

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 2 MAY 2000

### ABSENCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - QUARTER JANUARY–MARCH 2000

#### Report by the Director of Social Work

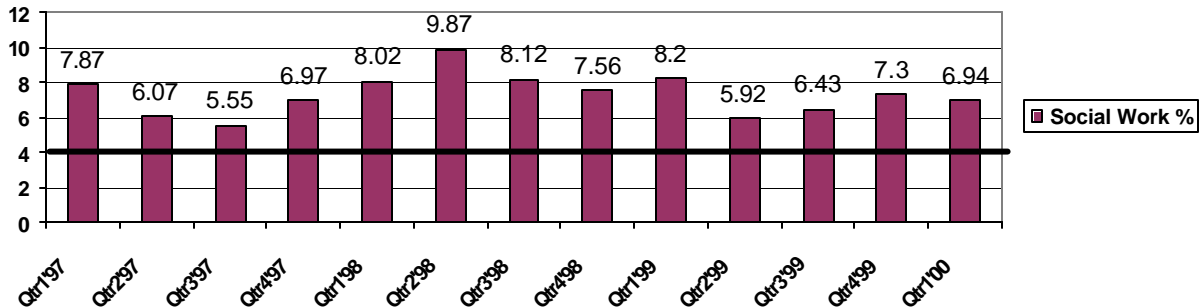
## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2000.

## 2. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

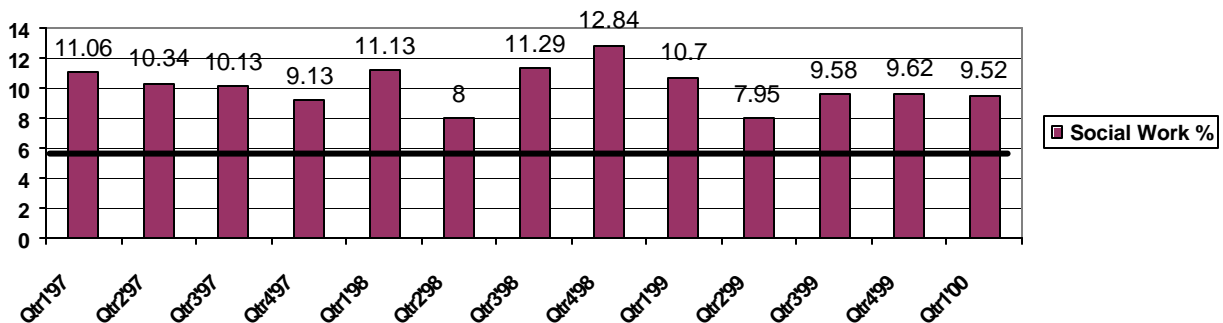
2.1 Absence statistics for the period January 1997 to the current reporting quarter are as shown in the following graphs:

### APT&C Employees



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

### Manual Employees



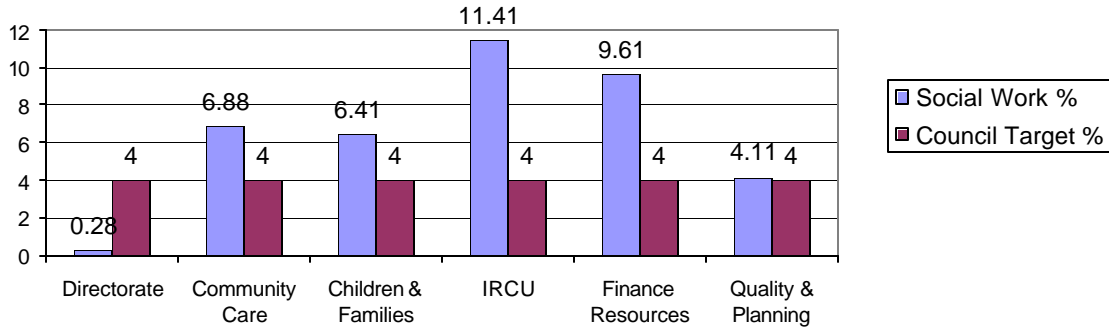
The Council Target for Manual Employees is 5% as shown on the chart above.

The total absence rate for the Social Work Department for the quarter is **7.89%** with APT&C Employees reporting 6.94% and Manual Employees 9.52%. The Department's attendance performance improved with an increase in work days available of 6.6%.

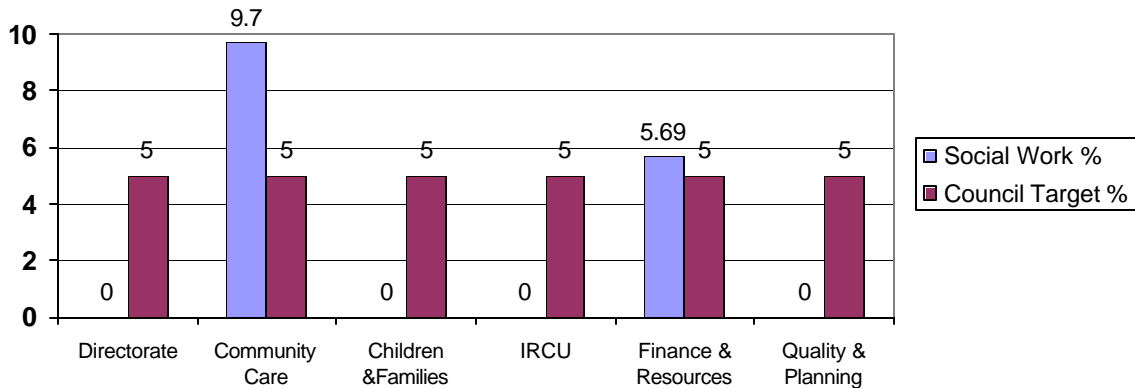
### 3. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT QUARTER ABSENCE RATES

3.1 The following charts illustrate the analysis of absence for the quarter ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2000 analysed by Social Work Service Unit.

#### APT&C Employees



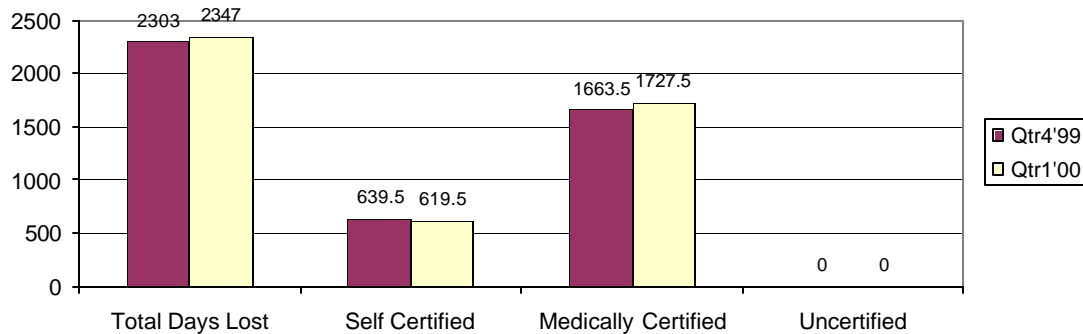
#### Manual Employees



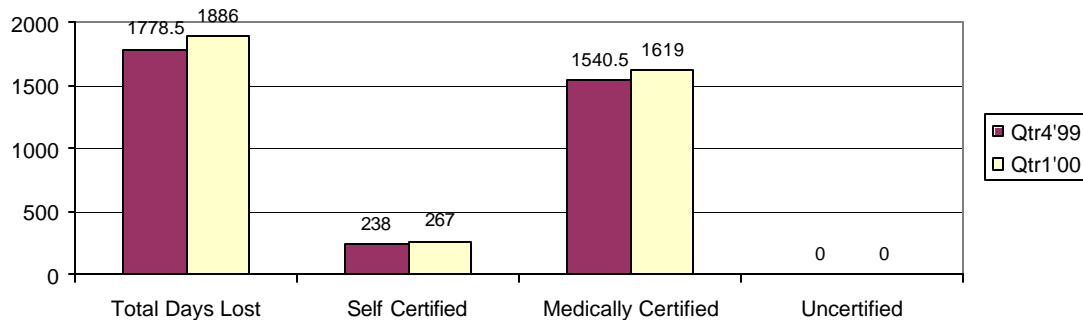
There are differing levels of absence, dependent on the operational setting and the number of employees within each Service Unit. The highest concentration of absence for APT&C employees relates to Finance and Resources and IRCU, reporting 9.61% and 11.41% respectively. Finance and Resources and IRCU represent 10.8% and 0.8% of the department's APT&C employees. On this basis both teams would have expected to contribute to 253 and 18 days lost, rather than the 357 and 34 days reported.

3.2 The following charts illustrate the analysis of absence for the quarter ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2000.

## APT&C Employees



## Manual Employees



21% of total days lost relate to self certified absences. The highest concentration of absence continues to relate to medically certified absences, representing 79% of total days lost. Medically certified absences in excess of four weeks continues to be high contributing to 75% of the total medical certified absences and 60% of total days lost.

Based on employee categories, APT&C employees represent 69% of the department's population and Manual Employees 31% of the population. In this particular reporting period, Manual Employees have contributed to 45% of total days lost and APT&C employees 55% of total days lost.

Taking account of vacancies during the period, work days available would have expected to increase by 3,500 days. Considering this, it is estimated that the departmental absence rate would reduce from 7.89% to 7.4% (APT&C Employees reduce to 6.3% and Manual Employees reduce to 9.4%).

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

Area Of Concern	Management Action	Responsible
Recording Of Absence	Where appropriate, line managers are maintaining contact with absent employees. However, the reporting and recording of this is fragmented. Line managers should ensure that the appropriate recording procedures are adhered to, incorporating all contact whether formal or informal	All Managers

Area Of Concern	Management Action	Responsible
Stress Related and Long Term Absence	<p>Both Long-Term and Stress Related absences continue to be a prominent feature in reasons for employee absence. However, in comparison to the last report, there has been a significant reduction in days lost and employees absent in these categories, mainly relating to personal stress.</p> <p>Managers continue to be sensitive in dealing with such situations and support individual employees during their absence.</p>	All Managers
Welfare Service	<p>No referrals have been made to the Employee Welfare Service during this reporting quarter, although self-referrals continue. Managers will be reminded of this service and of the new Occupational Health Service recently introduced by East Ayrshire Council.</p>	Social Work Personnel

**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 personally responsible for managing absence within their sphere of influence. They continue to be alert to the frequency, levels and patterns of absences in order that corrective action may be taken. Managers continue to communicate the corporate and departmental absence procedures to individual employees and the effect their absence has on the operation of the department.

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

**5.1** The Director of Personnel Services is currently in the process of developing an appropriate mechanism for costing absence. It is anticipated that development will progress in association with the phased implementation of the Corporate Human Resource Information System (Cyborg).

**5.2** 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 and person focussed absences must be covered to maintain, and provide continuity in, service delivery. This feature is most critical in residential care.

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

Nil.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

Although the absence statistics for both employees groups exceeds the Council's target, performance has improved overall by 0.27% in comparison to the last reporting period. An improvement is also evidenced when comparing absence rates for previous year's, an overall improvement of 1.33% in comparison to quarter 1 in 1999 and 1.48% in comparison to quarter 1 in 1998.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

Douglas Bulloch  
**Director of Social Work**

18<sup>th</sup> April 2000

Enclosures (1)

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

Any Member wishing further information should contact Allan Y McDougall, Depute Director (Finance & Resources) at 01563-576950 or Diane Norwood, Service Officer (Personnel) at 01563-576847

**AGENDA**

