

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE MEETING – 1 FEBRUARY 2001

### ABSENCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - QUARTER 3 JULY TO 1 OCTOBER 2000

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

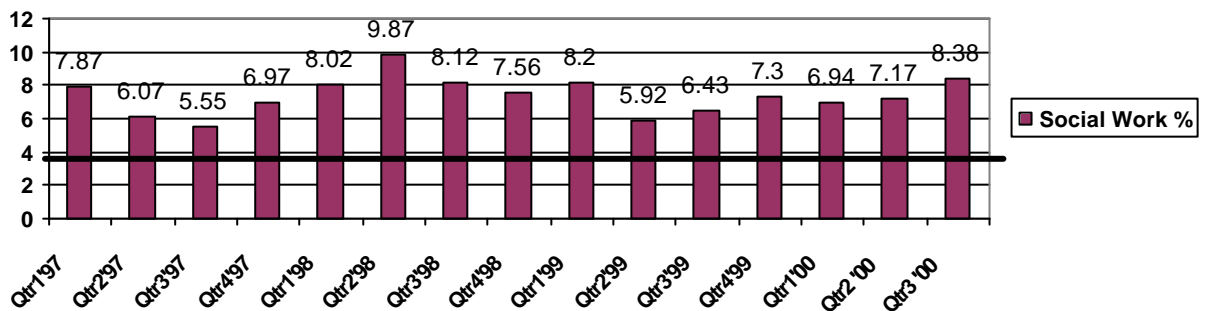
## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of absence rates for the Department of Social Work for the quarterly period ending 1 October 2000.

## 2. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

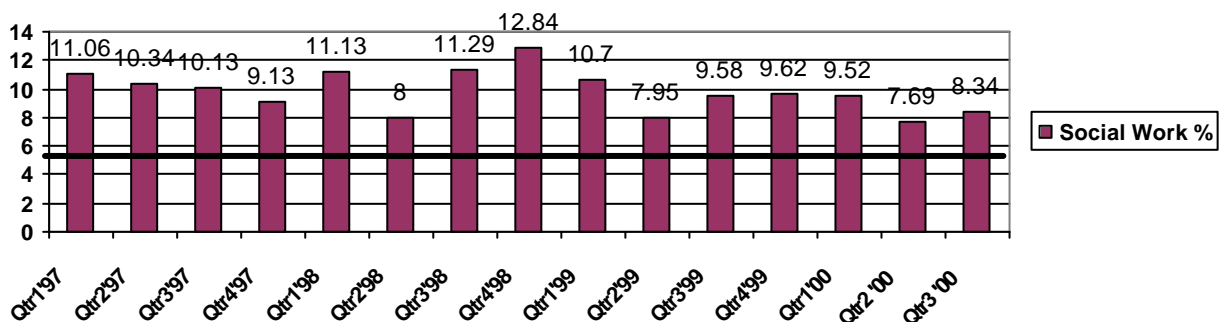
- 2.1 Absence statistics for the period January 1997 to the current reporting quarter are as shown in the following graphs:-

### APT&C Employees



The Council Target for APT&C Employees is 4% as shown in the chart above.

### Manual Employees



The Council Target for Manual Employees is 5% as shown on the chart above.

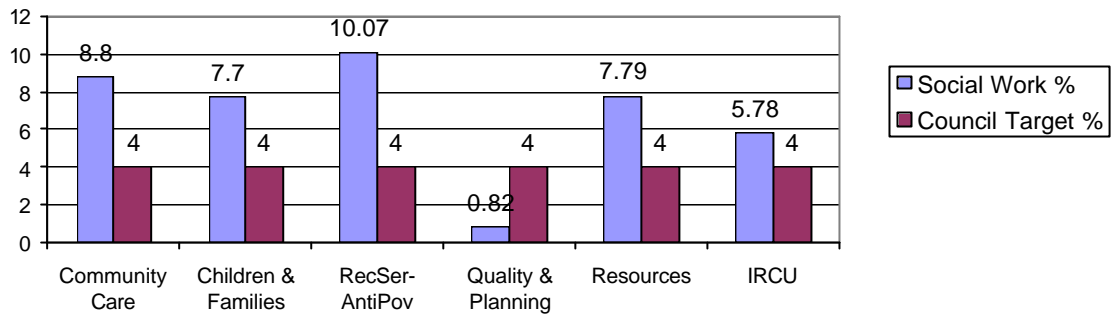
The total absence rate for the Social Work Department for the quarter is **8.37%** with APT&C Employees reporting 8.38% and Manual Employees 8.34%. The Department's absence rate has increased by 1.01% since the last reporting quarter.

An increase of 1.21% in APT&C Employees, and 0.65% in Manual Employees.

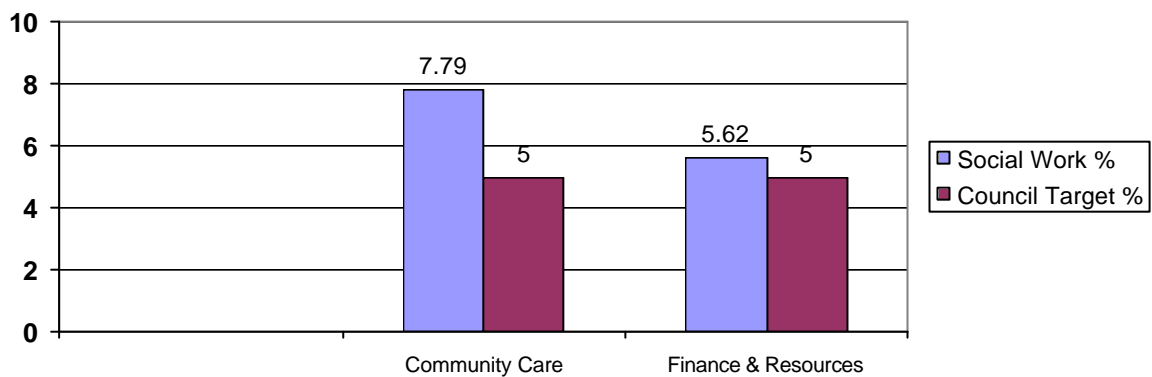
### 3. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT QUARTER ABSENCE RATES

3.1 The following charts illustrate the analysis of absence for the quarter ended 1 October 2000 analysed by Social Work Service Unit:-

#### APT&C Employees



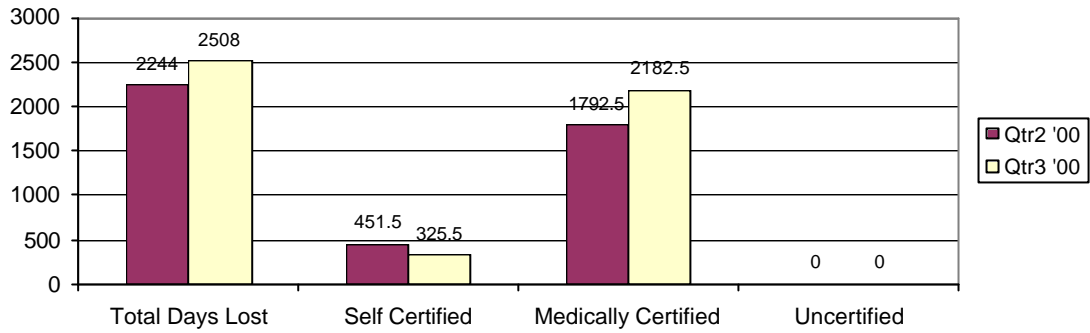
#### Manual Employees



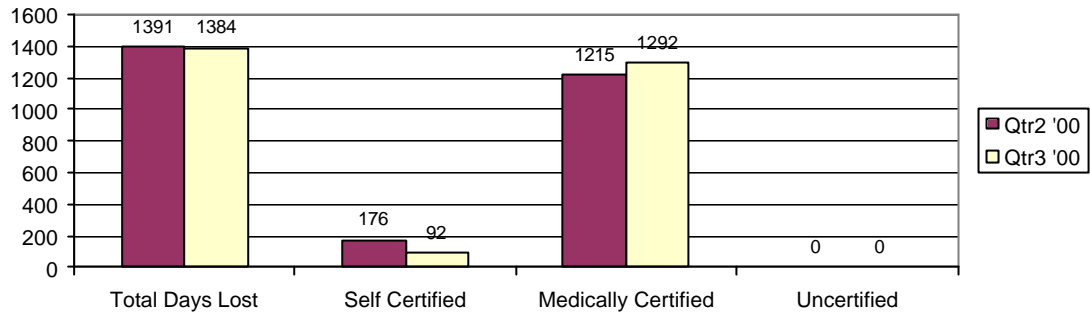
There are differing levels of absence dependent on the operational setting and the number of employees within each Service Unit. The highest concentration of absence for APT&C Employees relates to Reception Services/Anti Poverty and Community Care, reporting 10.07% and 8.8% respectively. Reception Services/Anti-Poverty and Community Care represent 8.20% and 56.5% respectively of the Department's APT&C Employees. On this basis Reception Services/Anti Poverty would have expected to contribute to 205 days lost, rather than 242 reported.

3.2 The following charts illustrate the analysis of absence for the quarter ended 2000 by employee category:-

### APT&C Employees



### Manual Employees



10.72% of total days lost relates to self-certified absences. The highest concentration of absences continues to relate to medically absence certified representing 89.27% of total days lost. Medically certified absences in excess of four weeks continues to be high contributing to 52% of the total medical certified absences and 46% of total days lost.

- 3.3** Areas of concern and subsequent management action identified during this quarter are listed in the table overleaf-

Area Of Concern	Management Action	Responsible
Long-Term Absence and Persistent Short Term Absence	<p>60 absence management meetings have been held during this reporting period, with 44 employees attending these meetings. This equates to 31% of the total Long Term Absences, and 34% of Short Term Absences.</p> <p>Absence management meetings are an essential component of the Council's absence management policy, and require to be arranged more frequently in line with Council policy.</p>	All Managers
Medical Referrals	<p>Whilst the Department actively encourages and supports employees to return to work after a period of absence, managers require to utilise the Occupational Health Service more frequently and timeously where employee's absence is long term or persistent short term. Personnel Department will encourage managers and will promote this service.</p>	All Managers/ Personnel Team
Underlying Causes of Long term Absence	<p>The aggregate level of absence in the department is causing concern and a managerial "task force" has been formed to examine the causes and extent of absence across the Social Work department. In particular, the effect of the level of vacancies present in the department, the possible stressors in the social work task and the findings of national research will be considered as well as the possible requirement for more direct action.</p>	All Managers/ Personnel Team

**3.4** Attached in appendix A is an analysis of reasons for absence analysed by Social Work Service Unit and Total Staff Absent. Appendix B analyses the Total Days Lost by Service Unit and Reason for Absence.

#### **4. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS**

Senior managers are responsible for managing absence within their specific area of responsibility. They continue to be alert to the frequency, levels and patterns of absences in order that early corrective action may be taken. The Department's Personnel Team will undertake an absence review audit, prior to the next absence reporting quarter, in specific Service Units, including, Home Care and Residential Care. The Department's commitment to provide high quality services in these areas means absences must be covered incurring additional costs.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** The cost of absence is not contained in the Social Work Department Revenue Budget and is being managed within the total resources available. As the majority of social work centres are person focused, absences must be covered to maintain, and

provide continuity in, service delivery. This feature is most critical in residential and day care. However, Management action will be focused on those Units and Offices where absence is considered to be excessive in order to reduce the statistics, if possible.

## **6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

The absence statistics for both employee groups exceeds the Council's target with absence rates increasing during this quarter overall by 1.21% for APT&C Employees and 0.65% for Manual Workers.

The Department is committed to reducing the absent rate, whilst ensuring that all employees are treated sympathetically during any period of absence.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**8.1** The Social Work Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

**John Mulgrew**  
**Director of Educational and Social Services**

24 January 2001

Enclosures (1)

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS – Nil**

Any Member wishing further information should contact Allan Y McDougall, Head Of Resource Support at 01563-576090 or Catriona Barr, Senior Service Officer (Personnel) at 01563-576847.

**AGENDA**