

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 6 NOVEMBER 2003

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT – QUARTER 3 2003

Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

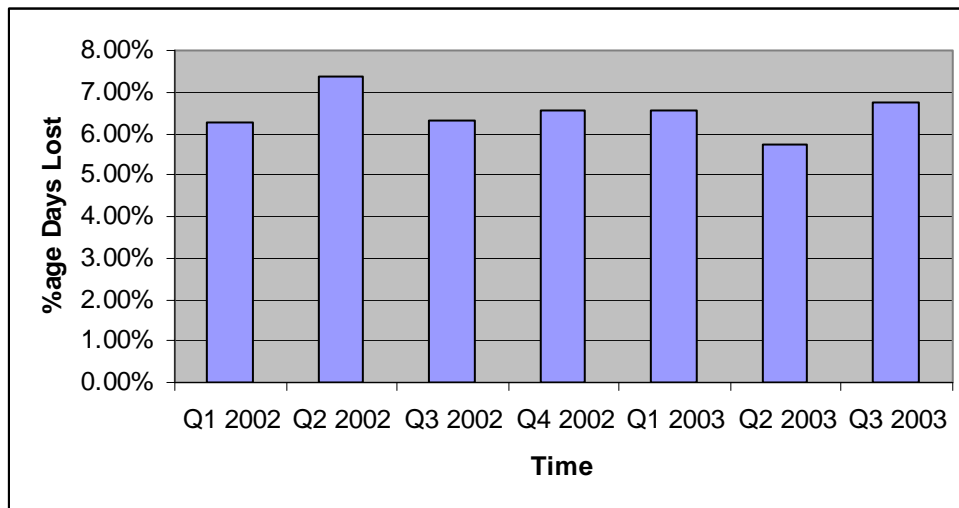
1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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 30 September 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 6.76 for Quarter 3. Graph 1 below compares this information with the previous quarters from 2003 and calendar year 2002.

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



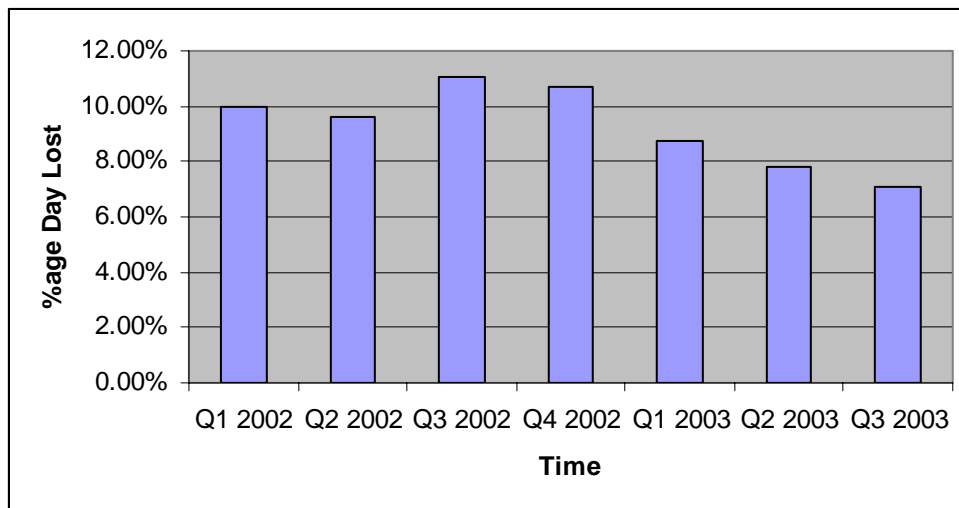
2.2 For the reporting period ended 30 September 2003 a total of 2,718 working days were lost, which is an increase of 452 on the Quarter 2 days lost. Of this figure 1,713 days were lost for medically certified absences covering period of more than 4 weeks.

- 2.3 The results of Quarter 3 reversed the previous downward trend highlighted in Graph 1 (above). Directorate Staff and other senior managers continue to work closely with the Head of Personnel to ensure the implementation of corporate absence procedures and to provide support for all employees.
- 2.3 The principal causes of long term absence are detailed in Appendix 1 (attached). It has long been recognised that illness resulting from stress and musculo-skeletal problems are significant causes of staff absence and a range of initiatives have been undertaken to address the source of problems.
- 2.4 The Department has employed a movement and handling training co-ordinator and is currently delivering training to appropriate staff. This programme is supported by the annual Health and Safety action plan which also focuses on preventative measures such as training.
- 2.5 A pilot programme has been undertaken in conjunction with Corporate Personnel and the Health and Safety Executive to address the issue of stress at work. It is anticipated that this project will be rolled out to all sections of the department.

3. MANUAL EMPLOYEES

- 3.1 The Council target for Manual absence rate has been set at 5%. The statistics for Quarter 3 is 7.1%. Graph 2 below details the information for the calendar year 2002.

Graph 2 – Manual Employees - Absence Rate for 2002 / 03



- 3.2 For Quarter 3 a total of 1,725 days lost, of which 1,200 were for medically certified absences covering more than 4 weeks.

3.3 Statistics for Quarter 3 continue the favourable trend when compared previous years and quarters. As reported in section 2.3 (above) this may be in part attributed to the increasing emphasis on managerial and employee support delivered from the Departmental and Corporate Personnel Sections.

4. FINANCIAL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 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. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 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
20 October 2003

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	

E & SS

Appendix A

		Category - Reason For Absence (Total Days Lost)													
Service Unit	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Community Care	2,755	2,755	85	35		40	132	77	52	690	624	567	70	10	373
Children & Families	456	456		9		19	1	29	5	95	168	62	67		1
Criminal Justice	289	289				1	7	1			165	62		52	1
Directorate	2	2						2							
Resources	73	73				2	6	4	4	5	9				43
Quality & Planning	269	269	5			32	33	14	15	68	62	13			27
Community Support	599	599				19	6	30	8	37	315	115			69
Total	4,443	4,443	90	44	0	113	185	157	84	895	1,343	819	137	62	514
% Of Total Lost Days			2.0	1.0	0.0	2.5	4.2	3.5	1.9	20.1	30.2	18.4	3.1	1.4	11.6