
Report to: Audit and Scrutiny

Date of Meeting: 8th February 2023

Subject: Maximising Attendance and Wellbeing

Report by: Senior Manager – HR and Workforce Development

1.0 Purpose.

- 1.1. This report provides Committee with (i) an update on the maximising attendance action plan presented to the Partnership and Performance Committee in 2019, and (ii) an overview of absence levels across the Council for 2022/2023.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. That Committee notes the report and accompanying appendices, commenting and challenging as appropriate

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. In February 2019, the Chief Executive and Strategic Director (Partnership and Performance) attended the Local Government and Communities Committee at the Scottish Parliament. The Committee's main focus was on absenteeism in local authorities, the extent to which it inhibits councils in delivering services and realising goals and how councils are tackling this. The outputs of this meeting form part of the Committee's overall year-round scrutiny of the challenges facing councils, especially in terms of resources and budgeting which will then in turn lead to a report to the Scottish Parliament.
- 3.2. Following attendance at the Local Government and Communities Committee the SPDS Wellbeing Group undertook work to compare Councils SPI calculations in order to identify the consistency of reporting inline with the 'Metadata Definitions' outlined in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework for Sickness Absence. The findings of the report showed that there are inconsistency across Councils.
- 3.3. The Maximising Attendance and Employee Well being Action plan for 2019/20 (**Appendix 1**) was, in conjunction with HR, developed by the former Strategic Director of People (Fiona McOmish) and presented, for noting, to the former Partnership and Performance Committee in 29 August 2019.

- 3.4. The action plan outlined a number of recommendations and proposals, which aimed to promote measures on attendance and well being across the Council. An internal audit had also been completed which highlighted a number of recommendations for management actions for delivery.
- 3.5. Commitment was also given to provide further update to the Partnership and Performance Committee; however with the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic from March 2020 these were not progressed. In addition, many of the measures in the action plan were put on hold and procedures had to be adapted substantially in order to support employee well being and manage absences, in a very different working environment and at a time of crisis.
- 3.6. Compared to other Councils, the average FTE days lost due to absence in Clackmannanshire Council remains high (see tables 1 and 2).

Table 1 – Average FTE days lost per local government employee (Extract LGBF Annual Report 2021/2022)

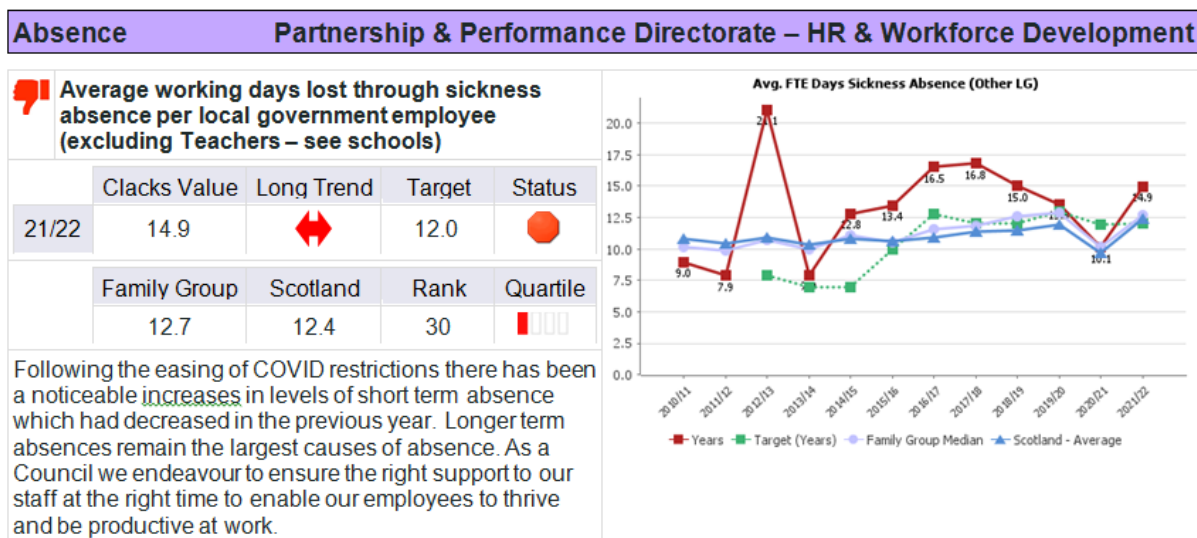
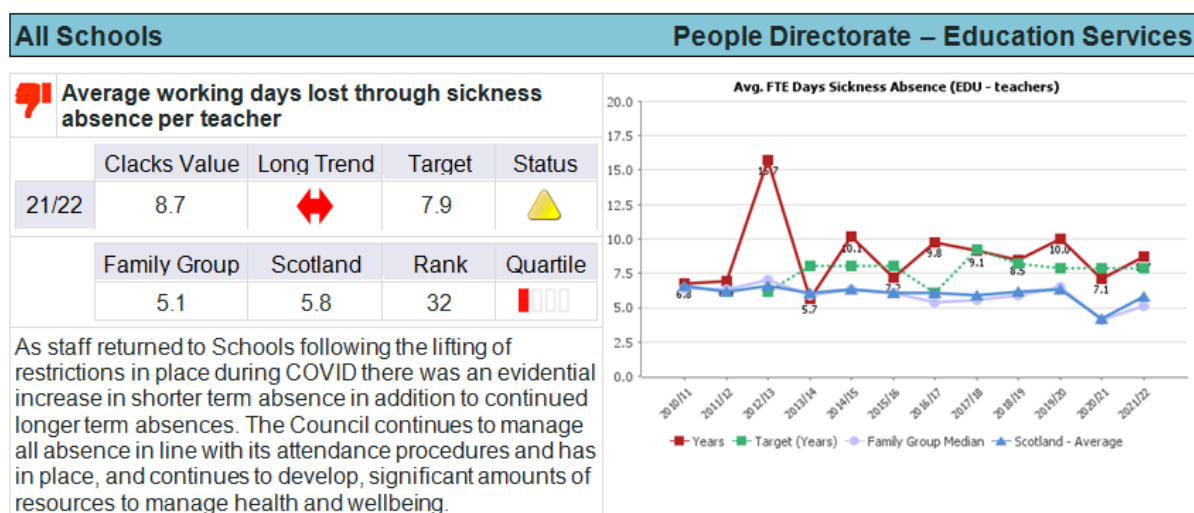


Table 2 – Average FTE days lost per teacher (Extract LGBF Annual Report 2021/2022)



Rank & Quartile	Authorities' results are ranked best (1 st) to worst (32 nd) to support learning from strong performers. Rankings are grouped into four quartiles to provide a higher-level summary. If not all authorities report, quartiles are smaller (e.g. 6 do not report Housing due to differing arrangements).	🟢🟢🟢🟢	Top quartile	1 st to 8 th place
		🟡🟡🟡🟡	Second quartile	9 th to 16 th
		🟠🟠🟠🟠	Third quartile	17 th to 24 th
		🔴🔴🔴🔴	Bottom quartile	25 th to 32 nd

- 3.7. The latest data from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (2021/2022) shows that for local government employees (excluding teachers) the average FTE days lost was 14.9 putting the Council in the bottom quartile and position 30 of 32, and for teachers average days lost per FTE was 8.7 putting the Council again in the bottom quartile and position 32.
- 3.8. Draft figures for the 2022/2023 LGBF return show an increase to 16.7 average FTE days lost for local government employees (excluding teachers) but an improving position for FTE days lost for teaching staff, falling to 7.6 days.
- 3.9. The overall lost time rate for the Council increased from 4.72% to 5.26%. Summary information for each of the Councils portfolios is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 – Portfolio Absence Summary information

Portfolio	Lost Time Rate 21/22	Lost Time Rate 22/23	Average FTE days Lost 21/22	Average FTE days Lost 22/23
Place	5.85%	6.62%	16.00	17.61
People	3.93%	4.55%	12.13	12.30
P&P	4.03%	3.43%	8.19	8.85
HSCP	8.28%	8.16%	21.19	20.40
Transformation	2.46%	1.18%	5.00	3.65

- 3.10. As we moved from response to recovery and “business as usual” attendance management and wellbeing is now once again a key priority.
- 3.11. The Council’s Maximising Attendance policy and procedure were recently reviewed and approved by Council in June 2023.
- 3.12. The 2019 action plan recommended the development of family friendly policies that would promote flexible working and support. Since 2020 a Menopause policy was been developed and implemented as well as a Carers policy and Pregnancy Loss policy. In addition our special leave policy has been reviewed and further updates made to the Flexible Working and Work/Life balance policy. Further the Council Homeworking Policy was updated during the pandemic and further flexibility provided through hybrid working.
- 3.13. Council also recently agreed to amend the current provision that staff require 26 weeks continuous service to be able to make a flexible working request to it being a day one entitlement.
- 3.14. In December 2021 Council agreed a new Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing Policy to support the mental health and wellbeing of our employees and in December 2022 approved our Wellbeing strategy for 2022 – 2025.
- 3.15. The Council continues to promote wellbeing of staff with a number of initiatives having been undertaken. Examples of supports provided to staff can be seen on our wellbeing pages at <https://www.clacks.gov.uk/coronavirus/wellbeing/>

4.0 Sustainability Implications

- 4.1. There are no direct sustainability impacts flowing from the recommendations in this Report.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. Financial Details

- 5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes

High absence levels can result in increased financial costs due to engagement or agency staff and/or additional overtime. These costs are managed within existing budgets.

- 5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

5.4. Staffing

Potential increased use of agency and casual staff.

6.0 Exempt Reports

6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box)

- Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all
- Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life
- Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential
- Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?
Yes No

9.0 Legality

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

Maximising Attendance Action Plan

Absence information for 2022/2023

11.0 Background Papers


11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below) No

Author(s)

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Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Stuart Crickmar	Strategic Director, Partnership and Performance	

MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE AND EMPLOYEE WELLBEING CAMPAIGN - ACTION PLAN

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update	Action update – as at May 2023
1.	Points arising out of Internal Audit report to be considered in relation to the content of the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedures.	To ensure the consistent and transparent application of robust controls.	HR will ensure, that these points are included, as part of the next scheduled review of the Maximising Attendance Policy / Procedures / Managers' Guide.	HR Service Manager	31 December 2019	Work is on track to address the recommendations contained within the IA report.	The Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedure has been recently reviewed through the policy group process and was agreed by Council in June 2023.
2.	A review/refresh of the corporate record outlining who has attended Maximising Attendance training is required.	The corporate record must be updated to ensure that all officers with supervisory responsibilities have undertaken the mandatory Maximising Attendance training.	HR to send email reminder to all managers with supervisory responsibilities to establish who has attended a Maximising Attendance training course within the last 3 years. This will determine who requires training or a refresher course.	HR Service Manager	19 April 2019	HR email has been sent and returns are being collated to determine training/ refresher course requirements.	This is now captured on an ongoing basis via the itrent/clacks academy system.

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update	Action update – as at May 2023
3.	A programme of communications aimed at Maximising Attendance will take place throughout 19/20.	To emphasise the level of corporate priority in relation to absence/wellbeing and the impacts to the Council/Services and Teams of non-compliance. To remind all staff and line managers of their responsibilities for complying with the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedures.	<p>a) Initial comms piece will be sent from Chief Executive following recent attendance at parliamentary committee to raise the profile of employee wellbeing and emphasise the corporate priority of reducing absence levels (increasing resilience, wellbeing, engagement and capacity, and reducing the financial impact of absence).</p> <p>b) A focused communications strategy will run throughout the year to raise the profile of the impact of sickness absence, and continue the focus on promoting wellbeing (This will include a series of e-communications on Connect, posters, the video clips/podcasts, digital information screens at staff entrances)</p> <p>c) Staff roadshows will take place during early June 2019 and absence management will be a key topic.</p> <p>d) Working with partners and other local authorities to consider and apply good practice.</p>	<p>Chief Exec/ Strategic Director</p> <p>Comms team</p> <p>SLG</p> <p>SLG</p>	<p>By end April 19</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>June 2019</p> <p>Sept 2019</p>	<p>Action Complete</p> <p>Posters designed for imminent issue; costing for tv screen in staff foyer at Kilncraigs being obtained; Comms plan timings being developed.</p> <p>First roadshow took place on 13 June 2019.</p> <p>Teleconference being set up with East Ayrshire Council to discuss supportive approaches.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>As a result of pandemic further roadshows were not undertaken. Engagement mechanisms with staff will be considered as part of the interim workforce plan</p> <p>Completed</p>

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update	Action update – as at May 2023
4.	A systematic approach will be taken to review current long-term sickness absence within each directorate, ensuring that the instances of non compliance with the Policy and recording are addressed.	To ensure compliance with the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedures. To ensure a strong ongoing focus to improve attendance at work.	All Directors will work with Service Managers, HR BPs and OH where appropriate to review current long term sickness absences and ensure that individual plans are in place to support employees back to work.	Directors	Summer 2019	People portfolio meetings completed in June for Social Services and Education. Place/P&P meetings to follow in Q2 19/20.	There are meetings in place in each directorate to ensure absence management is being followed consistently and a new 3 month review process period between senior managers/ HR and strategic directors is also in place
5.	Refresh commitment to provide meaningful, regular updates to absence information held on Pentana.	To ensure the data contains up to date action on how short and long term absence is being addressed across the council.	Directors to ensure that Pentana updates are provided for their directorates.	Directors/ Service Manager	August 2019	Meetings ongoing to assess whether current Pentana requirements remain fit for purpose. Thereafter data requirements will be refreshed and rolled out at ESLG in August.	Pentana reports are tabled on a regular basis to ESLG/SLG
6.	Review whether automation/prompts on iTrent can be set for sickness absence over 7 days	Efficiencies have been achieved regarding annual leave requests via the use of automated prompts. Rolling this out to sickness absence is expected to increase efficiency for procedural compliance and reporting of sickness absence.	HR Service Manager to identify whether automated prompts/ escalation can be set up on iTrent for sickness absence over 7 days.	HR Service Manager	June 2019	New prompts have been set up and communications to roll out are in progress.	Completed
7.	Ensure employee wellbeing and improving attendance is placed on team/department meetings as a standing agenda item and that updates tie in with corporate priorities.	Ensure messages during campaign are reiterated during team/directorate meetings.	All line managers with supervisory responsibilities required to report progress on actions/updates through line management routes.	All line managers	August 2019	Cascade required through Strategic Directors and Senior Managers – Action ongoing	This is an ongoing agenda item on SMTs/ bipartites etc as well as absence specific review meetings with HRBPs. Senior Managers should be discussing absence and steps being taken with supervisors as part of their 1-2-1 engagement.

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update	Action update – as at May 2023
8.	Embed employee attendance and wellbeing into the PRD process.	Integrate objective as a positive indicator of performance.	All line managers to ensure that all PRDs make reference to all absence management to the extent that: a) Managers have already undertaken or will undertake the required training or ensure they attend a refresher session b) Managers will ensure they comply with Council policies and reporting requirements c) Embed these requirements within guidance and on iTrent.	All line managers	By end March 2020	Strategic Directors to seek assurance from Senior Managers that actions are embedded in PRD process. – Action ongoing	The PRD process has been replaced with Constructive Conversations where individual wellbeing is a main focus. Objective setting should include consideration of absence levels. Business Plans should include targets related to absence levels.
9.	Review/create family friendly policies that offer/promote flexible options aimed at reducing sickness absence: a) Develop and implement a Menopause policy b) Review and refresh family friendly policies to promote a variety of options that provide an ongoing focus to improve attendance at work.	Ensure that policies provide a range of options to support employees and improve attendance at work.	HR Service Manager will lead the development of a menopause policy and review family friendly policies to provide options to improve attendance at work.	HR Service Manager	Ongoing	Reviews for Flexible working, Carers policy currently going through internal governance routes. Special Leave policy due for imminent approval. Development of menopause policy has commenced.	The menopause policy is in place. In addition we developed and implemented a carers policy and pregnancy loss policy. In addition flexible working. Special leave have been updated.
10.	Continue to promote wellbeing in order to progress the 'Gold' Healthy Working Lives award.	Embed actions to promote wellbeing with the campaign to improve attendance at work.	Link HWL campaign actions with efforts to improve attendance at work.	HWL Group	Ongoing	Comms team due to meet with HWL group to align campaign dates	Council approved the Wellbeing Strategy 2022 - 2025 and the HWL Group will take forward the identified actions

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update	Action update – as at May 2023
11.	Embed outputs of wellbeing focus group arising out of the Staff Survey results/actions into the Workforce plan.	Ensure links are made to embed and integrate actions where possible.	OD Adviser to ensure links with staff survey, workforce plan and sickness absence actions.	OD Adviser	June 2019	Strategic Director (People)/ OD Adviser meeting took place in July 2019 following council approval of Strategic workforce plan to align actions. Ongoing.	Completed and included within Council's workforce Programme (which has since closed down following completion).
12.	Review progress by conducting random iTrent checks/quality assurance and committing to an annual review to ensure procedural compliance.	To ensure good practice is followed consistently. To track progress in sickness absence reporting.	Internal Audit to devise review plan that addresses actions outlined.	Internal Audit	Random checks ongoing culminating in 12-month annual review	Action not yet commenced.	Reports are sent to Bipartites which show the number of Support and Guidance and Return to work completed and outstanding. HRBPs review absence reports regularly and highlight issues to services. Work is currently ongoing in relation to amending the process related to submission of and recording of medical/self certificates.

APPENDIX 2 - Summary Absence information for 2022/2023

Staffing

	Average FTE (Including Casual)	Average Headcount (Including Casual)	Absence % (Hours Lost)	FTE Days Lost Per Employee	Long Term %	Short Term %	Cost of Absence
Place	511.45	629.5	6.62	17.61	77.61	22.39	£880,087.65
Health & Social Care Partnership	186.69	258.5	8.16	20.40	72.13	27.87	£435,827.88
Partnership & Performance	141.66	159.5	3.43	8.85	54.94	45.06	£153,793.99
People	1290.55	1680.5	4.55	12.30	61.82	38.18	£2,108,202.10
Transformation Services	5.80	6	1.18	3.65		100.00	£3,972.58

		Average FTE (Including)	Average Headcount	Absence % (Hours Lost)	FTE Days Lost Per Employee	Long Term %	Short Term %	Cost of Absence
Place	Business Support (Place)	1.80	2	5.11	13.33	93.33	6.67	£2,919.83
Place	Development	51.58	57	1.69	4.56	64.93	35.07	£27,915.56
Place	Environment	148.15	154.5	9.38	24.56	82.12	17.88	£332,011.78
Place	Housing	53.37	56.5	5.09	13.07	74.25	25.75	£94,229.67
Place	Property	255.55	359	6.41	17.26	76.00	24.00	£423,010.80
Place		1.00	1	0.00	0.00			
Health & Social Care Partnership	Adult Provision	99.98	159	11.25	27.00	76.07	23.93	£313,049.56
Health & Social Care Partnership	Assessment Care Management	30.01	34	1.68	4.74	23.08	76.92	£23,632.26
Health & Social Care Partnership	Business Support (Health & Social Care Partnership)	12.75	16	2.73	6.81		100.00	£7,660.17
Health & Social Care Partnership	Partnership, Mental Health & Learning Disability	39.61	47.5	8.50	22.23	75.21	24.79	£91,485.89
Health & Social Care Partnership		4.35	5	0.00	0.00			
Partnership & Performance	Finance & Revenues	46.30	50	4.70	12.12	63.17	36.83	£67,032.00
Partnership & Performance	HR & Workforce Development	27.34	32.5	1.81	4.91		100.00	£18,268.14
Partnership & Performance	Legal & Governance	23.22	28	3.46	8.59	60.10	39.90	£27,110.88
Partnership & Performance	Partnership & Transformation	43.30	47.5	3.19	8.21	59.43	40.57	£40,214.97
Partnership & Performance		1.50	1.5	1.15	2.00		100.00	£1,168.01
People	Children's Services	121.23	142.5	6.85	17.33	77.55	22.45	£302,117.47
People	Education	1167.82	1550	4.34	11.79	59.73	40.27	£1,806,084.63
People		1.50	1.5	0.00	0.00			
Transformation Services		5.80	6	1.18	3.65		100.00	£3,972.58
		1.00	1	0.00	0.00			

