

ABSENCE REPORT – OCTOBER 2015

HR & OD

Subject:	Absence Report (Council & Schools)
Committee:	Cabinet
Date:	23 October 2015
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Peter Smith
CMT Member:	Lesla Annear (Strategic Director for Transformation & Change)
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Ref:	
Key Decision:	No
Part:	N/A

I. Purpose

At Co-operative Scrutiny Board on 19 August 2015 an update on sickness was requested for the following additional information:

- Schools (Maintained) data
- Breakdown of reasons for short term absence
- Private sector comparators
- Local authority comparators (family group)

This report reviews rolling year to date sickness absence across Plymouth City Council (including Schools) by comparing sickness absence data against targets and labour market data, where available. Reasons for absence for corporate and school employees are also given. This report also provides an overview of current and upcoming approaches to managing sickness absence across the council and schools.

2. Update since 19 August (Rolling Year)

The two tables below provide information on sickness absence days lost for both corporate and schools. The schools data is based on employees of maintained and voluntary controlled schools. Figures are shown as rolling year to date (RYTD) as at September 2015.

Plymouth City Council has a combined legal responsibility for schools, which are either Community Schools or Voluntary Controlled. All other schools operate as separate entities. In Plymouth there are 40 schools which come into this category. 37 schools purchase payroll services, and 3 schools purchase HR Advisory services. We do not own the data for Academies, Voluntary Aided or Trust schools and therefore cannot report on their sickness absence. The key points when reviewing the Schools data are:-

- Schools do not always follow the same corporate arrangements, for example there is no target number of day's sickness.
- The amount of input from the Local Authority in respect of advice and assistance with casework is likely to be limited where an alternative HR provider is used.

Table I: This table provides details of corporate sickness absence against target.

Council Wide Sickness Absence (exl Schools) September 2015

Directorate	Total number of days lost to sickness (RYTD)	Average FTE days lost to sickness (RYTD)	Directorate Target (Ave days lost)	Percentage of Working Time Lost to Sickness	Average FTE days lost v Target days lost	
Executive Office	393.13	5.75	7.00	2.46%	-1.25	●
Transformation & Change	4,814.26	7.08	8.50	3.00%	-1.42	●
People	7,914.25	8.15	9.45	3.45%	-1.30	●
Place	4,561.79	7.43	8.50	3.15%	-1.07	●
Office of the Director of Public Health	688.90	6.89	8.50	2.92%	-1.61	●
Council Wide Total	18,372.33	7.55	8.49	3.20%	-0.94	●

Table two: This table provides details of schools sickness absence – there is no target.

Sickness Absence – Schools Only September 2015

Directorate	Total number of days lost to sickness (RYTD)	Average FTE days lost to sickness (RYTD)	Percentage of Working Time Lost to Sickness
Voluntary Controlled School	376.48	4.47	1.89%
Community School	13,930.82	7.86	3.33%
Schools Total	14,307.30	7.71	3.27%

Performance Update

Corporate

Corporate sickness remains under the target.

Sickness has decreased by half a day per employee. An average of 8.05 days per employee (full time) was reported in the last scrutiny report (August 2015) which has fallen to 7.55 days.

Schools

The average days lost due to sickness within the School data is 7.71 FTE days.

3. How does Plymouth City Council compare to other organisations (public and private sector)?

- The overall Council target is an average of 8.49 FTE days.
- Council wide excluding Schools: 7.55 FTE days or 3.20% hours lost to sickness
- Schools: 7.71 FTE days or 3.27% hours lost to sickness
- The public sector average is: 8.7 FTE days lost due to sicknessⁱ
- The private sector average hours lost to sickness is 1.8%ⁱⁱ. *It is unclear whether this percentage is for short term absence only, which is normally the figure reported within the private sector.*
- South West Region does not hold sickness data for other Local Authorities or family group Councils.

4. Reasons for Absence

The reasons for absence are consistent across public and private sectors.

- Minor illnesses contribute to the most common reasons for short term sickness. See table three and four below.
- Musculoskeletal and stress related illness also contributes to short term sickness absence.

Table three: Most common reasons for short term absences – Corporate Employees

Top 5 Reasons for Short Term Sickness Absence (Council) September 2015 RYTD

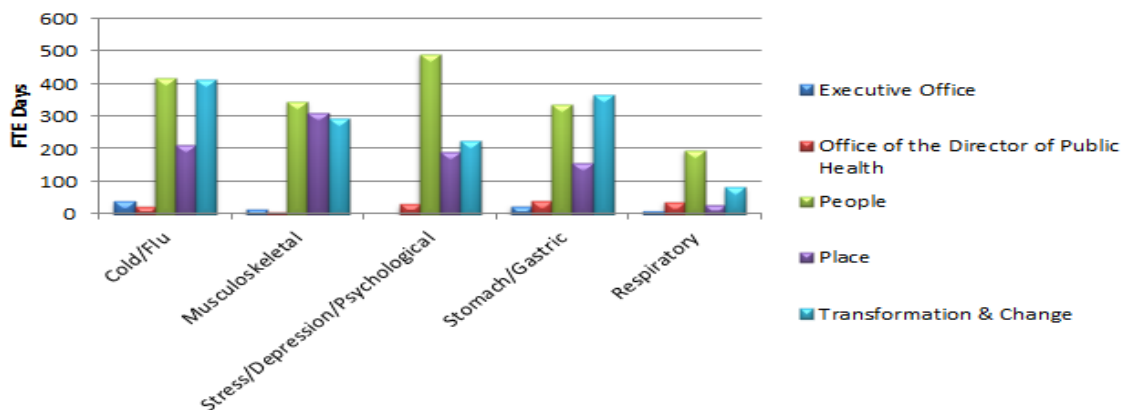
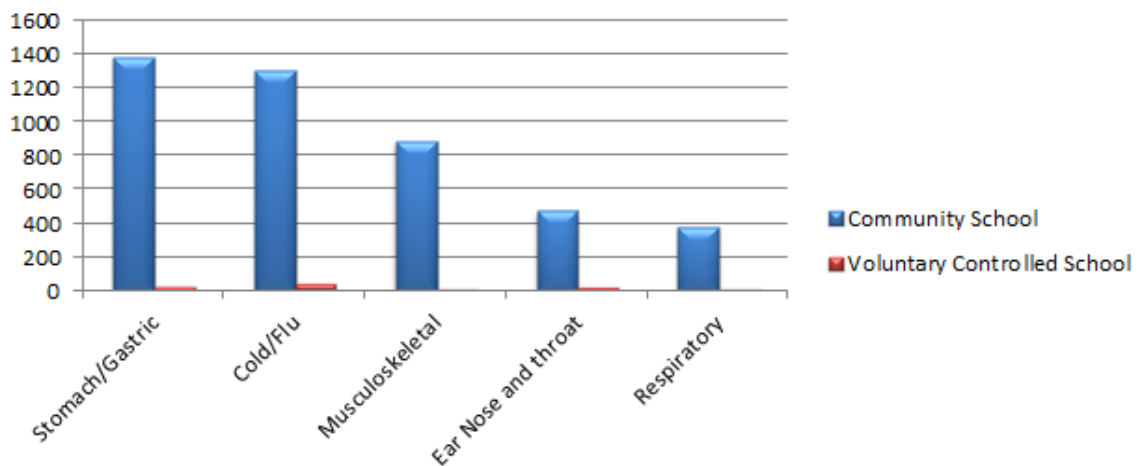


Table four: Most common reasons for short term absences – schools

Top 5 Reasons for Short Term Sickness Absence (Schools) September 2015 RYTD



Note: This tables shows total number of days lost due to sickness across Schools, of which 3 are Voluntary Controlled (maintained) Schools and 37 Community Schools.

5. Average Sick Days per FTE Year on Year Comparison

The average sickness days lost (per FTE) has reduced across the council and schools as a result of positive interventions taken to manage and reduce sickness absence.

These charts show average sickness days lost per month across the council in 2013/2014 compared to 2014/2015.

Table five: Council wide days lost, per month to sickness compared to previous year.

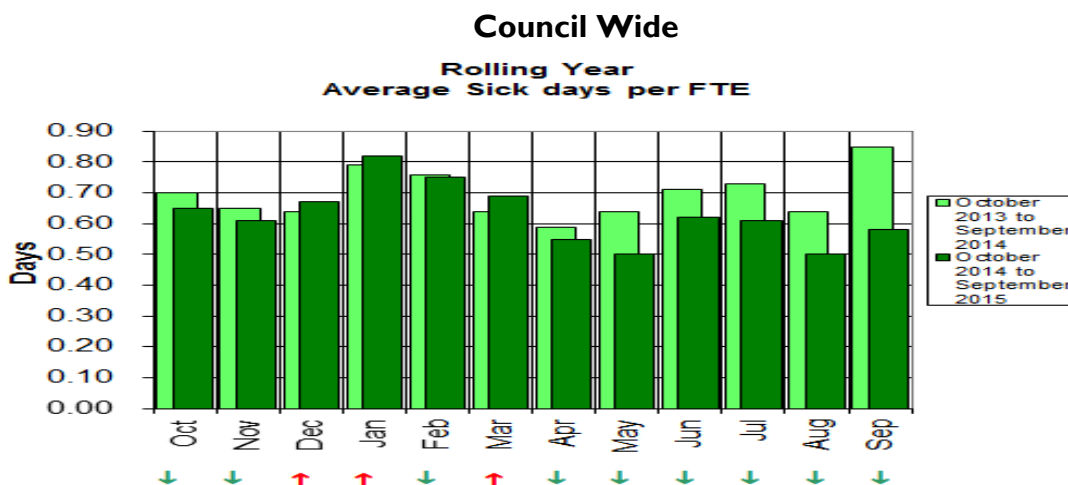
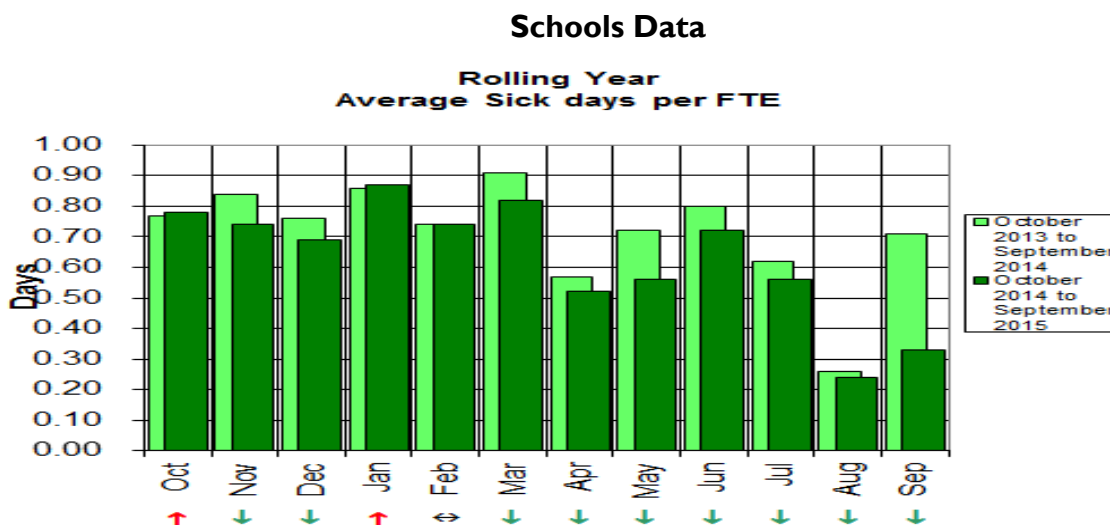


Table six: School days lost, per month to sickness compared to previous year.



6. Approaches to managing sickness absence

- New workforce reports are being developed that will help to identify trends and facilitate appropriate interventions to improve attendance.
- The HSW team coordinates an annual flu vaccination programme.
- Schools' HR Advisers have revised the Managing Attendance policy for teaching staff to mirror the Capability Policy.
- The Capability Policy has also been adapted for implementation for support staff in schools. The Schools' HR Advisers will be facilitating a number of briefing sessions for Head teachers of Maintained and Voluntary Controlled schools.
- Following the re-tendering process, the Health Safety and Wellbeing Team will be working with the Council's occupational health provider to ensure more proactive interventions for stress and musculoskeletal disorders that are both work related and non-work related.
- The HSW Team will be conducting a follow up review of how departments are managing stress and resilience in the workplace.
- Employees have access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provides guidance on managing work and non-work related stressors through access to a 24/7 helpline and a signposting website as well as up to 6 free counselling sessions.
- Plymouth City Council encourages the use of Occupational Health Services wherever possible.
- CMT has confirmed their commitment to implement a Workplace Wellbeing Charter.
- The Workplace Wellbeing Steering Group, will be developing a strategic action plan to improve the wellbeing of our employees, following recommendations from our external assessment of our performance against the Workplace Wellbeing Charter standards.