

# NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 June 2016

### 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 Member's with information in relation to sickness absence to inform Member scrutiny of the management of sickness absence across the Council.

#### 2. Monitoring Data

- 2.1 This report focuses on Quarter 4 sickness data for 2015 / 2016, the full year period April 2015 to March 2016. The monitoring data is provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 For ease of reference I have included two tables in Appendix 1 which have been included in previous reports. **Table 1** provides Members with the all Wales benchmarking figures for 2014 / 2015, and **Table 2** sets out the average FTE sick days in 2014 / 2015 for each service, measured against the Council average for the period (9.4 days) and the 2015 / 2016 target of 8.7 days. I have included these tables again to help Members benchmark performance.
- 2.3 **Table 3** provides the Quarter 4 monitoring data for 2015 / 2016 for each service, measured against the Council average for the period (9.7 days). Members will note that disappointingly the Council average has increased from 9.4 days in 2014 / 2015. Members can compare this data with the data provided in Table 2 (2014 / 2015) to determine trends in absence patterns. A health warning must be applied to this

comparison however. As a result of organisational structure changes over the past 12 months and the movement of services from one head of service to another, and in some cases from one directorate to another directorate, services cannot be compared like for like with the previous year across the board. Education (excluding schools), Adult Social Care Services, Social Services Commissioning and Support Service and Planning and Public Protection have been particularly affected by this reorganisation of large groups of employees. Comparisons with previous years are provided elsewhere in this report, for example for short term and long term absence, and the same health warning must be applied to the comparison.

- 2.4 There are examples of services which have not been subject to significant movement of employees and the comparison of this year's data with last year's is meaningful. I have also looked at Directorate performance to see what trends that can demonstrate. Overall, Corporate Services showed a reduction in absence rates from an average 8 FTE days in 2014 / 2015 to an average 6 FTE days in 2015 / 2016. All of the Corporate Services saw a reduction in absence rates with the exception of Human Resources which increased by 20%, albeit it still remains below the Council average.
- 2.5 Overall Social Services, Health and Housing increased from 11.7 FTE days in 2014 / 2015 to 13 FTE days in 2015 / 2016. Children and Young People Services however did see a 10% reduction in absence rates, reflecting the focus on improving workforce matters within that service over a number of years.
- 2.6 Overall Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning reduced absence from 9.4 FTE days in 2014 / 2015 to 9 FTE days in 2015 / 2016. In Schools, Teacher absence remained consistent over the 2 year period, and Support Staff absence increased by a significant 53%. Whilst because of the significant changes across the two central education services, Transformation and Participation, it is difficult to compare the 2015 / 2016 data with the 2014 / 2015 data the school figures demonstrate that the overall directorate reduction in absence must have been achieved by these two services.

2.7 Overall Environment has seen an increase in absence over the 2 year period from 9.8 FTE days in 2014 / 2015 to 10.2 FTE days in 2015 / 2016. Engineering and Transport has however seen a significant 31% reduction in absence.

**2.8 Table 4** 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 2015 / 2016. The data for 2014 / 2015 is also provided, and Members can see that whilst the overall numbers of days lost has reduced, the ratios continue to remain consistent.

**2.8 Table 5** provides an overview of the Council average working days lost per FTE employee in Quarter 4 each year from 2009 / 2010 to 2015 / 2016. The All Wales Sickness Benchmarking figures for 2015 / 2016 are not available until the autumn so I cannot advise at this point how Neath Port Talbot benchmarks when compared to the rest of Wales. It is hoped that this information will be available for the 2016 / 2017 Quarter 1 report.

**2.9 Table 6** provides Members with the split between short term and long term absence for each service. With the exception of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services and ICT, this table demonstrates that long term absence rates are higher across services than short term absence rates.

**2.10 Table 7** 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.

**2.11 Table 8** sets out the number of employees who were absent on 3 or more occasions in each service during 2015 / 2016, and **Table 9** sets out the number of working days lost by these employees.

**2.12 Table 10** then sets out the number of employees who were absent for 28 consecutive days or more in each service as a snapshot at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, and

**Table 11** sets out the number of working days lost by these employees.

2.13 **Table 12** sets out the number of employees absent for 28 consecutive days or more in each service during the 12 month period 2015 / 2016, compared with 2014 / 2015 and **Table 13** sets out the number of working days lost by these employees.

2.14 **Table 14** provides Members with information in relation to why employees were absent from work in 2015 / 2016. This information will help inform targeted strategies in relation to managing absence and promoting health and well-being. Members can compare this with the top ten reasons for absence in 2014 / 2015, set out in **Table 15**. Cancer related absence increased significantly by over 50% when compared with last year. Stress related absence increased by 12% and continues to be the biggest cause of absence, representing three times the amount of absence as the number 2 cause in the top ten list, back pain related absence.

2.15 To help Members understand how the reasons for absence relate to patterns of absence, **Table 16** then sets out the top ten reasons for short term absence in 2015 / 2016, and **Table 17**, sets out the top ten reasons for long term absence.

2.16 **Table 18** provides data in relation to employees leaving employment as a result of ill health. 32 employees left the Council's employment in 2014 / 2015 as a result of ill health and in 2015 / 2016, 40 employees have left the Council's employment for ill health reasons.

2.17 Finally, and sadly, Members are advised that during 2015 / 2016, 8 employees died in service following periods of ill health.

### **3. Ongoing scrutiny**

3.1 Members will continue to receive sickness monitoring information on a quarterly basis. This will enable Members, over time, to monitor absence rates and patterns across the Council.

3.2 The data presented in this report will raise questions for Members, so for example, whether 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.

#### **4. 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.

#### **5. Financial Impact**

The costs of sick pay in 2015 / 2016 will be confirmed at Committee.

#### **6. Consultation**

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

#### **7. Equality Impact Assessment**

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

#### **8. Workforce Impacts**

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

#### **9. 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.

## **10. Recommendation**

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

## **11. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Sickness Absence Quarter 4 2015 / 2016 Monitoring Data

## **12. Background Papers**

The Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedure.

## **13. 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](mailto:s.rees5@npt.gov.uk)

APPENDIX 1 – SICKNESS ABSENCE QUARTER 4 2015 / 2016 MONITORING DATA

TABLE 1

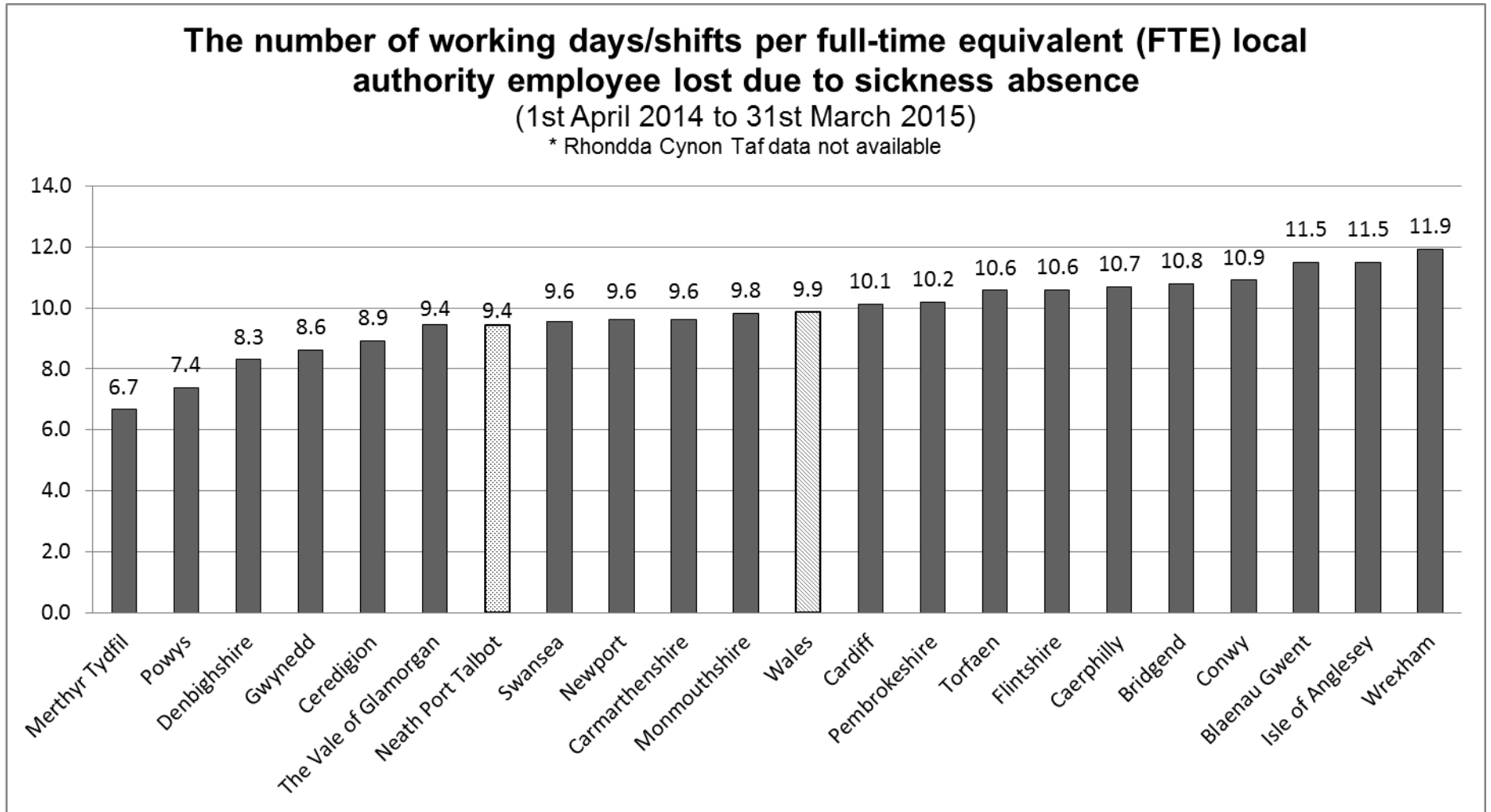
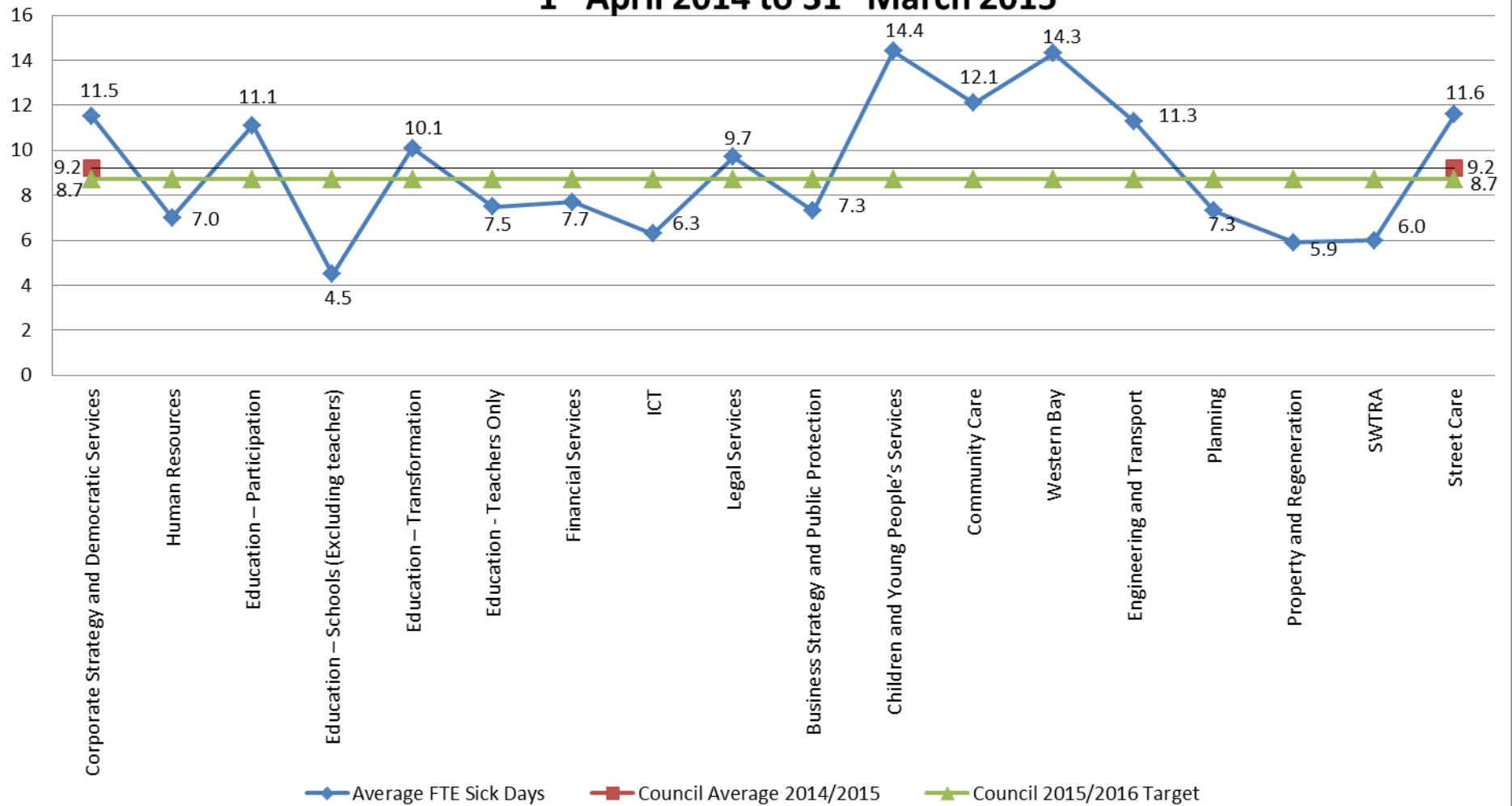


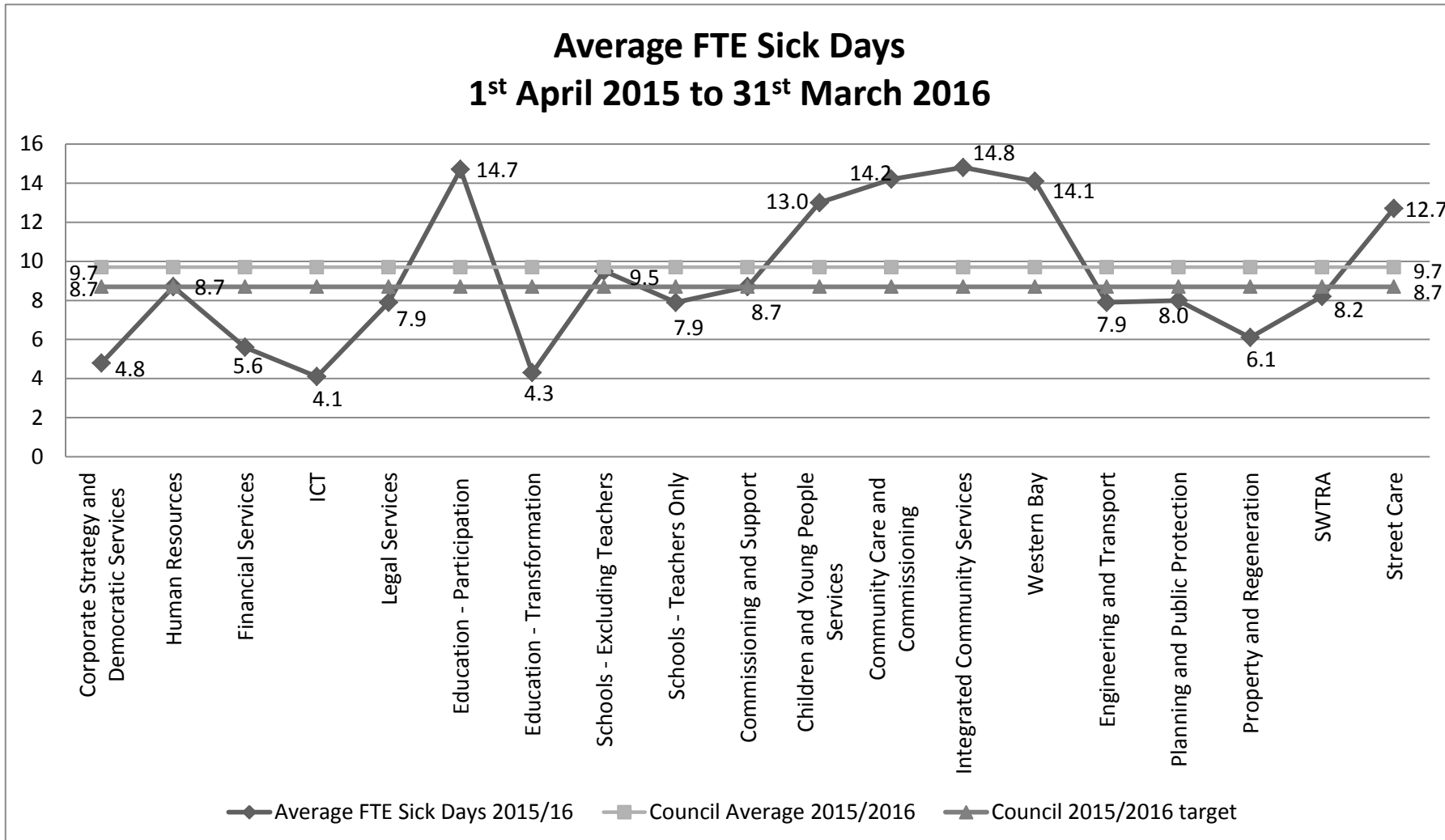
TABLE 2

## Average FTE Sick Days 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015





**TABLE 3**



**TABLE 4**

## Ratio of short and long term sickness – number of FTE days lost (including teachers)

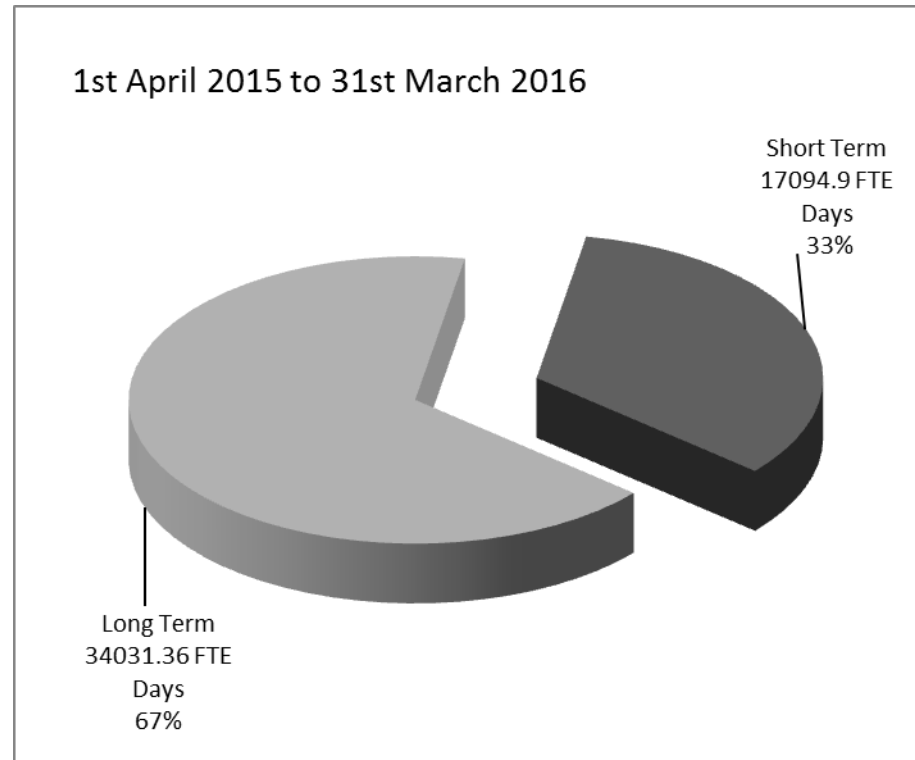
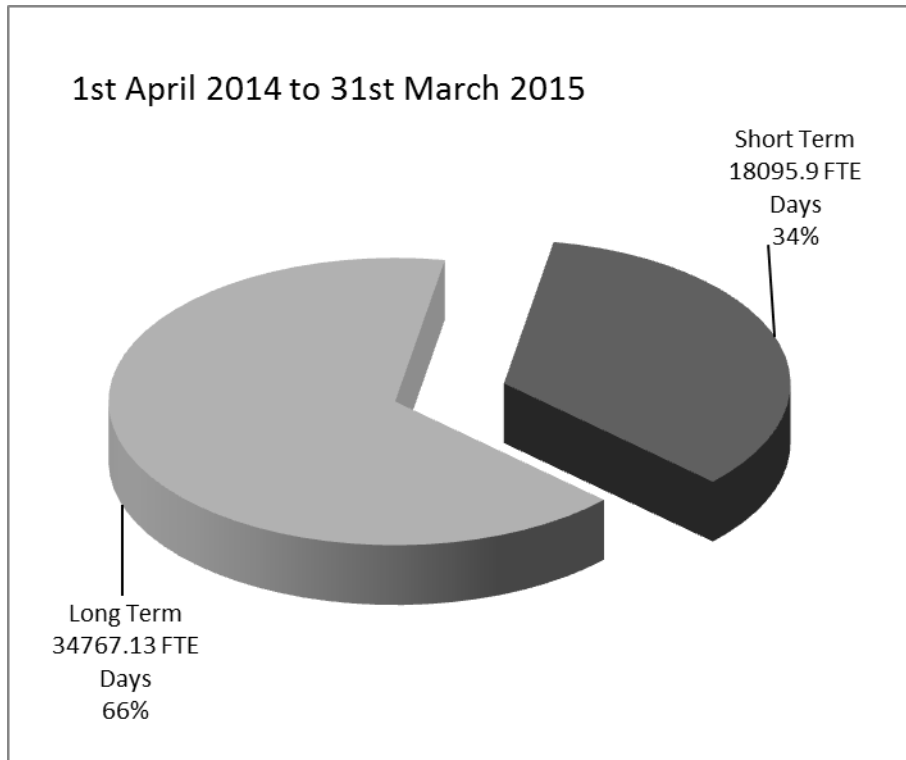
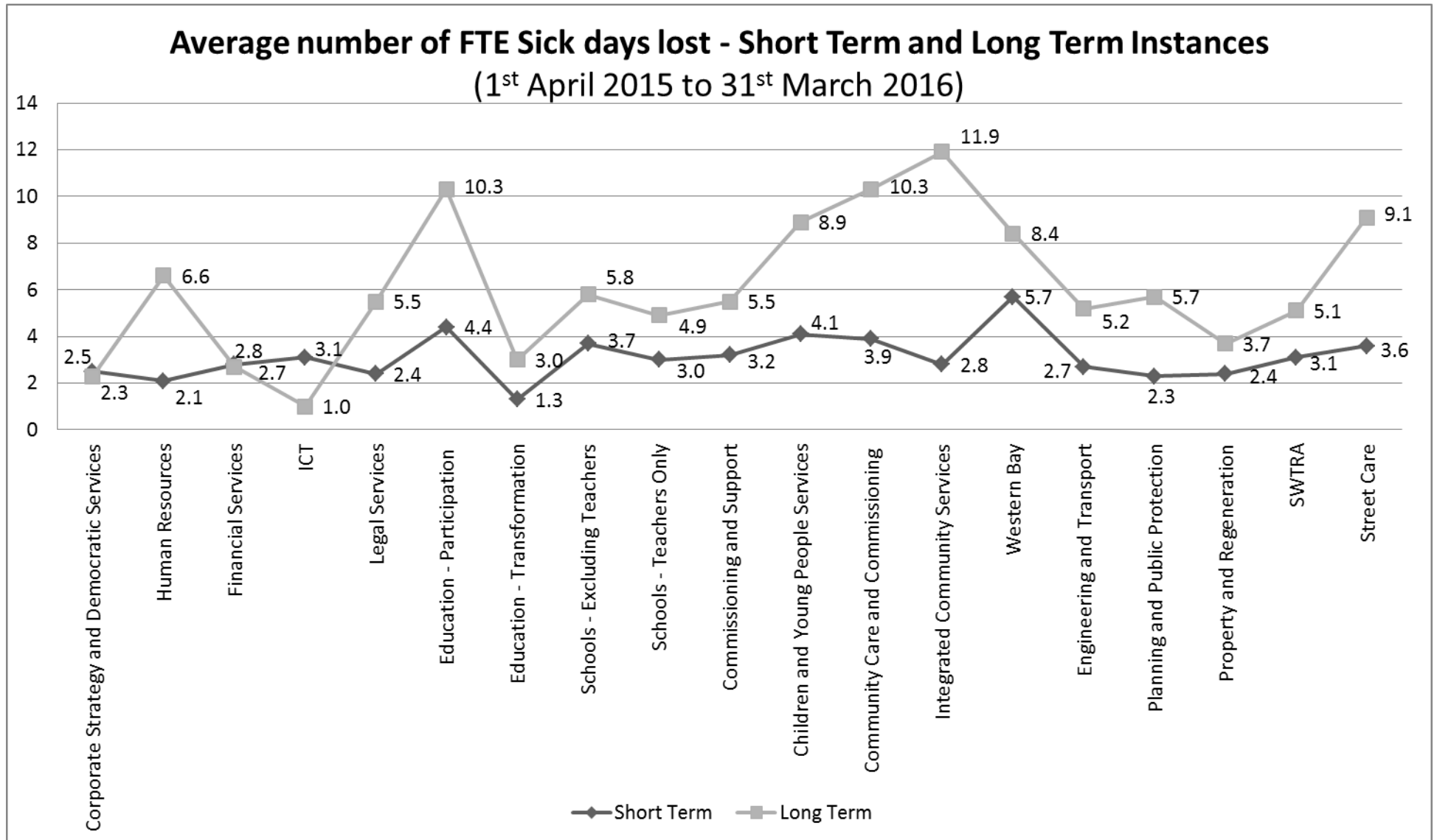


TABLE 5

**Full Year Average Sickness Rate**

<b>Overall Sickness (Including Teachers)</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
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

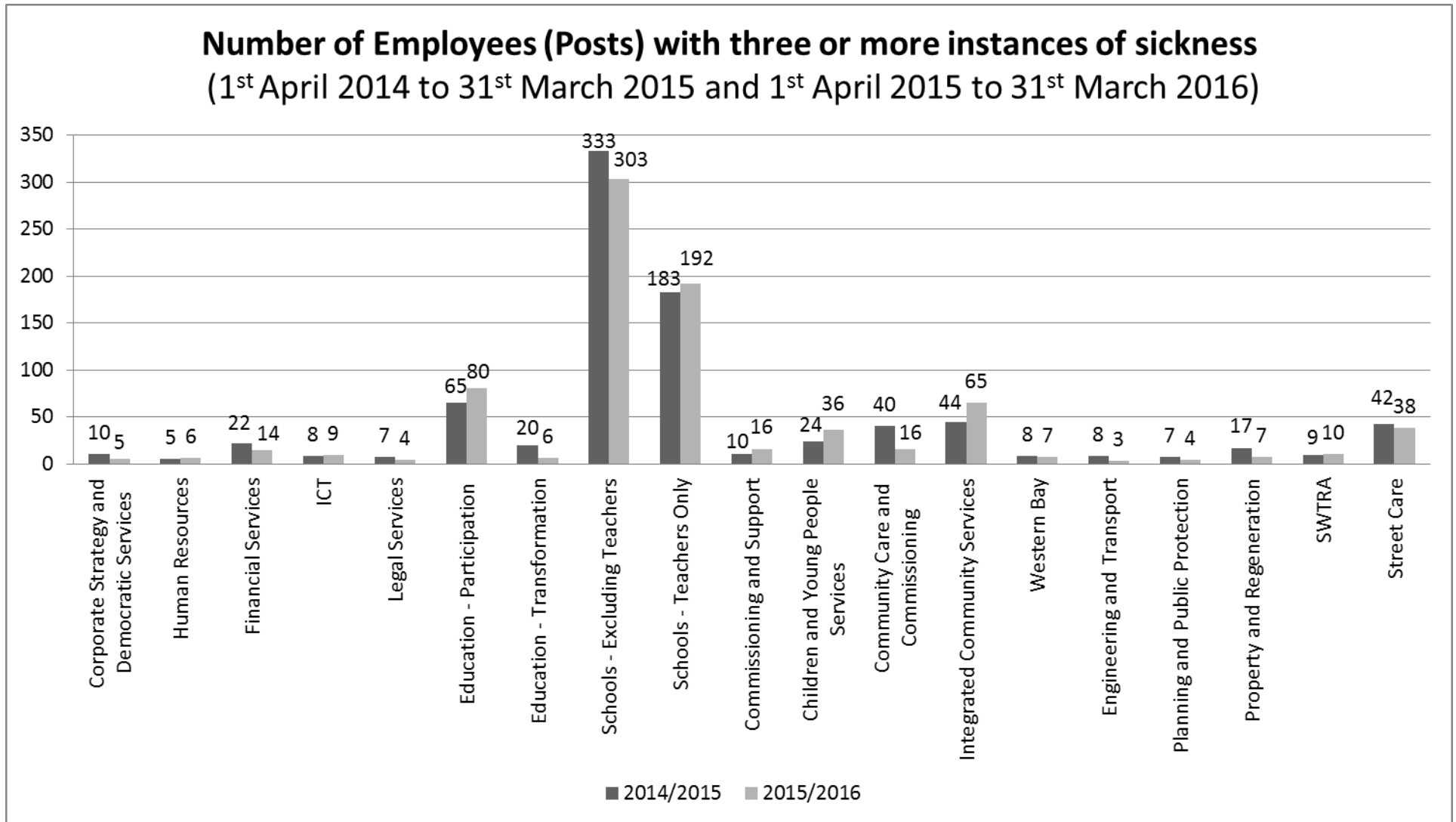
**TABLE 6**



**TABLE 7**

<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>HEAD COUNT</b>	<b>FULL TIME EQUIVALENT</b>
HUMAN RESOURCES	75	67
CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	80	74
FINANCIAL SERVICES	178	162
ICT	100	97
LEGAL SERVICES	91	67
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES	353	293
COMMISSIONING & SUPPORT SERVICES	194	183
COMMUNITY CARE AND COMMISSIONING SERVICES / INTEGRATED COMMUNITY SERVICES / WESTERN BAY	680	503
ENGINEERING AND TRANSPORT	171	127
PLANNING & PUBLIC PROTECTION	95	90
PROPERTY AND REGENERATION	143	105
STREETCARE SERVICES	548	470
SOUTH WALES TRUNK ROAD AGENCY	103	100
PARTICIPATION	1016	471
TRANSFORMATION	134	107
SCHOOLS (Exc Teachers)	1713	1009
TEACHERS	1168	1104
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6842</b>	<b>5031</b>

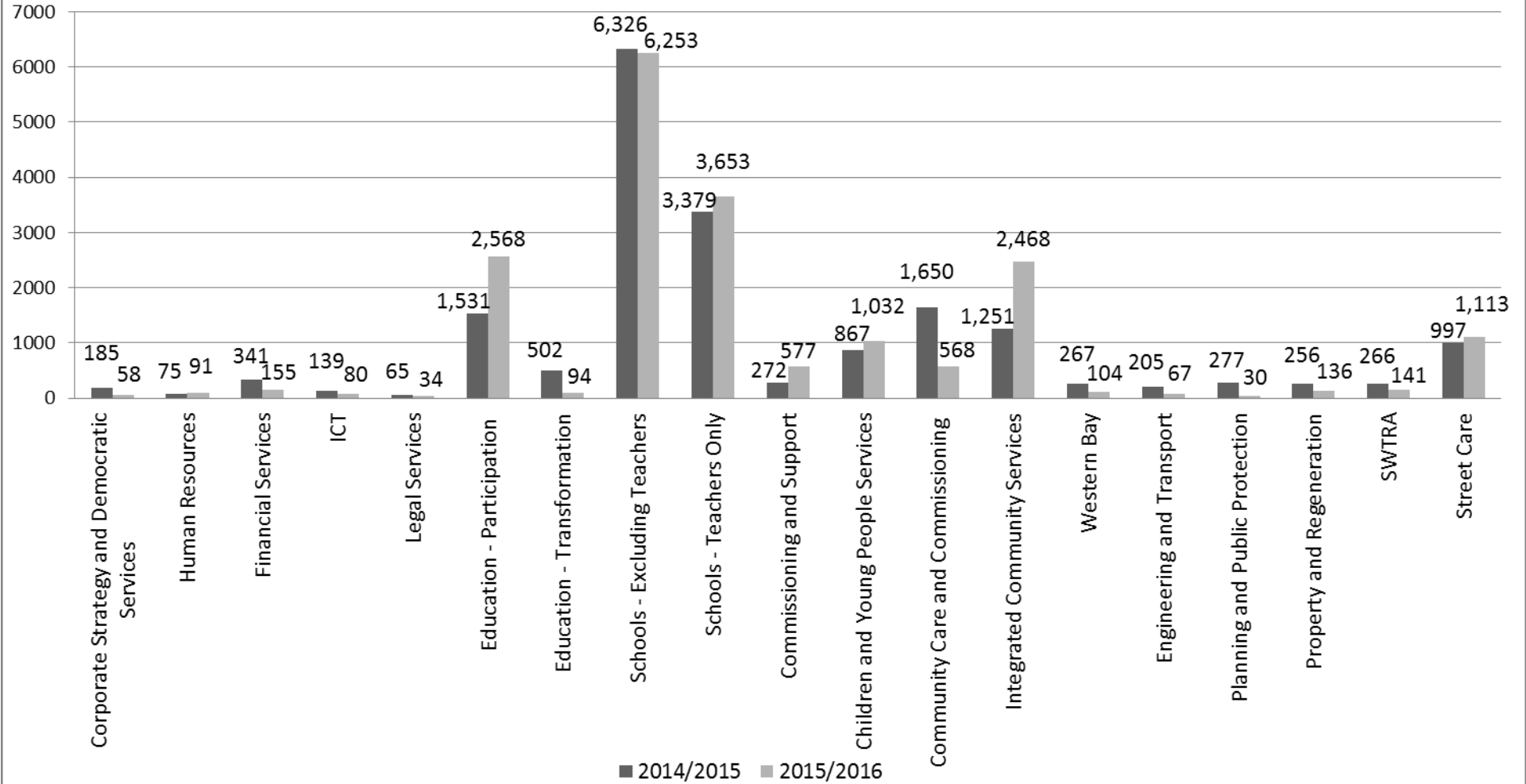
**TABLE 8**



**TABLE 9**

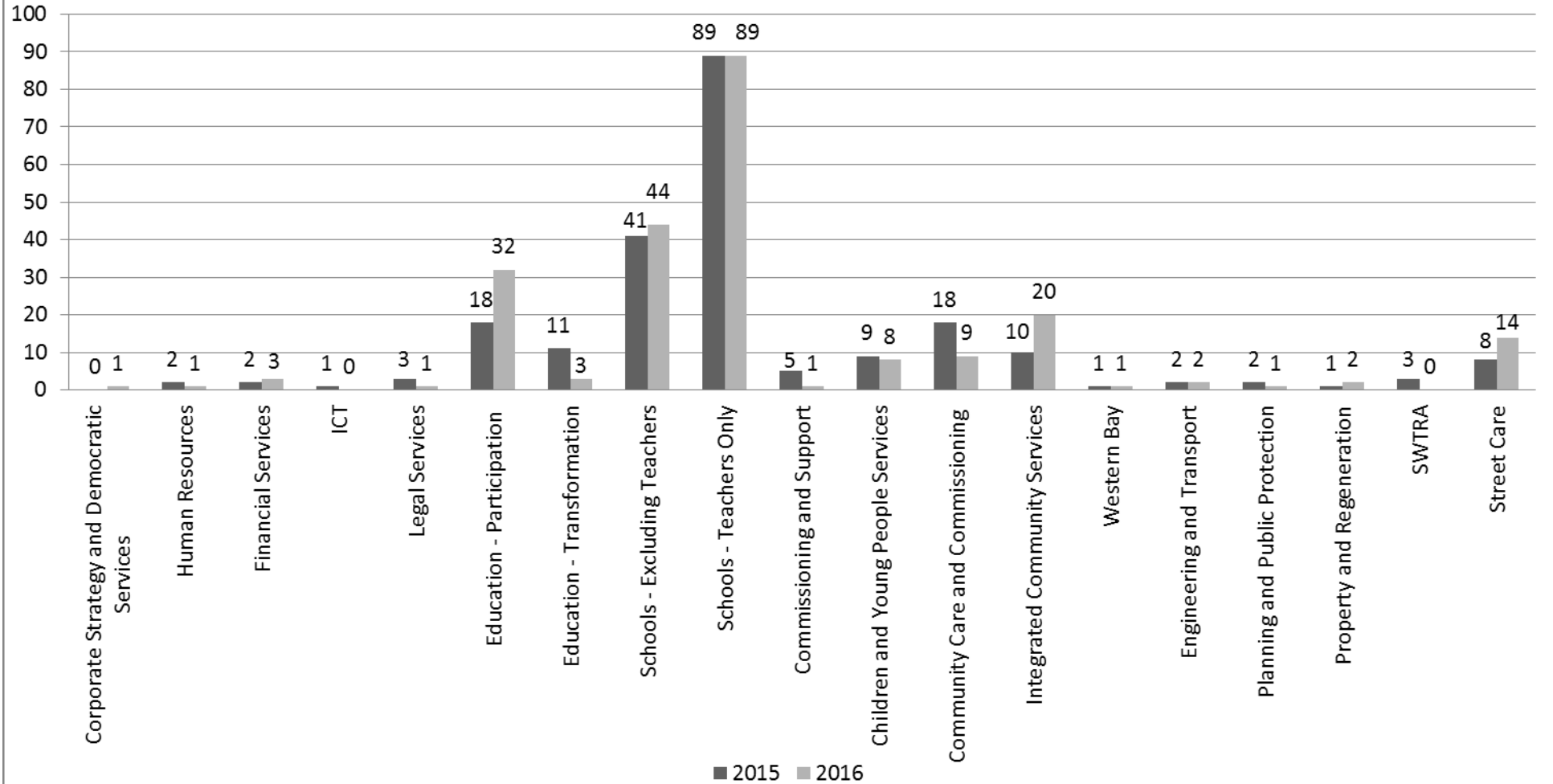
## Number of Working Days Lost for Employees with three or more instances of sickness

(1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016)



**TABLE 10**

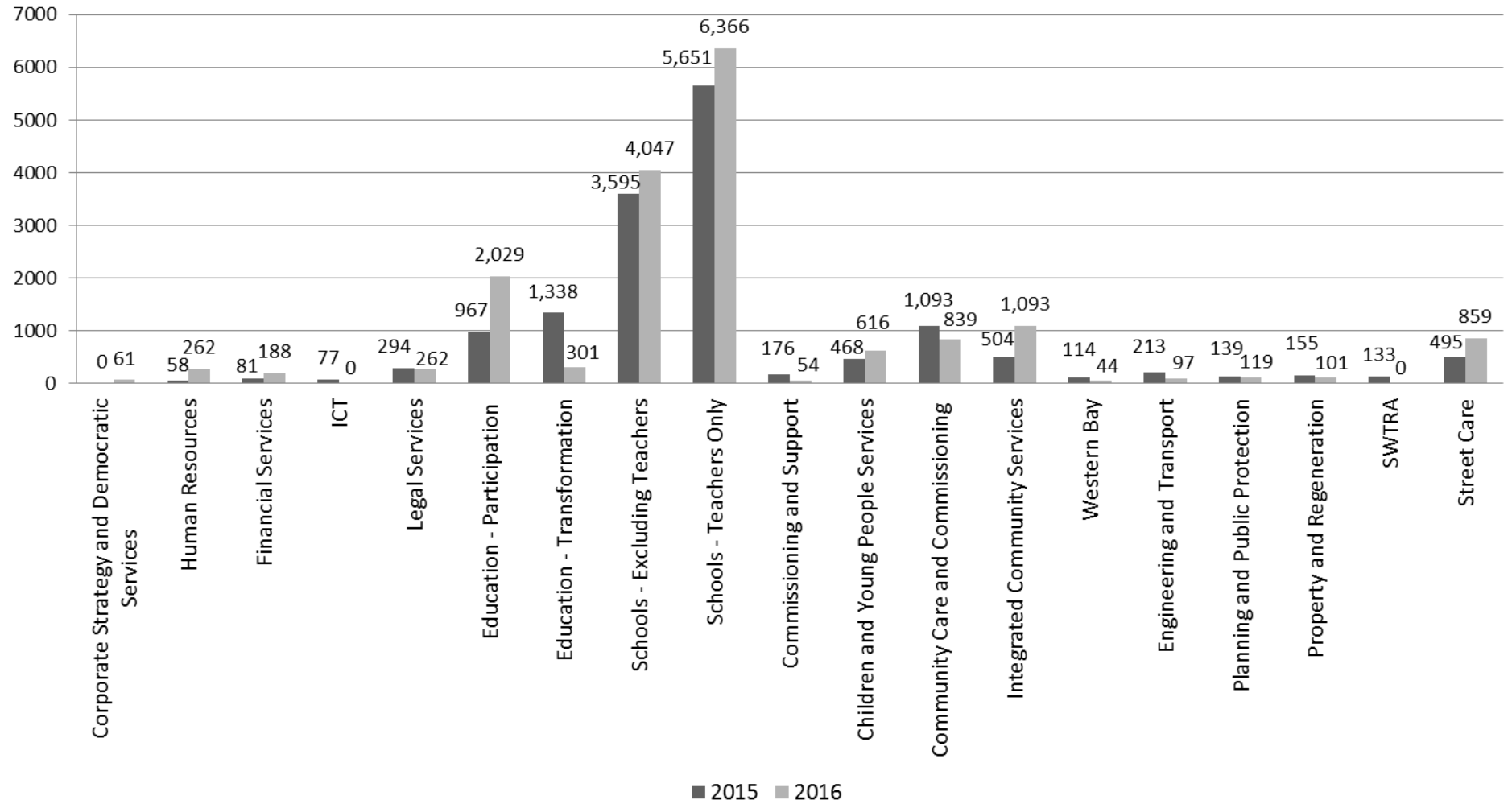
**Number of Employees (Posts) consecutively sick  
for 28 Calendar Days or more  
(as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016)**



**TABLE 11**

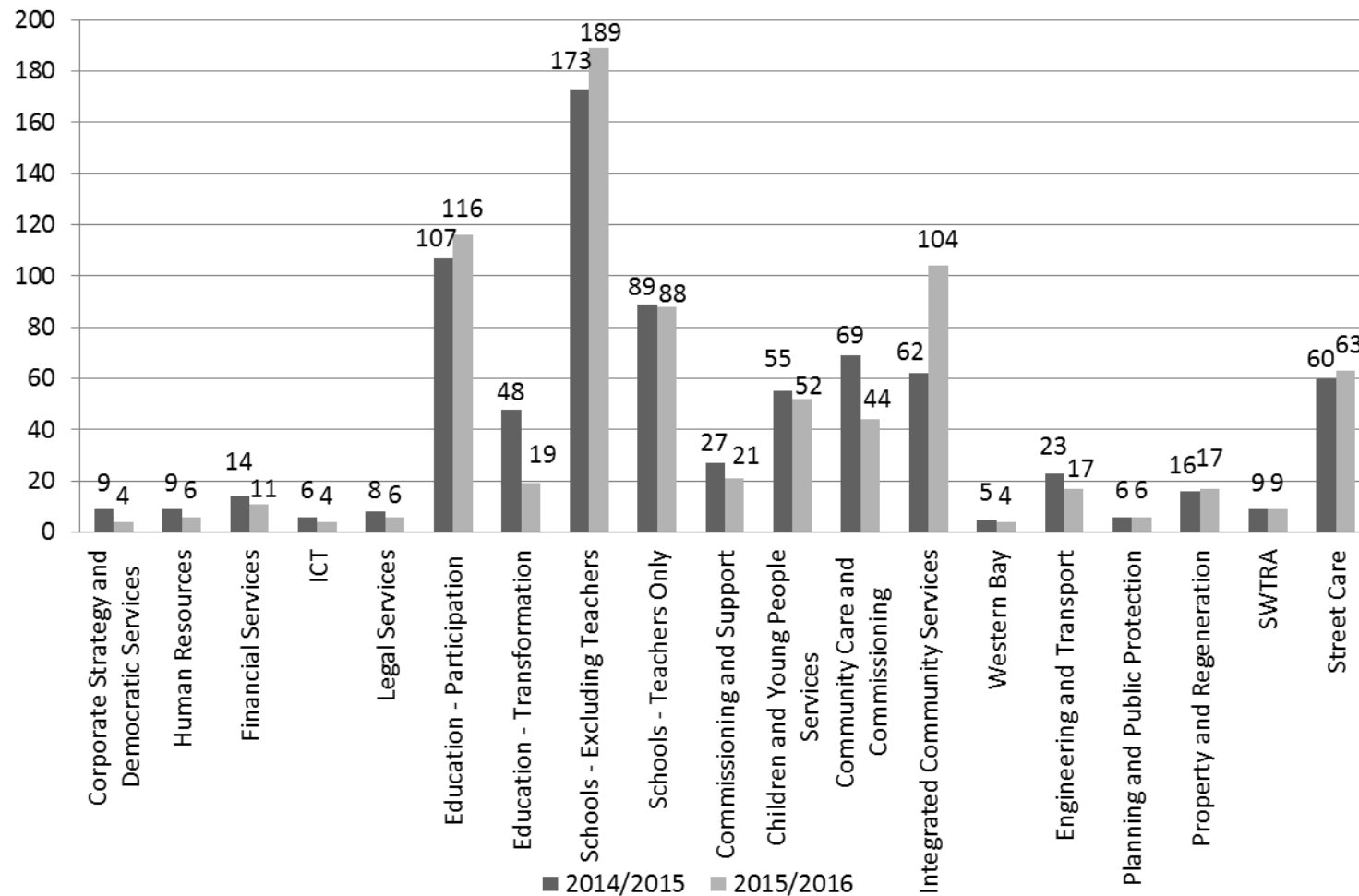


**Number of Working Days/Shifts lost for those employees who are  
consecutively sick for 28 calendar days or more  
(As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016)**



**TABLE 12**

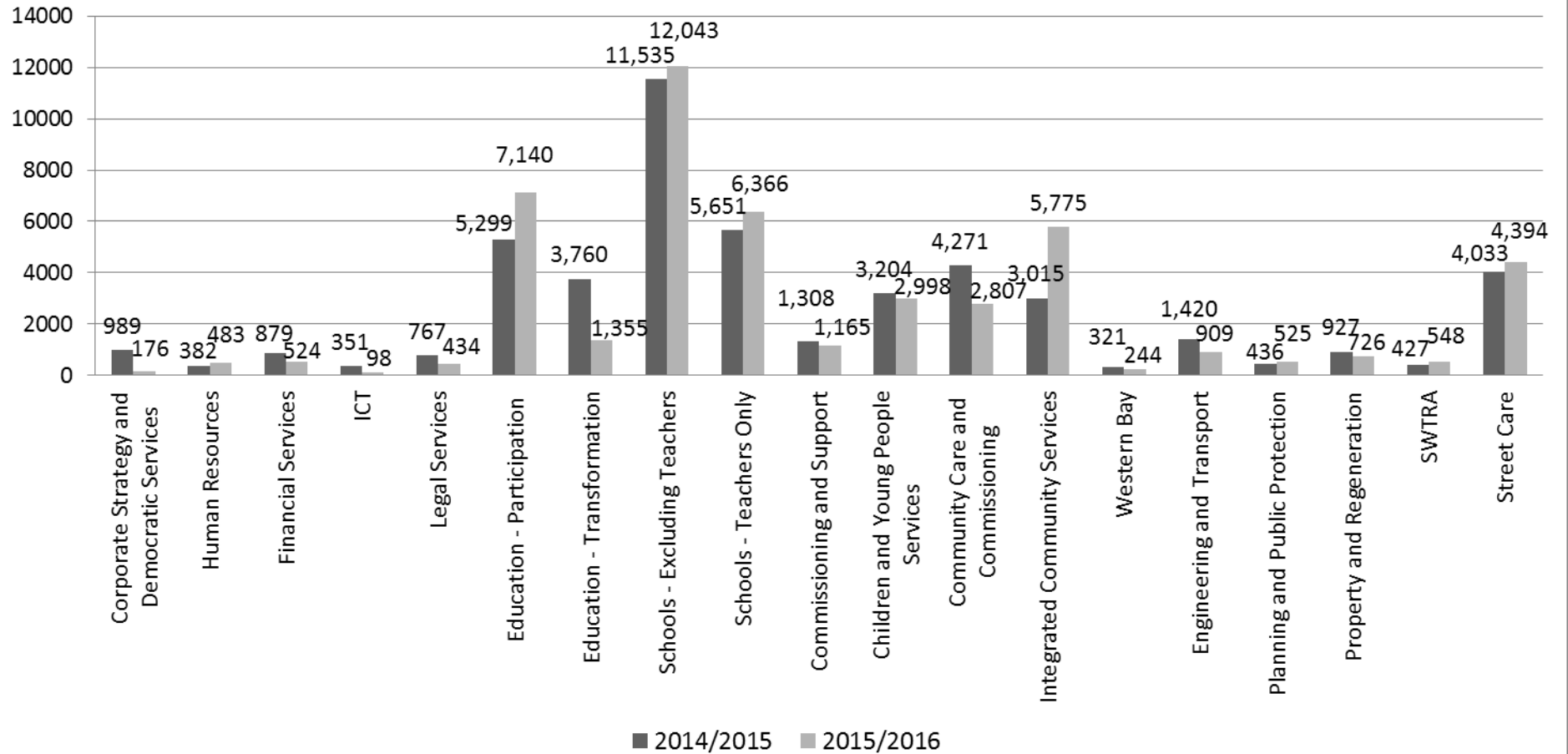
**Number of Employees (Posts) consecutively sick for 28 Calendar Days or more**  
 (1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016)



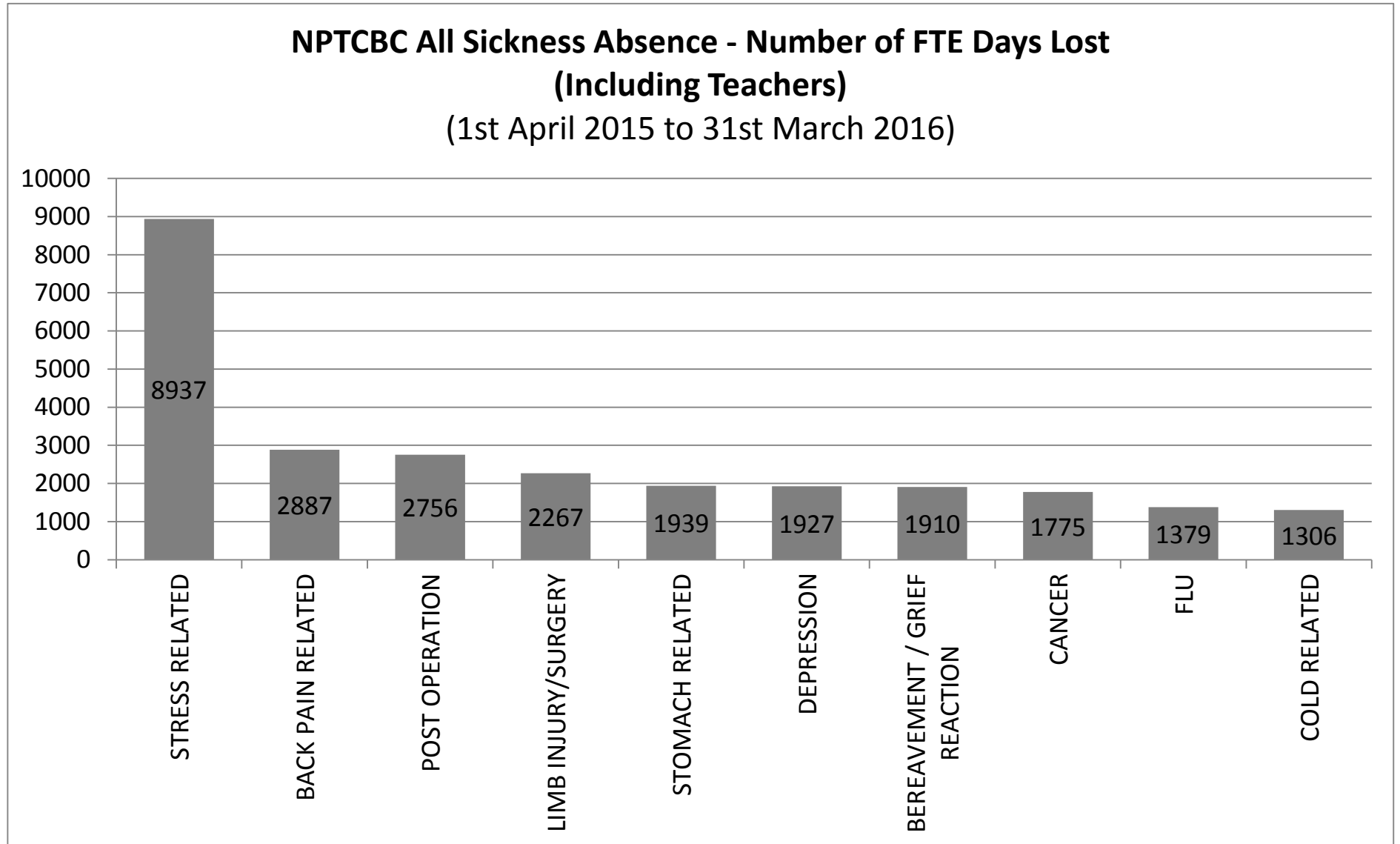
**TABLE 13**

## Number of Working Days/Shifts lost for those employees who are consecutively sick for 28 Calendar Days or more

(1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015 and 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016)

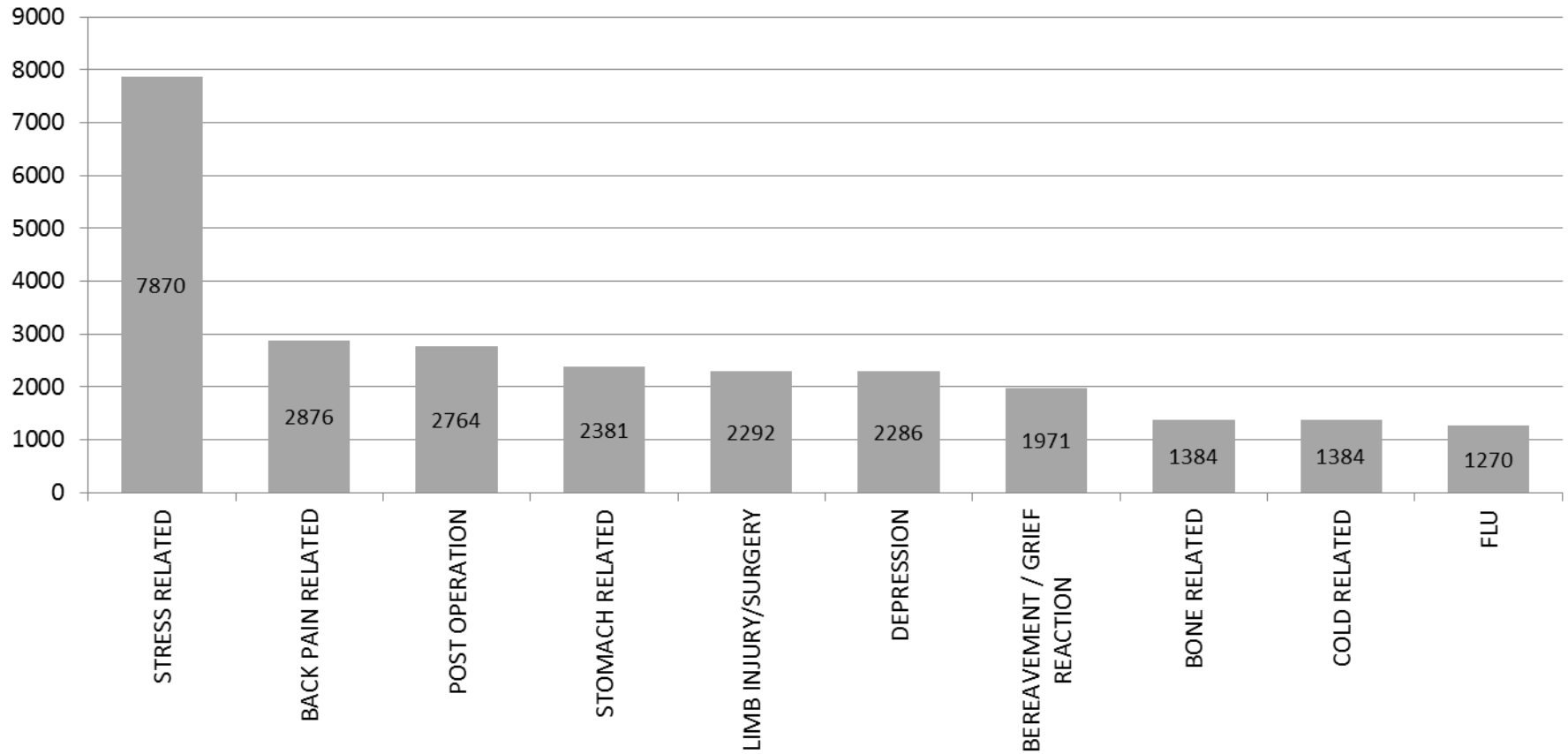


**TABLE 14**



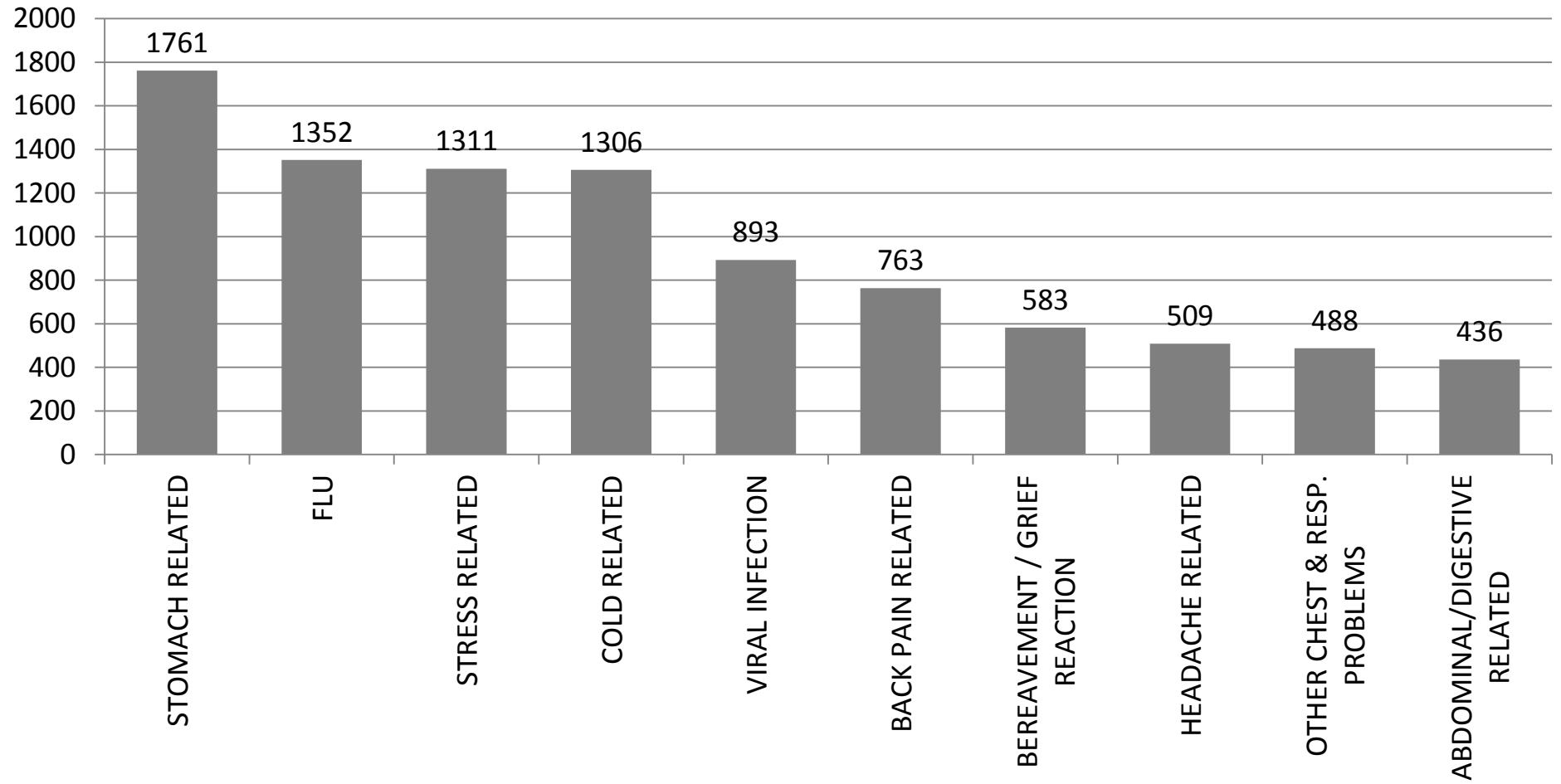
**TABLE 15**

**NPTCBC All Sickness Absence - Number of FTE Days Lost  
(Including Teachers)  
(1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015)**



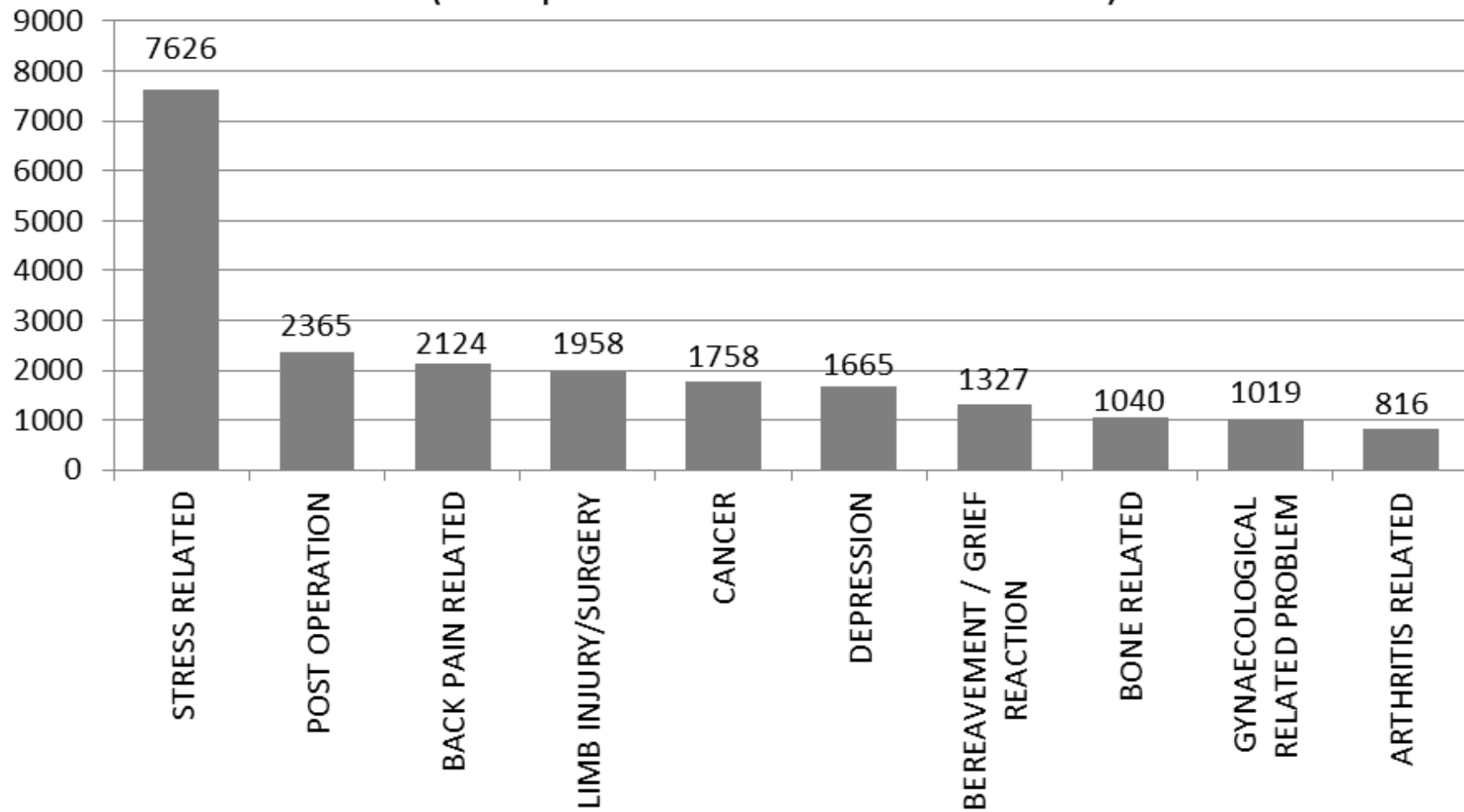
**TABLE 16**

**NPTCBC Short Term Sickness Absence - Number of FTE Days Lost  
(Including Teachers)  
(1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016)**



**TABLE 17**

**NPTCBC Long Term Sickness Absence - Number of FTE Days Lost  
(Including Teachers)  
(1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016)**



**TABLE 18**

*Ill Health Leavers 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015*

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Resignation (Health Reasons)</b>	<b>Ill Health Retirement Tier 1</b>	<b>Ill Health Retirement Tier 2</b>	<b>Ill Health Retirement Tier 3</b>	<b>Dismissal - Inability Attend Work On A Regular Basis</b>
CHEX	0	0	0	0	0
ELLL	1	3	0	0	1
SCHOOLS	1	5	0	1	4
SSHH	1	6	0	0	4
ENV	1	2	0	0	2
FCS	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>

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

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Resignation (Health Reasons)</b>	<b>Ill Health Retirement Tier 1</b>	<b>Ill Health Retirement Tier 2</b>	<b>Ill Health Retirement Tier 3</b>	<b>Dismissal - Inability Attend Work On A Regular Basis</b>
CHEX	0	1	0	0	0
ELLL	3	5	0	0	3
SCHOOLS	3	1	1	0	4
SSHH	0	2	1	2	4
ENV	0	7	0	0	2
FCS	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>