

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 13 September 2001

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - 2nd April - 1st July 2001

Report by the Director of Department of Educational and Social Services

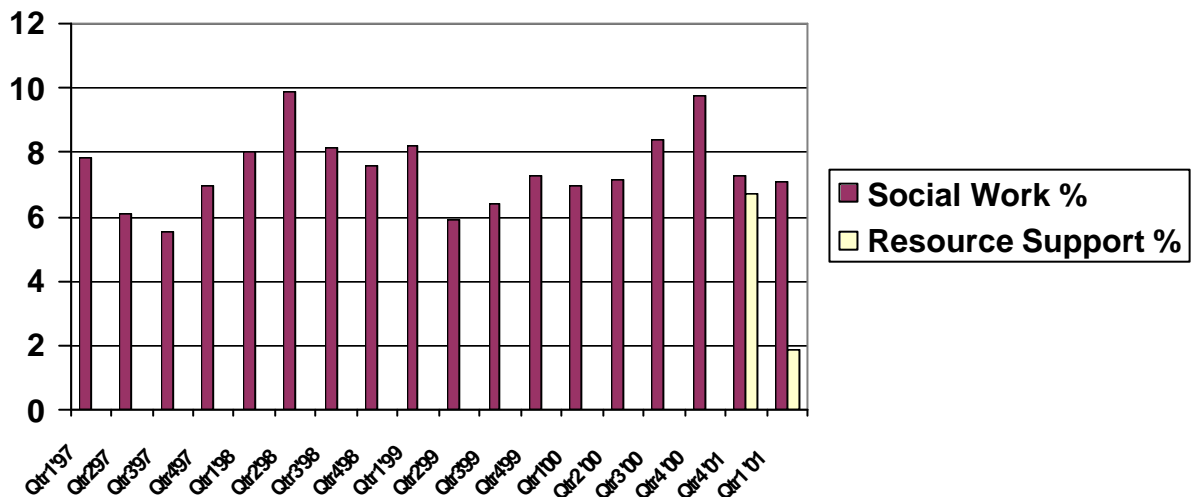
1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of the Social Work Committee of absence rates for Social Work Services [and Resource Support], for the period ending 1st July 2001.

2. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

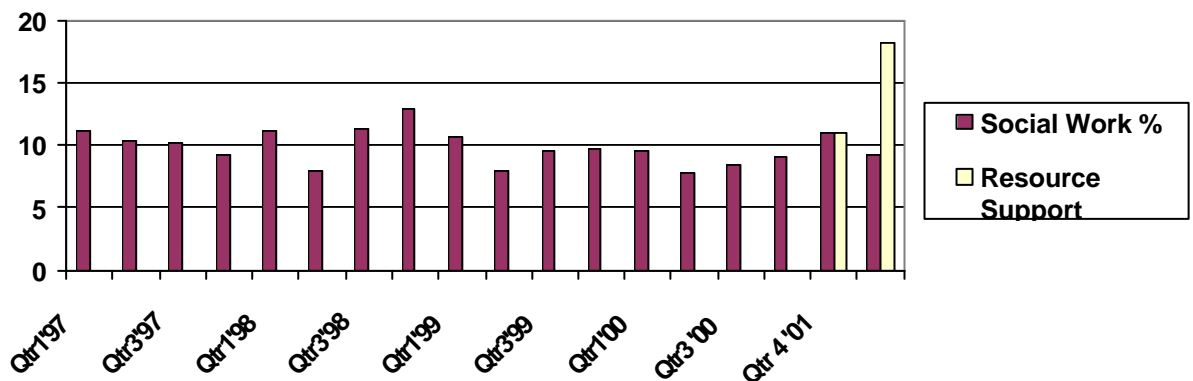
- 2.1 Absence statistics for the period January 1997 to the current reporting quarter are as shown in the following graphs:-

APT&C Employees



The Council Target for APT&C Employees is 4%.

Manual Employees



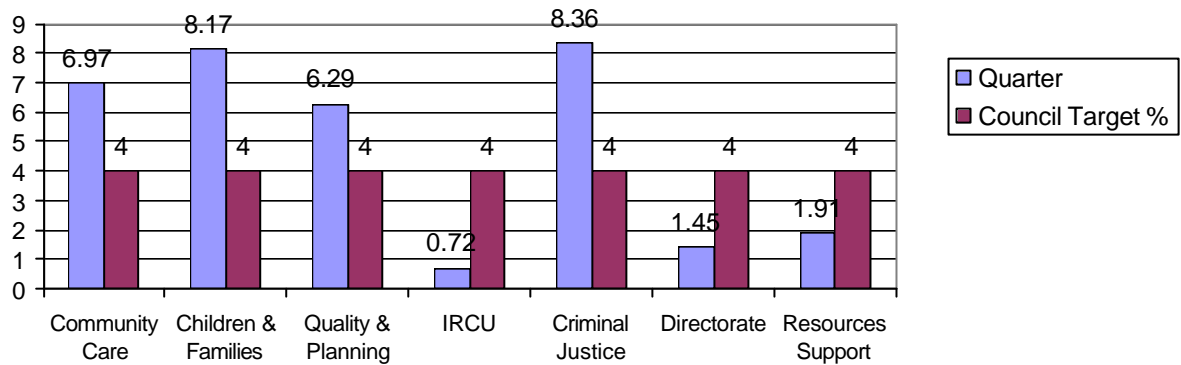
The Council Target for Manual Employees is 5%. Please note that two quarter 4 figures are shown to accommodate the standardisation of absence reporting.

3. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT QUARTER ABSENCE RATES

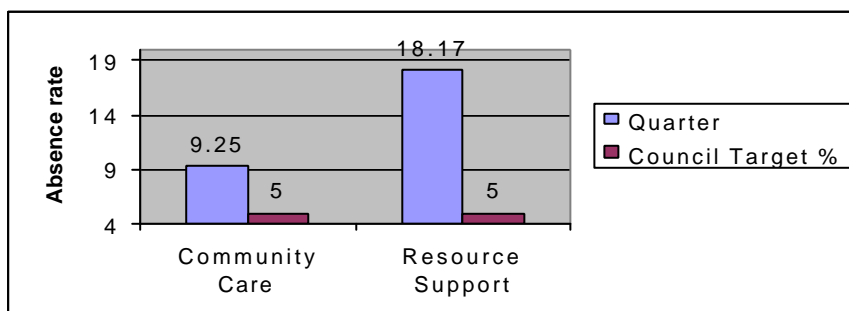
3.1 The total absence rate for Social Work and Resource Support is 7.71%. Social Work's total absence rate for the quarter is **7.89%** [with APT&C Employees reporting 7.09% and Manual Employees 9.25%]. Resource Support's total absence rates for the quarter is 5.48% [with APT&C Employees reporting 1.91% and Manual Workers 18.17%]. Members are asked to note that days lost through industrial injury are no longer included in the statistics because of requirements by the Scottish Executive for standardise absence reporting for the Performance Indicator.

The following charts illustrate the analysis for the quarter ended 1st July 2001 analysed by work area. Members should note that the absence rate of 18.17% for manual workers in the Resource Support team relates to two employees.

APT&C Employees



Manual Employees



3.2 The following charts illustrate the analysis of absence for the quarter ended 2nd July 2001 by employee category in total days lost.

APT&C Employees

	QUARTER 4 '01	QUARTER 1 '01
Self Certified	643	515
Medically Certified	1695	1669
Total Days Lost	2338	2184

Manual Employees

	QUARTER 4 '01	QUARTER 1 '01
Self Certified	264	156
Medically Certified	1616	1703
Total Days Lost	1880	1859

- 3.3** As indicated to Committee previously, several areas currently give cause for concern, and the subsequent management actions identified and taken during this quarter to address the issue are listed in the table below

MANAGEMENT ACTION	PROGRESS IN THE REPORTING PERIOD
Targeting resources towards managing absence	88% of those employees, reporting as long term absence, attended an absence management meeting.
Improve the process of medical referrals	1- Additional services purchased in the local geographical area 2- Reduction in the waiting time for consultation from 6 weeks to 3 weeks.
Increase use of Occupational Health Service	9 new referrals for Employee Counselling 3 referrals for Welfare Advice and Guidance
Refresher Training For Managers	Completed in June 2001
Visit to target work groups	Completed Home Care, Children and Families and Older People.
Targeting the cause of absence	1-Clearer understanding of categories of absence 2- Working with corporate personnel on an implementation plan for the recently approved "Managing Stress in the Work Place" and the re-drafted Absence Management Procedures.
Information meetings with the Trade Unions	Taken place and ongoing

- 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

Members are asked to note that there has been a significant increase in the amount of activity in managing absence within Social Work. Tackling the issue has been given the highest priority and senior managers are working closely with the Head of Personnel to ensure the Corporate Absence Procedures are implemented and to seek support and guidance on best practice.

There has been substantial progress in some areas in the latest quarter. 55 employees have been recorded as long term absent, representing 18% of the employees who reported absence. This is a reduction of 26 employees since the last reporting period.

88% of employees recorded as long term absent have had an absence review meeting, with 18 (33%) of these employees having a follow up meeting. These figures have significantly increased from the last quarter highlighting a pro-active approach to managing absence.

The total referral rate to the Occupational Health Department for independent medical/advice is 22 with 18 of those referrals linked to Long Term Absence. The timing of such referrals is crucial in supporting individual employees and in management of employee absence.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The cost of absence is not separately funded in the Social Services Revenue Budget and is being contained within the total resources available for all services.

6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The statistical information contained within the report reflects the high priority that Social Work gives to managing absence in a fair and consistent manner for all employees. Utilising key initiatives such as Occupational Health Service to their full potential will enable the Department to successfully provide a range of supports to employees during absences from work.

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

Enclosures (1)
6 September 2001

AGENDA

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS – Nil

Any Member wishing further information should contact Allan Y McDougall, Head of Resource Support at 01563-576090 or Steven Moore Head of Social Work at 01563-576920