

POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11.00 am WEDNESDAY, 14 JUNE 2017 COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2 - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE

PART 1

- 1. To receive any declarations of interest from Members
- 2. To receive the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 8th March 2017. (Pages 5 12)
- 3. To receive the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2017/18. (Pages 13 14)

<u>To scrutinise information and monitoring issues being</u> reported by:

Report of the Head of Human Resources

- 4. Sickness Absence Monitoring Report (Pages 15 36)
- 5. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for prescrutiny (Cabinet Board reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)
- 6. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972
- 7. Access to Meetings to resolve to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act

PART 2

8. To select appropriate private items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board Reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members)

S.Phillips Chief Executive

Civic Centre Port Talbot

Wednesday, 7 June 2017

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor A.N.Woolcock

Vice Councillor S.Rahaman

Chairperson:

Councillors: M.Crowley, J.D.Morgan, C.Edwards,

S.E.Freeguard, M.Harvey, S.K.Hunt, H.N.James,

L.Jones, A.Llewelyn, S.Miller, L.M.Purcell, S.M.Penry, A.L.Thomas and J.Warman

Notes:

- (1) If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.
- (2) If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.
- (3) For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised though

Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.

- (4) The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.
- (5) Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present: 8 March 2017

Chairperson: Councillor D.W.Davies

Vice Chairperson: Councillor A.Jenkins

Councillors: A.Carter, C.Clement-Williams, M.Harvey,

Mrs.L.H.James, D.Jones, A.R.Lockyer and

Mrs.K.Pearson

Officers In Mrs D.Hopkins, S.John, Ms.L.Doyle, N.Chapple,

Attendance D.Rees, C.Cole, D.Michael, S.Davies,

Mrs.S.Rees and N.Evans

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees and A.N.Woolcock

1. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2017

The minutes were noted by the Committee.

2. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT TEAM REPORT CARD - QUARTER 3 2016 / 2017

Members considered the Human Resources and Learning, Training and Development Service Report Card.

Human Resources

Members noted the work of the long-term sickness absence task force and welcomed the additional funding that had been agreed to for the work to continue. Members asked for assurance that the work of the task force was working. Officers stated that whilst it was frustrating to see that sickness figures had recently increased across the Council, more people were taking time off work due to sickness absence but due to the work of the taskforce, employees are

returning to work sooner than was the case before the launch of the taskforce.

Members noted the statement about keeping compulsory redundancies at a minimum and how was the Council ensuring this remained the case. Officers advised that within the past year there had been 23 compulsory redundancies compared to 73 voluntary redundancies and over 200 people were successfully redeployed, avoiding their compulsory redundancy.

Members asked for clarification on why customer satisfaction was not measured and Officers confirmed this was largely to do with the nature of the work of the HR team – so for example, it would not be appropriate to ask an employee who has been subject to disciplinary processes, how satisfied they were with the outcome. That said, there are some processes which will lend themselves to a customer satisfaction, for example, recruitment, and work is underway to develop this further.

Members noted that the figures for individuals in HR with 3 or more short term absences had increased and asked whether this could be looked at. Officers confirmed that where appropriate cautions were issued, and the employees concerned were quite clear on what acceptable attendance looks like.

Recruitment of senior officers was mentioned and whether the Council would address this issue or would consultants continue to be used. Officers stated that it is the responsibility of each service area or Directorate to decide how they wish to fill vacancies but the preferred option is always directly employed staff. A further question in relation to consultants in Social Services was raised and officers confirmed that one consultant will leave in March 2017 and the interim post of Director is interim until March 2018.

Members asked how the service managed an 8% underspend in the previous year and officers stated that this was because of vacant posts.

Training and Learning and Development

Members asked what training is provided for Social Workers.

Officers confirmed that in the first instance an individual would require a Social Work degree and then on the job training and formal training as set out in the the Care Council for Wales Continuing Professional

Education & Learning (CPEL) Framework, beginning with the First Year in Practice.

Members asked how the training materials were developed for Social Work training. Officers stated that training material are developed on an all Wales basis, and then rolled out regionally. The Learning, Training & Development Manager for NPT works with the national training group to support the development of training materials.

Members asked in relation to the HR Report Card, whether sickness absence figures for the Council include pregnancy related sickness. Members then asked whether pregnancy related sickness should be included within normal sickness absence figures. The Head of Human Resources stated that she would speak with colleagues from other Councils to get an understanding of whether they include this within the wider figures and confirmed that NPT figures do include all pregnancy related sickness absence

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

3. **LEGAL SERVICES REPORT CARD 2016/2017**

Members considered the Legal Services Report Card.

Members asked whether there was an opportunity to generate income from work in relation to environmental impact work and officers confirmed that the Council could only cover its costs and not make a profit.

Members asked for clarity that with the impending staff changes of the next year or so would the department be a new looking one. Officers confirmed that a policy of developing in house legal experts was the preferred option to ensure business continuity.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

4. <u>LEGAL SERVICES REPORT CARD 2016/17 - LICENSING SECTION</u>

Members considered Licensing Section' service report card.

Members were advised that Safeguarding training has commenced for taxi licence holders and a specific report on this had recently been considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

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Members asked whether the 6th person waiting for an appraisal would receive one by the end of March 2017. Officers advised that the 6th person had only recently started within the section.

Members asked how many taxi drivers there were within the County Borough. Officers stated that there were currently 355 taxi licence holders and between 250 and 260 taxis. Members continued by asking whether there was an upper limit on the number of licences that can be issued. Officers confirmed that there was no power to limit driver numbers. A limit can be imposed on hackney carriage vehicles, (subject to a survey showing no unmet demand), but there was currently no intention to implement a limit.

Members asked why there had been unplanned departures from the section and were advised that this was because the individuals had secured better, higher grade positions within the Council.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

5. ICT AND PROCUREMENT - REPORT CARD 2016/17

Members considered the ICT and Procurement Service Report Card.

Officers advised that given the nature of the service upwards of 75% of the budget was in relation to staffing costs and if additional savings targets were identified then it would result in staff having to leave.

Members welcomed the service's use of modern apprentices and asked whether this would continue in the future. Officers stated that there currently 8 full time staff employed by the service, two are modern apprentices and six had previously been apprentices. The service will continue to identify opportunities to utilise more apprentices in the future.

Members asked how sickness absence was monitored within the service. It was confirmed that every Monday the Head of Service and his accountable managers are e-mailed a copy of all the sickness absence taken the previous week to ensure that it is managed immediately. Each individual's sickness absence details are appended to the return to work interviews and submitted with the monthly returns.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

6. CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE - DIGITAL BY CHOICE - HIGHLIGHT REPORT - QUARTER 3 PROGRESS REPORT (APRIL 1ST - 31ST DECEMBER) 2016-17

Members considered the quarterly highlight report of the Corporate Improvement Objective Digital by Choice.

Members asked was the Council on target to deliver all the actions contained within the report. Officers advised that they were but there had been some issues in particular in relation to Margam Park and the provision of WiFi. The issue has now been resolved but it required in-depth discussions with CADW on where the transmitter could be sited at the orangery.

Members asked whether any training is available for Community Councils and their staff on using computers as this will increase the accessibility for the public. Officers noted that there was nothing that the Council was currently doing to provide training but it may be something that One Voice Wales may be able to offer.

Following Scrutiny the report was noted.

7. TO RECEIVE THE SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

The work programme was noted by the Committee.

8. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

Cabinet Board Papers

The Committee scrutinised the following items:

9.1 <u>Closed Circuit Television Service (CCTV) and Out of Hours</u> Update

Members considered the progress report on the decisions made by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Board in June 2016.

Members stated that the paragraph within the report in relation to the savings was unclear and clarification was sought so that the public are able to understand what it means. Officers stated that the

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paragraph meant that originally £114k of savings had been identified which was subsequently reduced to £44k but now there will be no savings taken forward.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

9.2 Quarterly Performance Management Data 2016-2017 – Quarter 3 Performance.

Members considered the quarter three performance report.

Members asked how many Enterprise clubs were run within the County Borough. Officers stated that the information would be circulated outside of the meeting.

Members were disappointed to read that there was minimal information in relation to the Adult Services Improvement Objective. Officers advised that this would be raised at the next meeting of the Social Care Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee when the performance report is presented to the Committee.

Following scrutiny the report was noted.

9.3 Supply of Groceries, Provisions and Frozen Foods

Members considered the report that sought to extend the current framework arrangements in relation to the supply of groceries, provisions and frozen foods.

Members asked whether we could get goods cheaper if the Council went to tender rather than extend the framework. Officers advised that it was a possibility and this would be tested when the NPS carried out their tender. However, given their failure to tender to timescale an extension to the existing contract is the logical option. Following Scrutiny the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

9.4 Council Tax and Business Rate Court Costs

Members considered a report to determine the costs to be recovered from Council tax payers and business rates payers in respect of the issue of summonses and the granting by the magistrates of liability orders. Members asked if the figures were correct within the report. Officers stated that the costs are worked out based on the work involved pulling cases together and Business Rates liability order cases tend to be more time consuming.

Following scrutiny the committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

CHAIRPERSON

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Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2017/18

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Officer
14 June 2017	Sickness Update Report – Quarter 4 (2016/17)	
25 July 2017		
20 September 2017		
1 November 2017	6 Monthly Sickness Absence Update Report	Sheenagh Rees
	Sickness Report – Quarter 1 (2017/18)	Sheenagh Rees
13 December 2017		

Version 2 – 1 June 2017

Officer Responsible: Charlotte Davies

24 January 2018	Long Term Sickness Absence Update Report	Sheenagh Rees
	Quarter 2 Sickness Report – Quarter 2 (2017/18)	Sheenagh Rees
7 March 2018	Well Being Plan	Karen Jones
	Public Service Board	Karen Jones
18 April 2018	Sickness Report – Quarter 3 (2017/18)	Sheenagh Rees

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14th June 2017

Report of the Head of Human Resources - Sheenagh Rees

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

SICKNESS ABSENCE MONITORING REPORT

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information in relation to sickness absence to inform Member scrutiny of the management of sickness absence across the Council.

2. Summary

2.1 Absence rates rose slightly in 2016 / 2017 when compared with the previous year, from an average of 9.7 FTE sick days per employee, to 9.9 FTE sick days. The report provides Members with more detail in relation to absence rates in each service of the Council, provides a breakdown of short term and long term absence, the reasons for absence, as well as some new analysis of absence rates as they relate to the age of employees. The data presented in this report will raise questions for Members, so for example, where Members see fluctuations in sickness absence levels in particular services, they may want to take the opportunity to refer this to the relevant scrutiny committee for further investigation. The report also provides Members with the background to the Long term Sickness Absence Taskforce.

3. Monitoring Data

3.1 This report focuses on Quarter 4 sickness data for 2016 / 2017. The monitoring data is provided in Appendix 1.

- 3.2 **Table 1** provides Members with the average FTE sick days per employee, in each service for Quarter 4 in 2015 / 2016 and in 2016 / 2017 (15/16 is the left hand column, 16/17 is the right hand column).
- 3.3 **Table 2** provides an overview of the Council's average working days lost per FTE employee in Quarter 4 each year from 2009 / 2010 to 2016 / 2017.
- 3.4 **Table 3** provides Members with an overview of the Council's absence pattern and the ratio of days lost to short term and long term absence in Quarter 4 of 2015 / 2016 and 2016 / 2017.
- 3.5 **Table 4** provides Members with the split between short term and long term absence for each service by age groups as requested by Members at the last meeting of this committee.
- 3.6 **Table 5** provides Members with head count and full time equivalent figures for each service. This is provided to help Members understand how sickness data compares with the number of employees employed within each service. Members should note that these figures are subject to change, particularly where cross-directorate change takes place.
- 3.7 **Table 6** sets out the number of employees who were absent on 3 or more occasions in each service during Quarter 4 of 2016 / 2017, and **Table 7** sets out the number of full time equivalent working days lost by these employees (Members should refer to Table 5 when looking at this data for context).
- 3.8 **Table 8** sets out the number of employees absent for 28 consecutive days or more in each service during Quarter 4, **Table 9** sets out the number of full time equivalent working days lost by these employees.
- 3.9 **Table 10** provides Members with information in relation to why employees were absent from work during Quarter 4. Data is provided for 2015 / 2016 (left hand column) and 2016 / 2017 (right hand column). This information will help inform targeted strategies in relation to managing absence and promoting health and well-being.

- 3.10To help Members understand how the reasons for absence relate to patterns of absence, **Table 11** then sets out the top ten reasons for short term absence in the quarter, and **Table 12**, sets out the top ten reasons for long term absence. Again, data in relation to 2015 / 2016 and 2016 / 2017 is provided.
- 3.11**Table 13** illustrates the percentage of employees off work due to stress per age band.
- 3.12**Table 14** provides data in relation to employees leaving employment as a result of ill health. In the first three quarters of 2015 / 2016, 30 employees left the Council's employment as a result of ill health. In the first three quarters of this year 33 employees have left the Council's employment.
- 3.13Benchmarking data across local government in Wales is not available for 2016 / 2017 yet. It is published in September each year. For Members information, in 2015 / 2016, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council ranked 6th in Wales in relation to FTE absence rates.
- 3.14 In February of this year, the Council, with the Joint Trade Unions, became a signatory to the Trade Union Congress' (TUC) 'Dying to Work' voluntary charter that sets out an agreed way in which employees will be supported, protected and guided throughout their employment, following a terminal diagnosis.
- 3.15The charter states the following:
 - We recognise that terminal illness requires support and understanding and not additional and avoidable stress and worry.
 - Terminally ill workers will be secure in the knowledge that we will support them following their diagnosis and we recognise that, safe and reasonable work can help maintain dignity, offer a valuable distraction and can be therapeutic in itself.
 - We will provide our employees with the security of work, peace of mind and the right to choose the best course of

action for themselves and their families which helps them through this challenging period with dignity and without undue financial loss.

- We support the TUC's Dying to Work campaign so that all employees battling terminal illness have adequate employment protection and have their death in service benefits protected for the loved ones they leave behind.
- 3.16 Finally, and sadly, Members are advised that during the quarter, 3 employees died in service following periods of ill health.

4. Sickness Taskforce - Background and Update

- 4.1 In September 2014, Members of this Committee endorsed the establishment of the Sickness Taskforce to undertaken an examination of long term sickness absence [over 28 days] to understand what actions would be needed to reduce the incidences of absence and / or the length of absences with the aim of reducing the costs of absence.
- 4.2 The initial phase of the Taskforce Project was a **Research Phase**. The Taskforce plotted all current cases of long term absence within identified hot spot areas to establish barriers, constraints and consider employee patterns and behaviours. Research of best practice nationally and across industries led to the development of a good practice strategy, evidence based on the principles of early intervention. Research identified the positive impact of immediate intervention strategies that include maintaining informal contact during absence. This strategy was developed with the support and input of the trade unions. A trade union representative was seconded to the HR team for a period of 6 months to help with the development of the strategy.
- 4.3 The Early Intervention and Effective Communication Strategy combines the following:
 - Early intervention
 - Effective communication
 - Informal Return to Work Plan Meetings with a clear focus on the return to work

- Additional HR resources utilised for rigorous case management and manager prompting at each key stage
- Clear roles and responsibilities managers retain responsibility and accountability for managing absence
- Personal manager briefings
- Stress risk assessments to be carried out for every instance of identified work related stress (even where the employee is not absent)
- How to Guides on managing different aspects of long term absence
- Occupational Health Referral Hotline to ensure referrals are necessary and add value.
- 4.4 In February 2015, the Taskforce began a Pilot Phase, piloting the early intervention and effective communication strategy, initially within the Environment Directorate, and since then it has been rolled out across the rest of the Council. A separate Schools Project has been developed by the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning, drawing on the work of the Sickness Taskforce. The Director of ELLL reports separately on this initiative at CYPE.
- 4.5 At the January meeting of this committee, Members were provided with data to determine whether or not the Sickness Taskforce is producing tangible cost benefits. The report concluded that since the introduction of the early intervention methodology, whilst the numbers of employees who are long term sick have increased, the length of absences has reduced. In Quarters 1 and 2 of 2014 / 2015 41% of those on long term absence were absent for more than 3 months or 65 working days. In 2015 / 2016 this reduced to 29%, and in 2016 / 2017, this reduced to 15%.
- 4.6 Latest health initiatives supported by the Taskforce, working with the Learning, Training and Development Team, are as follows:
 - The Taskforce has attended management team meetings across the Council to refresh managers on the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedure and Early Intervention and Effective Communication Strategy.

- Mindfulness Sessions have been trialled, in conjunction with Karen Fisher, WULF Project Manager from the Wales Union Learning Fund. Feedback from managers and employees has been positive and therefore further sessions will be organised for later this year.
- Ovarian Cancer awareness briefings held by Ovarian Cancer Action will be taking place over the next month.
- Discussions are taking place with Gofal, the mental health and wellbeing charity, exploring the opportunity for joint working in relation to Mental Health awareness.

5. Risk Management

Sickness absence must continue to be managed effectively or there is the risk that sickness rates will increase with associated loss of productivity and budgetary impact.

6. Financial Impact

The costs of sick pay in Quarter 4 2016 / 2017 will be confirmed at Committee.

7. Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to this item.

9. Workforce Impacts

This report will be shared with recognised trade unions in respective consultative forums for discussion and consideration.

10. Legal Impacts

The management of absence must be fair and reasonable, and managers should ensure compliance with the Council's Maximising Attendance at Work and related policies.

11. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Members NOTE the sickness absence monitoring report and continue to receive further monitoring reports on a quarterly basis.

12. Appendices

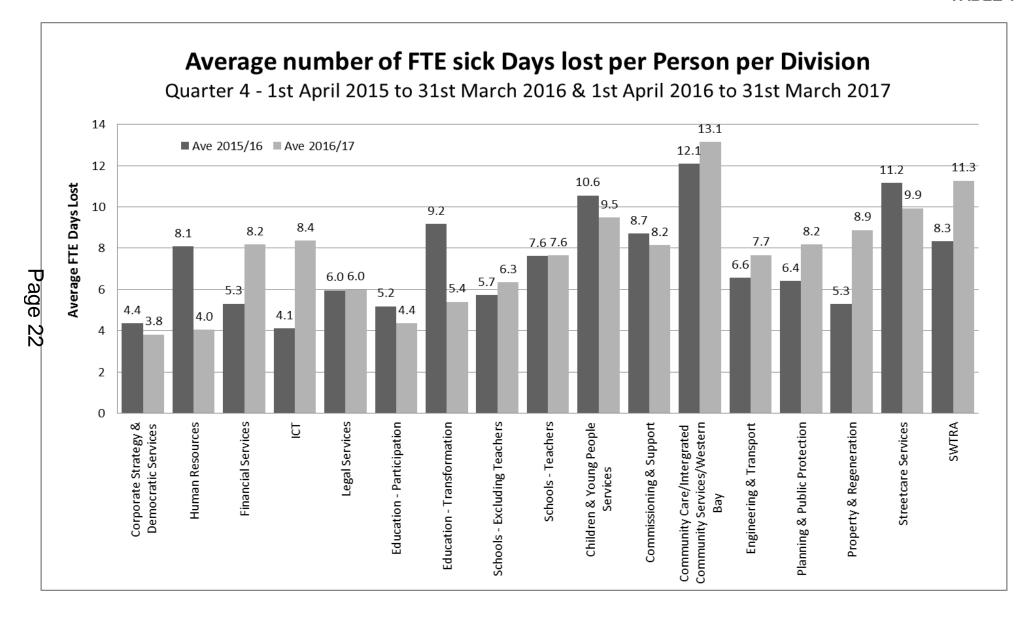
Appendix 1 – Sickness absence Quarter 4 2016 / 2017 Monitoring Data

13. Background Papers

The Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedure.

14. Officer Contact

For further information on this report item, please contact Sheenagh Rees, Head of Human Resources on extension 3315 or e-mail s.rees5@npt.gov.uk



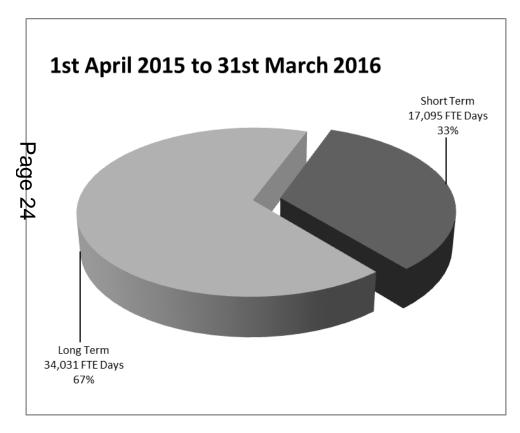
Quarter 4 Average Sickness Rate

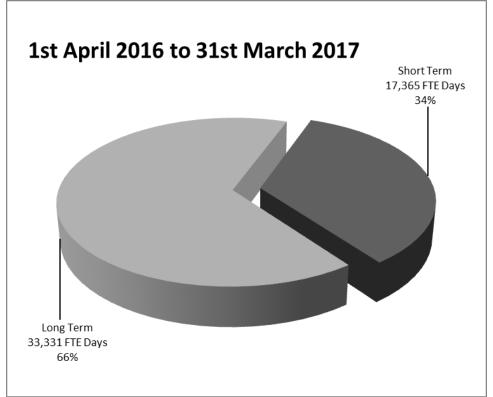
Quarter 4 Overall Sickness (Including Teachers)	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
The number of working days/shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence.	11.3	9.59	10.07	9.65	9.19	9.4	9.7	9.9

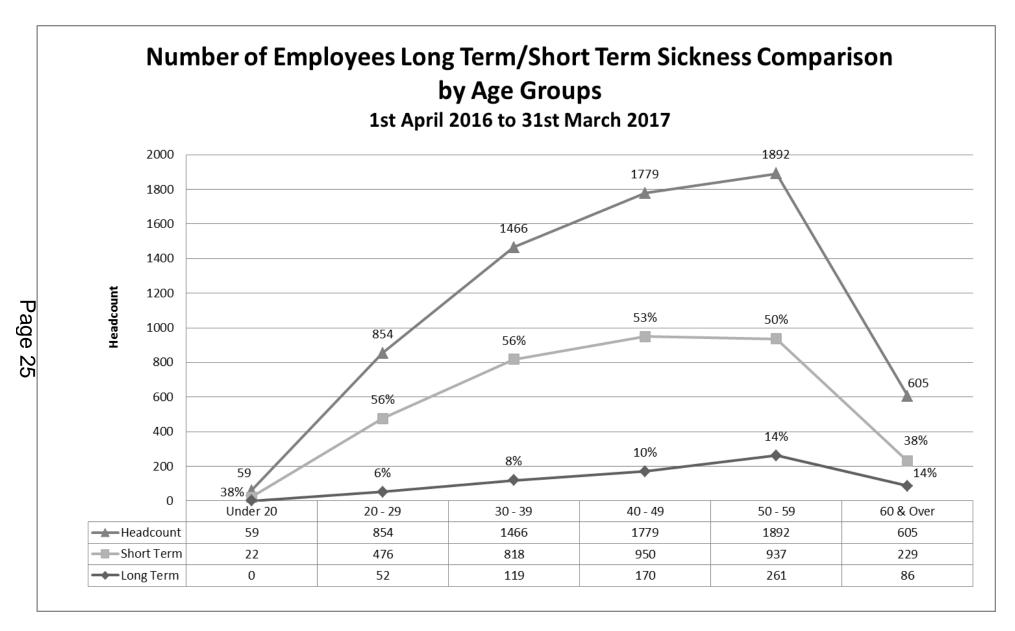
Ratio of short and long term sickness – number of FTE days lost

(Including teachers)

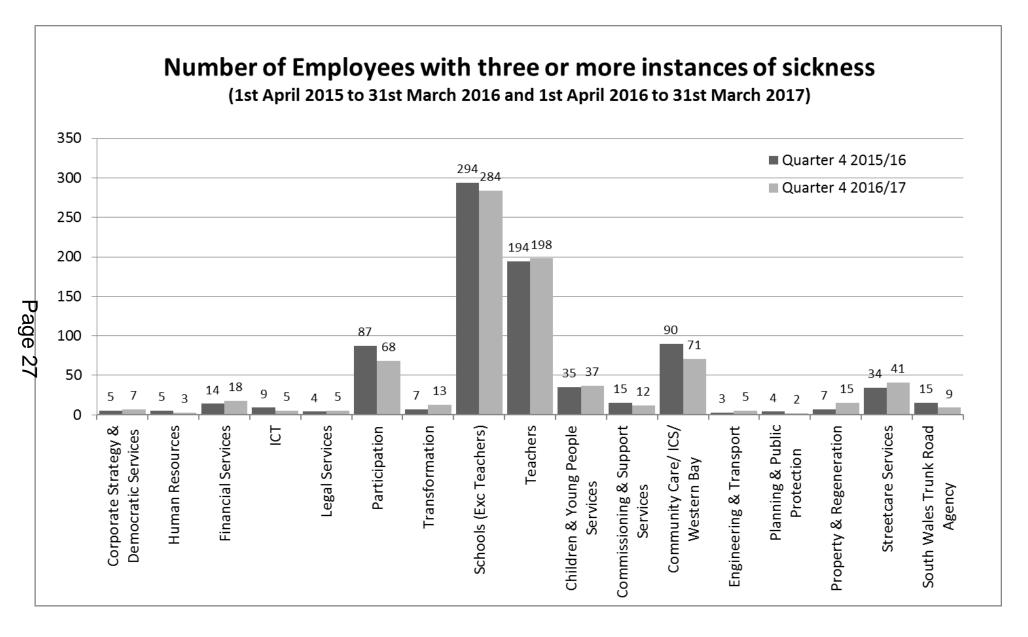
QUARTER 4 Comparisons - 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 and 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

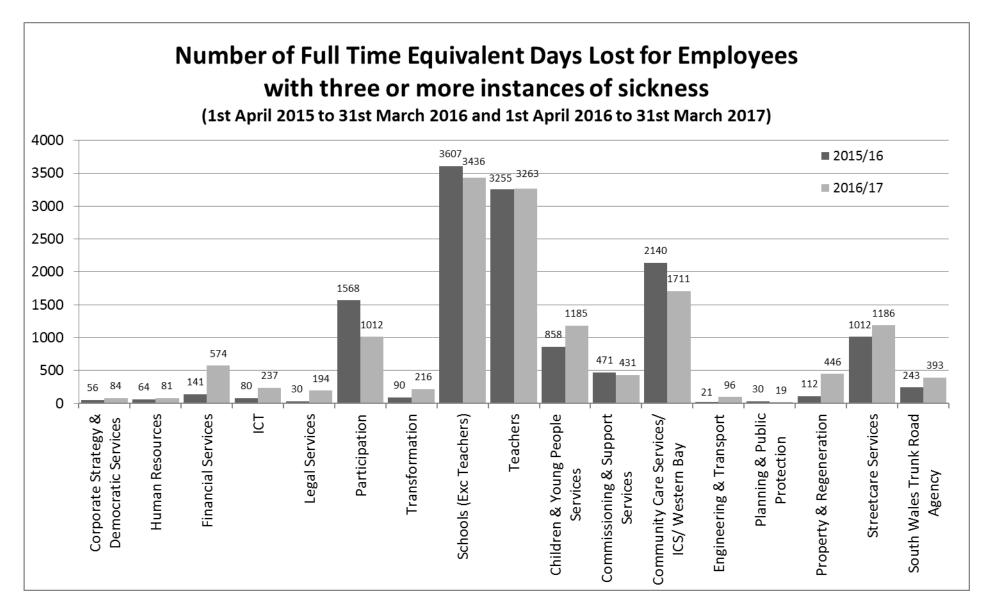




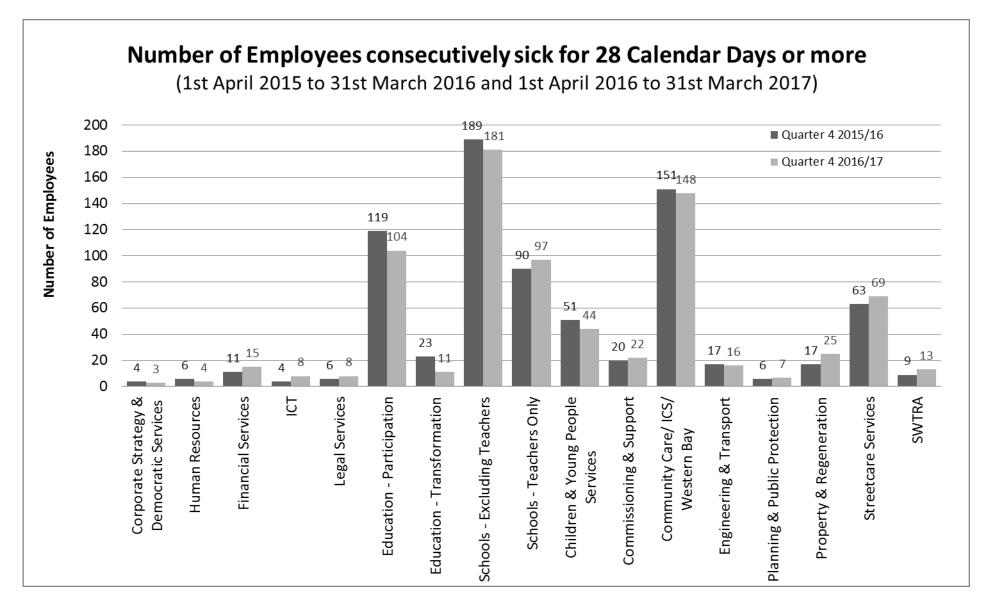


Division	Headcount	FTE
Corporate Strategy & Democratic Services	80	74.0
Human Resources	79	69.7
Financial Services	173	156.5
ICT	99	96.4
Legal Services	89	65.3
Participation	1039	465.8
Transformation	123	101.0
Schools	1539	949.0
Schools-Teaching	1202	1112.0
Children & Young People Services	361	301.3
Commissioning & Support Services	185	173.1
Community Care Services/Integrated Community Services/		
Western Bay	629	481.4
Engineering & Transport	161	120.6
Planning & Public Protection	94	87.9
Property & Regeneration	154	112.8
Streetcare Services	542	468.8
South Wales Trunk Road Agency	108	104.9
Total	6654	4940.6

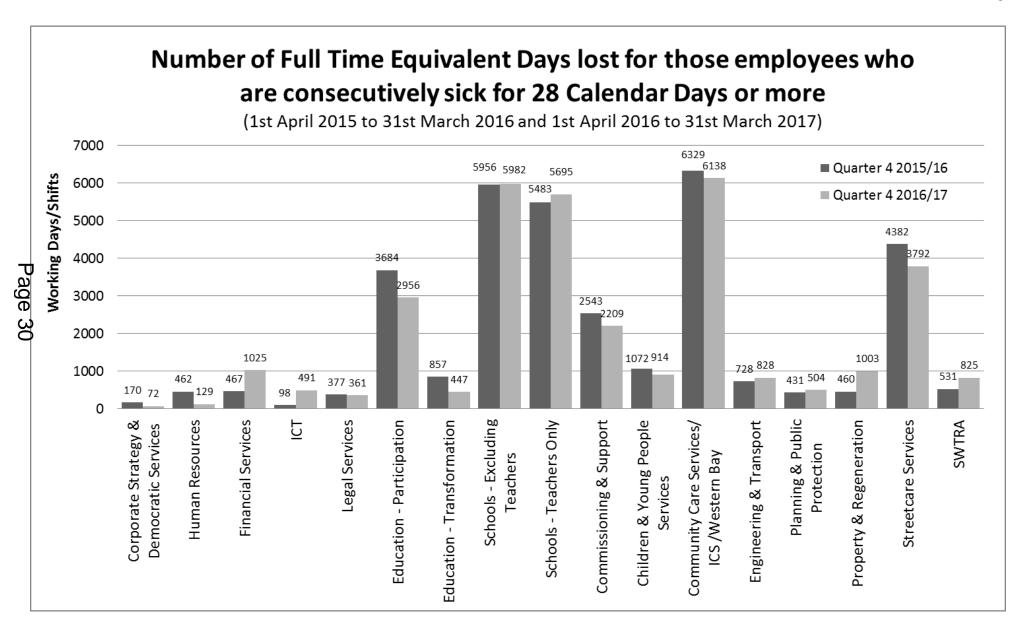


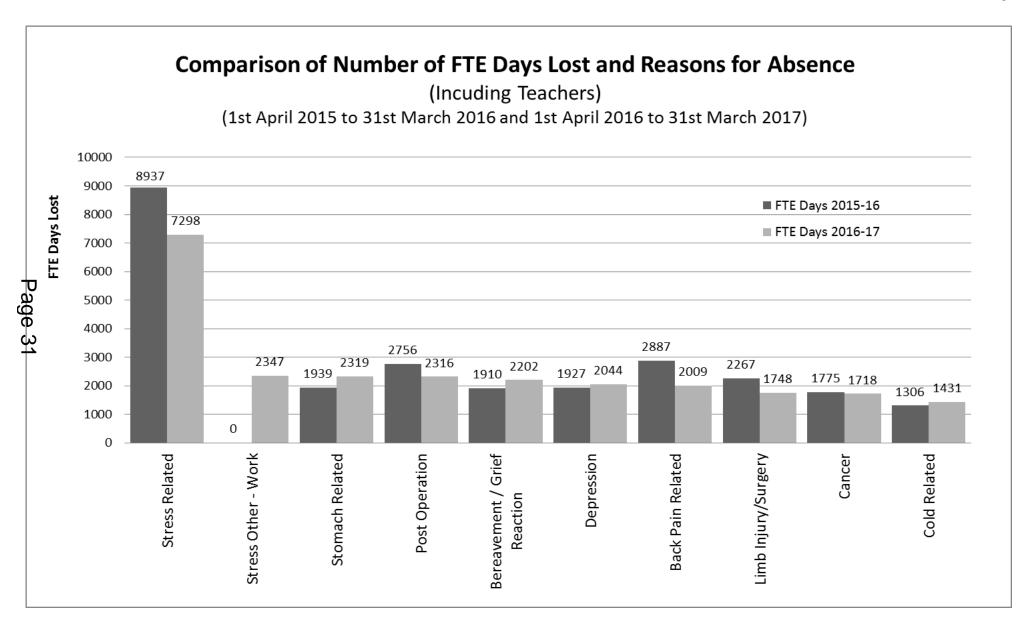


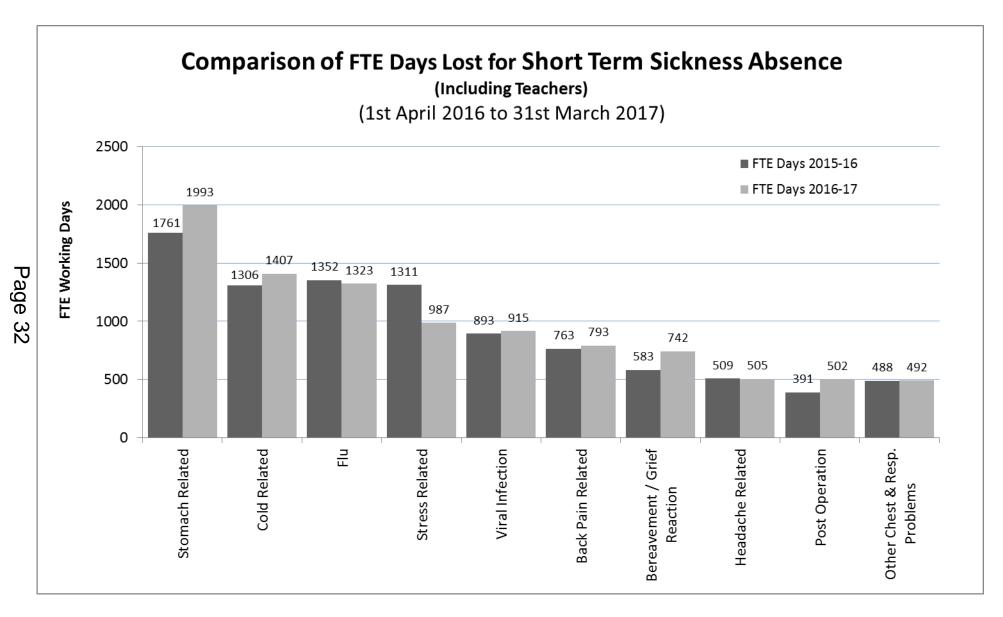
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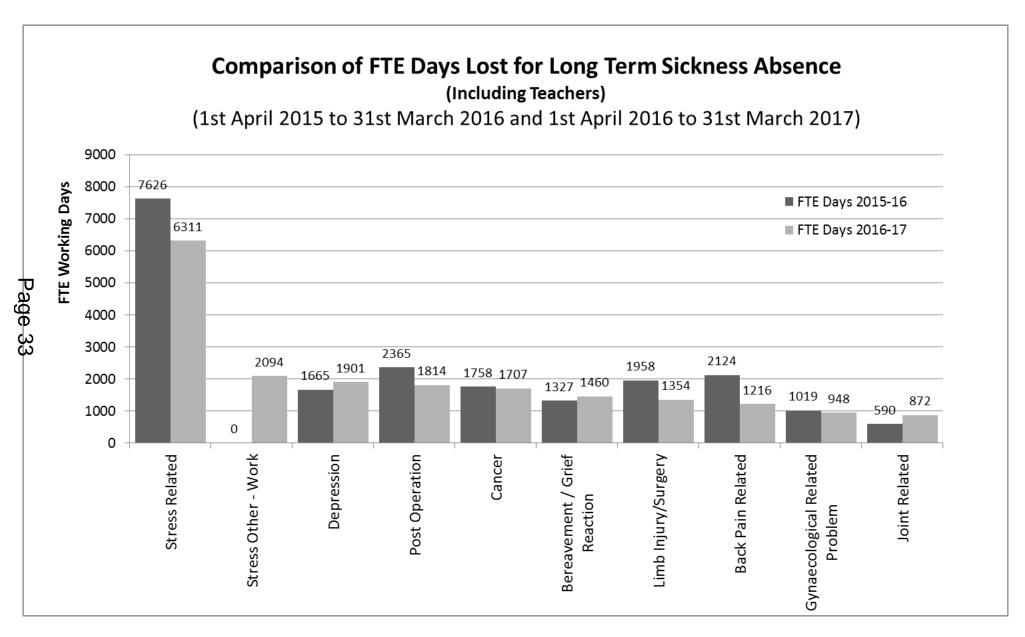


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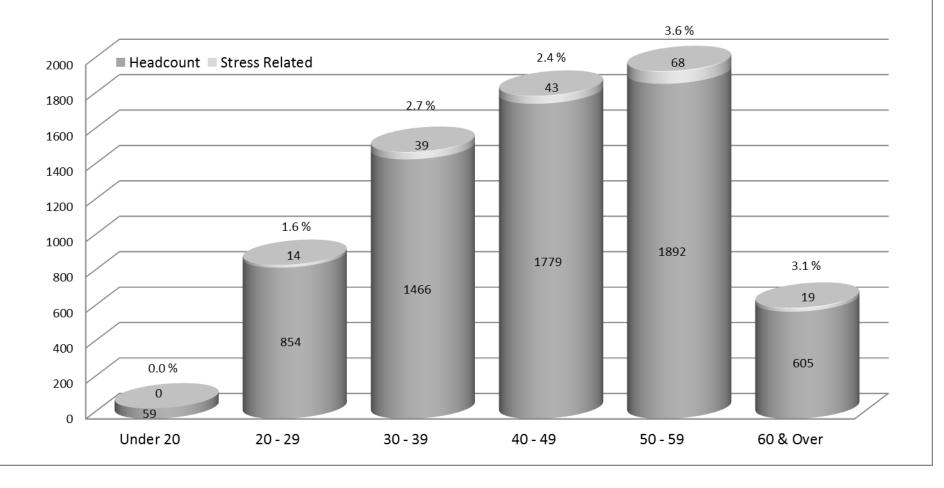








Comparison of total headcount and number of employees absent due to stress per age band Quarter 4 - 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017



Ill Health Leavers 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016

Directorate	Resignation (Health Reasons)	Ill Health Retirement Tier 1	Ill Health Retirement Tier 2	Ill Health Retirement Tier 3	Dismissal - Inability Attend Work On A Regular Basis
CHEX		1			
ELLL	3	5			3
SCHOOLS	3	1	1		4
SSHH		2	1	2	4
ENV		7			2
FCS		1			
Totals	6	17	2	2	13

Directorate	Resignation (Health Reasons)	Ill Health Retirement Tier 1	Ill Health Retirement Tier 2	Ill Health Retirement Tier 3	Dismissal - Inability Attend Work On A Regular Basis
CHEX					
ELLL	3	3			3
SCHOOLS	10	4			4
SSHH	3	5		1	5
	1	2			1
FCS	1				
Total	18	14	0	1	13

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