



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	2008/09 Absence Rates
Date:	22 May 2009
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
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Purpose

This report:

- Provides sickness absence data for the Council and its seven departments for the financial year 2008/09.
- Compares performance for the financial year 2008/09 to the financial year 2007/08
- Proposes future target for reduction.

Relevant Background Information

In 2007/08 the average number of days lost per full time employee was 13.91. On 23 May 08, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed an overall council target reduction in absence of two days by 2010/11, i.e. to reduce to 12 average days absence by 2010/11.

Key Issues

- At the end of the financial year 2008/09 the average number of day's sickness absence per full time employee was 11.22 days.
- A robust, fair and consistent approach to managing attendance has resulted in a reduction of four and a half days sickness absence per full time employee since 2005/06 as follows:

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
15.75	15.08	13.91	11.22

- The council has reduced its absence by 5,618 days, or 17.16%, this year.
- This year the figure has reduced by over two and a half average days per person (2.66 days or 19.12%)

- Nearly 40% of staff had no absence during 2008/09 compared with 34.85% for the same time last year.
- 13.34% of staff were absent from work on a long term basis compared with 17.48% for the same time last year (more than 20 consecutive working days)
- Long term sickness accounted for 60.18 % of the council's sickness absence compared with nearly 70% for the same time last year.
- Appendix 1 provides absence rates at corporate, department and service levels for this year and last year.
- The size of a department has a significant impact on the overall sickness figures and so information on the size of each department is also included in Appendix 1.

Benchmark information

The council's figure of 11.22 compares as follows;

Belfast City Council average days absence 2008/09	11.22
Northern Ireland Housing Executive average days absence 2008/09	13.22
*Northern Ireland Councils average days absence for the sector 2007/08	13.70
*Northern Ireland Health Service average days absence 2007/08	13.20
*Northern Ireland Civil Service average days absence 2007/08	12.90

*Members should note:

- Except for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive comparisons have been made with 2007/08 figures as 2008/09 were not yet available for the other organisations.
- The NI Civil Service figure does not include industrial staff.

Targets for reduction

From 05/06 to 08/09, the council has reduced the average number of day's sickness absence per full time employee from 15.75 to 11.22. The Council has exceeded the target set by Members in May 08 of achieving an average of 12 days by 2010.

Members should note that this level of reduction will not be sustained over the next few years as many of the long term absence issues have been addressed and the lower the absence rate the harder it is to reduce. However, in order to sustain the downward momentum, it is recommended that the Council set a target of 10.50 average days to be achieved by March 2011.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the year end performance figures and agree the above approach to the target.

APPENDIX 1	Number of employees (FTE at quarter four)	% of BCC'S workforce	Average days absence per fte employee at year end 2008/09	Average days absence per fte employee at year end 2007/08
BCC	2411		11.22	13.91
Chief Executive's	84.63	3.51%	11.41	9.31
Corporate Communications	19.09	0.79%	18.88	11.84
Committee & Member Services	32.81	1.36%	10.86	14.84
Secretariat and Business Supp	17.5	0.73%	8.97	1.52
Good Relations	15.24	0.63%	6.21	2.84
Legal Services	18.57	0.77%	4.01	4.60
Corporate Services	503.89	20.90%	9.32	12.60
Human Resources (includes BIS)	67.58	2.80%	6.02	7.72
Financial Services	23.5	0.97%	14.06	10.28
ISB	117.23	4.86%	6.98	10.03
Facilities Management	234.85	9.74%	11.38	16.45
Directorate Support (includes BDM)	42.73	1.77%	9.69	11.73
Audit, Gov & Risk Services	12	0.50%	2.83	1.18
Projects & Corporate Systems	6	0.25%	3.42	12.50
Health & Environmental Services	822.68	34.12%	11.21	13.90
Environmental Health Services	167.23	6.94%	9.65	10.78
Building Control	73.18	3.03%	5.74	8.15
Waste Management	88.22	3.66%	12.61	10.81
Directorate Support	18.03	0.75%	4.87	7.88
Cleansing	476	19.74%	12.59	16.61
Parks and Leisure	643.71	26.70%	13.49	17.70
Leisure	306.24	12.70%	14.94	16.04
Parks & Amenities	325.08	13.48%	12.50	19.70
Directorate Support	12.4	0.51%	3.83	3.75
Development Department	281.04	11.66%	10.12	10.62
Economic Initiatives	52.65	2.18%	10.66	5.08
Community	120.9	5.01%	12.57	13.05
Waterfront & Ulster Hall	62.32	2.58%	6.14	11.48
Directorate Support	45.18	1.87%	8.29	11.46
Core Improvement	56.77	2.35%	9.79	7.34
Improvement Unit	23.86	0.99%	4.93	3.87
Corporate Policy Unit	4	0.16%	3.31	0.42
Estates Management	8.4	0.35%	9.82	18.78
Procurement & Project Management	20.51	0.85%	16.70	6.77

