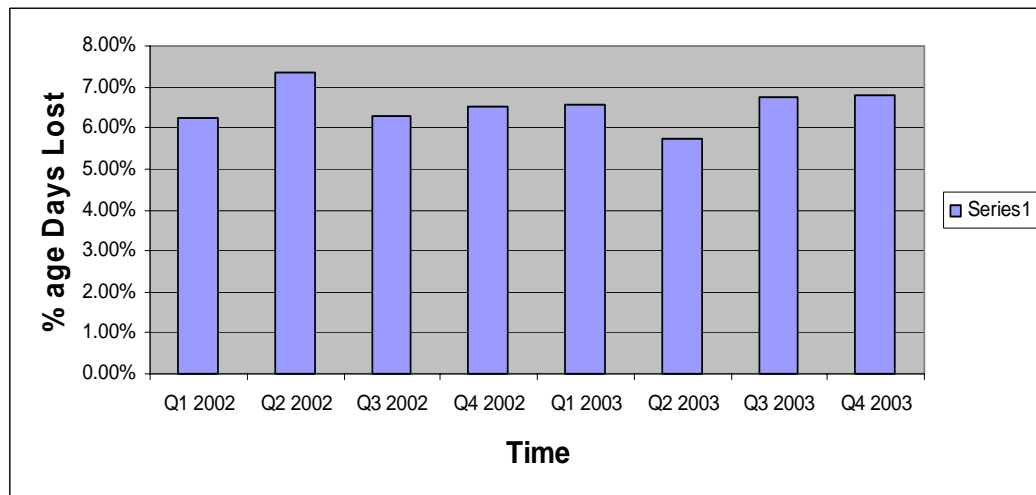
## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Social Work Committee of staff absence rates for Social Services, including Resource Support and Support to Communities, for the quarterly period ending 31 December 2003.

## 2. APT & C EMPLOYEES

- 2.1 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 of 6.82% for Quarter 4. Graph 1 below compares Quarter 4 with 2002 and previous quarters in 2003.

**Graph 1 – APT & C Absence Rates for 2002 / 03 – 2003/04**



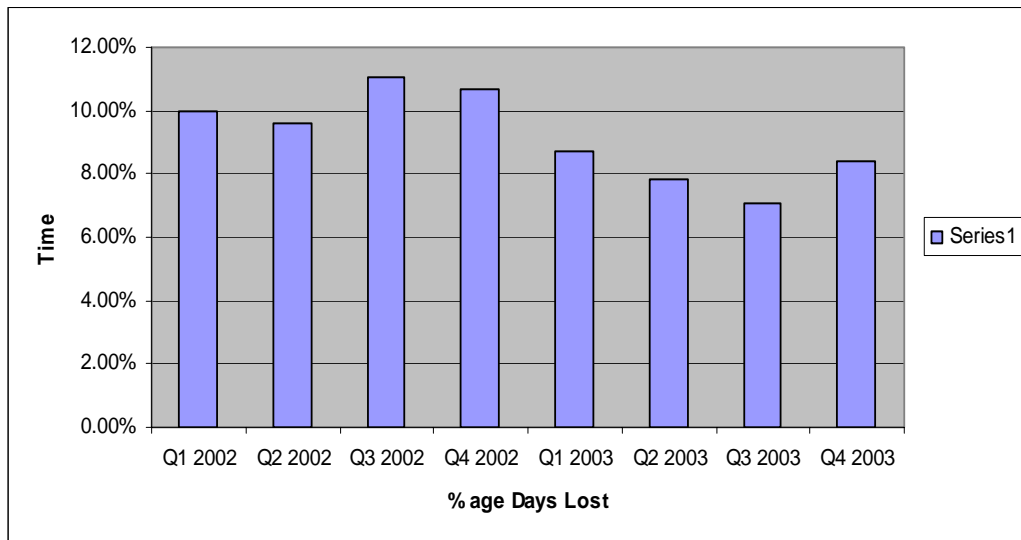
- 2.2 For the reporting period ended 31 December 2003 a total of 2,832 working days were lost which is an increase of 114 days over the Quarter 3 total. Of this figure 1,550 days were lost for medically certified absences covering a period of more than 4 weeks.

2.3 Graph 1 shows clearly that absence continues to stay above the Council's targets. The Director of Educational and Social Services continues to take positive action to find creative solutions to this long-standing problem, in conjunction with the Heads of Personnel and Social Work. Senior Managers within the Social Services continue to raise line manager awareness of the impact of absences upon the services and their responsibility to support employees.

### 3. MANUAL EMPLOYEES

3.1 The Council target for Manual absence rate has been set at 5%. The statistics for Quarter 4 is 8.41%. Graph 2 below details the information for the calendar years 2002 and 2003.

**Graph 2 – Manual Employees Absence Rate for 2002/03 – 2003/04**



3.2 For the Quarter 4 a total of 2,163 days were lost of which 1,473 were for medically certified absences covering more than 4 weeks.

3.3 As with APT & C the absence rates continue to be above Council targets. Again much work is on-going to support and advise line managers and employees to ensure positive measures can be taken to address the underlying issues.

### 4. OBSERVATIONS

4.1 A significant amount of activity is in place to manage staff absence levels within the department. Directorate staff and other senior managers work

closely with the Head of Personnel to ensure the implementation of corporate absence procedures and support for all line managers and employees.

4.2 In order to address the underlying problems activities undertaken include:

- Putting in place a supportive framework around staff in respect of:
  - Early referrals to Occupational Health and medical services
  - Employee counselling
  - Increased training in relation to moving and handling
  - Increased training for lone workers
  - In addition a management action plan is being developed which will focus on the production of core data, greater scrutiny of pressure points and raising the awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the line manager in addressing absenteeism

## **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.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 Committee is asked to:

- (i) agree to the Director and senior officers continuing to take appropriate action to ensure support mechanisms are available for staff to assist the reduction of absence levels; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew  
Director of Educational and Social Services  
EC/JBS  
3 March 2004

## **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**

## APPENDIX 1

1	Angina/Heart Problem	5	Viral Infection	9	Stress/Debility etc	13	Other Reasons
2	Asthma	6	Stomach/Abdominal	10	Operations/Recovery		
3	Bronchitis	7	Migraine	11	Workplace Injury		
4	Colds/Flu	8	Musculo-Skeletal	12	Injury Non Work		

		<b>Category - Reason For Absence (Total Days Lost)</b>												
Service Unit	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Community Care	2,712	169	26	21	63	99	138	31	733	616	320	78	126	292
Children & Families	370	6	23		9	27	11		58	101	62	73		
Criminal Justice	192			4	9		43			129	2		5	
Directorate	7					5	1	1						
Resources	117				1	39	5	6	53					13
Quality & Planning	282	1	20	8	19	25	33	8	25	30	102		1	10
Community Support	289				45	2	14	6	1	128	20		8	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,969</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>380</b>
<b>% Of Total Lost Days</b>		<b>4.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>9.6</b>