

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - HUMAN RESOURCES AND
CUSTOMER SERVICE****SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE AS AT 30TH JUNE 2012****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Members about Nottinghamshire County Council's performance in relation to current levels of sickness absence across its workforce.
2. To seek the endorsement by Members to the Employee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan for 2012/13, which sets out the key in-year initiatives for the further improvement of attendance levels.

Information and Advice**Background:**

3. One of the Council's strategic priorities is to reduce the number of working days lost due to employee sickness absence and at the Personnel Committee meeting on 13th June 2012 Members received data and analysis of the Council's performance against this key corporate performance indicator which set out the situation as at 31st March 2012.
4. This demonstrated that sickness levels across the County Council have improved gradually over the past two years. At the end of 2011/12 the average number of days absence per employee had reduced to 8.43 days per annum which exceeded the target set by the County Council for 2011/12 of 8.50 days sickness per employee.
5. The Council's current performance target for 2012/13 is **8.25 days** absence per employee per annum.

Current Performance:

6. The data set out in detail in **appendix A** to this report reflects the position at the end of the first quarter of 2012/13 (Q1 that is April to June 2012). This indicates that the current level is **8.16 days** sickness per employee on average, an improvement of **0.27 days** on the previous quarter and **0.09 days** above the current in year target.
7. A further quarterly update, setting out the situation as at 30th September 2012, will be submitted to Personnel Committee at its next meeting on 7th November

2012.

8. The absence reasons report for Quarter 1 2012/13 (**appendix A**), shows that, in common with all local authorities, absence attributed to stress and stress related illness continues to be the single greatest cause of sickness absence in the Council, having now stabilised over 2011/12 at around 20-21%. Stress currently accounts for **20.33%** of all absence, a decrease from **20.65%** at the previous quarter.
9. The Council's current Employee Health and Wellbeing action plan to support the delivery of its Wellbeing and Attendance Management Strategy therefore has a significant emphasis on building individual resilience and managing stress.

Employee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2012/13:

10. The continuing trend of falling sickness absence levels has been achieved by a refocus on working with managers to build employee health and well-being and encouraging employees to make lifestyle choices to feel fitter, healthier and more resilient at work.
11. In order to build on the progress made to date, the refocused Employee Health and Wellbeing action plan for 2012/13 is linked to the new leadership and management competencies in order to ensure that managers take responsibility and are accountable for proactively promoting a healthy and safe working environment.
12. The action plan for 2012/13 includes:
 - ongoing support for managers to provide a healthy and safe working environment to prevent and reduce absence
 - help and advice for employees to build their resilience to change and uncertainty, preventing stress becoming an issue that results in absence from work
 - reducing long term absence levels by helping all managers to rehabilitate employees who are off sick back into work as soon as possible and to support them to remain at work productively
 - continuing to provide lifestyle information and advice to employees both on-line and through our "Frontline" magazine and through targeted events on a variety of health and well-being topics.
13. It is anticipated that, with further development, the ongoing delivery of the action plan throughout the current year will further reduce absence levels. This will include further development of the partnership working already entered into between HR and Public Health as part of the ongoing promotion and delivery of the employee health and wellbeing agenda to NCC managers and employees.

15. HR will also continue to work positively with the trade unions through the Joint Wellbeing and Attendance Management Working Group to engage employees in taking personal responsibility for their own health and resilience at work.
15. The detailed action plan, which was considered by Corporate Leadership Team on 4th September 2012, shows progress to date and is set out as **appendix B** to this report.

Other Options Considered

No other options are currently being considered.

Reasons for Recommendations

The recommendations in this report will enable Members to review the current levels of performance and direction of travel set out in this report and the actions that are in place to maintain a level of performance which meets the Council's identified targets and supports continuous improvement in levels of attendance across the Council.

Regular update reports will be submitted on a quarterly basis.

Statutory and Policy Implications

This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Human Resources Implications

The human resources implications are implicit in the body of the report. The trade unions have been engaged in the delivery of the Employee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan through the Joint Wellbeing and Attendance Management Working Group

Trades Union Comments

Trades union colleagues have been consulted on the contents of the Personnel Committee report and the approach being taken by the County Council to Employee Health and Wellbeing. A joint officer and trades union working group has considered the issues and suggested approach in some detail. The trades union side welcome the overall reduction in absence levels but would be concerned if this has been achieved because employees are attending work when they are not fit to be at work. The trades union have also indicated that they are not surprised by the level of

absence due to stress. The trades union response is available in full as a background paper to this report.

Equalities Implications

The Council's Attendance Management policy and procedure applies equally to all directly employed staff. There is separate policy which is applicable to all Community Schools and is recommended to all schools with different governance arrangements. These procedures contain guidance which ensures that appropriate management of the sickness absence of employees with a disability complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Financial Implications

The financial cost of sickness to any large organisation will clearly be significant and, along with increased productivity and engagement, there are significant savings to be drawn down from reduced absence rates.

It remains as yet impracticable to establish the true cost of absence to the Council as this is a complex calculation which needs to take into account a range of related factors, including the cost of providing cover in front line service areas.

Following the migration of all employee data into the Business Management System post Phase 2 implementation, it is anticipated that, during the next financial year, one of the benefits arising will be that the system will be able to provide the range of information necessary to inform a detailed analysis and accurate breakdown of the actual cost.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 1) Note the current levels of performance and the trend of continuing performance improvement
- 2) Endorse the Employee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan for 2012/13

Marjorie Toward

Service Director HR and Customer Service

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Claire Gollin, Group Manager HR, on 0115 9773837 or claire.gollin@nottsgov.uk

Constitutional Comments (KK 15/8/2012)

The proposals in this report are within the remit of Personnel Committee.

Financial Comments (MB 17/08/12)

There are no specific financial implications arising from the report. As stated above, planned development of the Business Management System will provide more comprehensive financial information.

Background Papers

Trades union comments

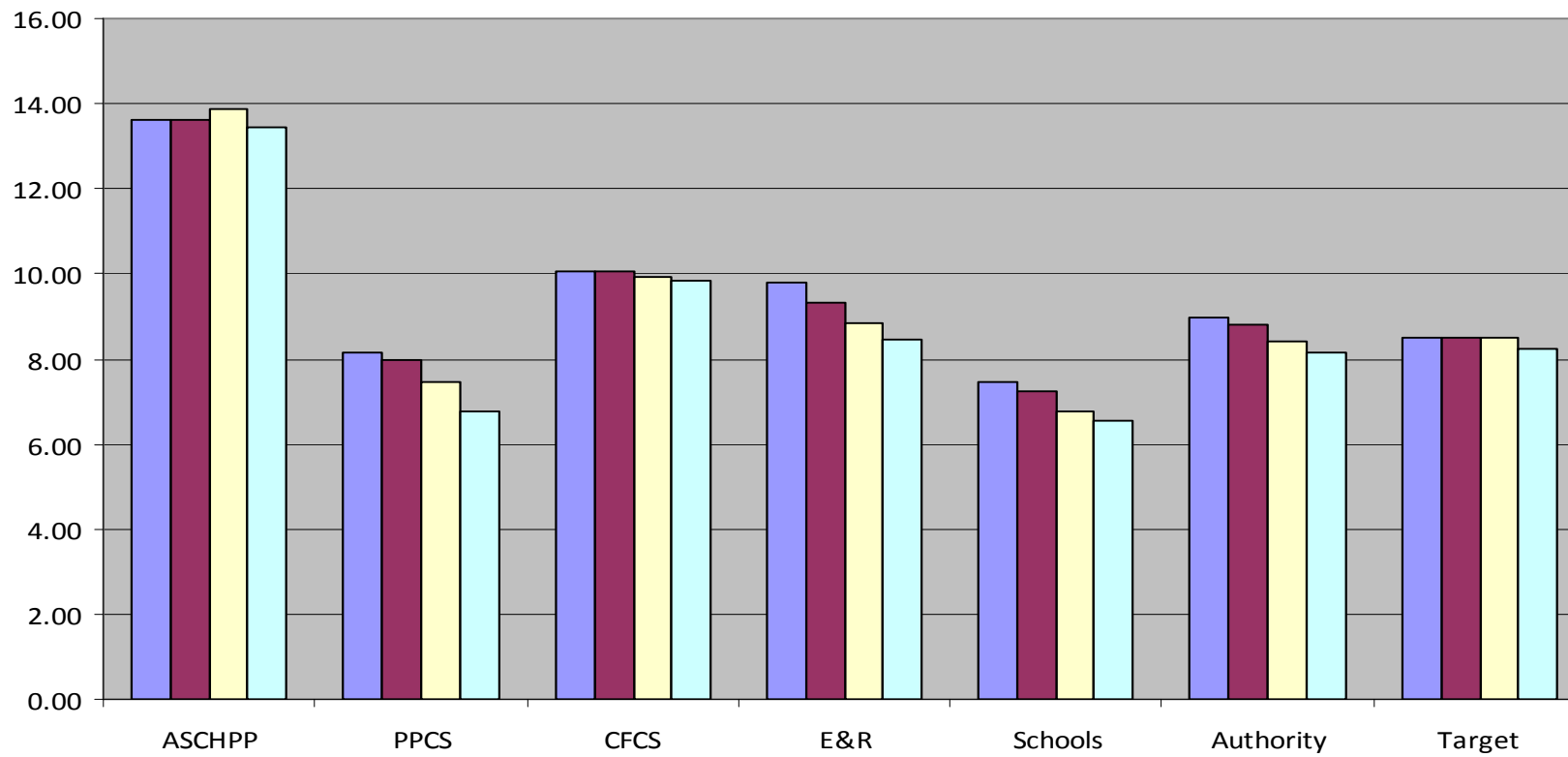
Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All

Appendix A:

Performance (rolling basis):

Average number of days sick per employee for the authority by department



■ October 2010- September 2011

■ December 2010 - November 2011

■ April 2011 - Mar 2012

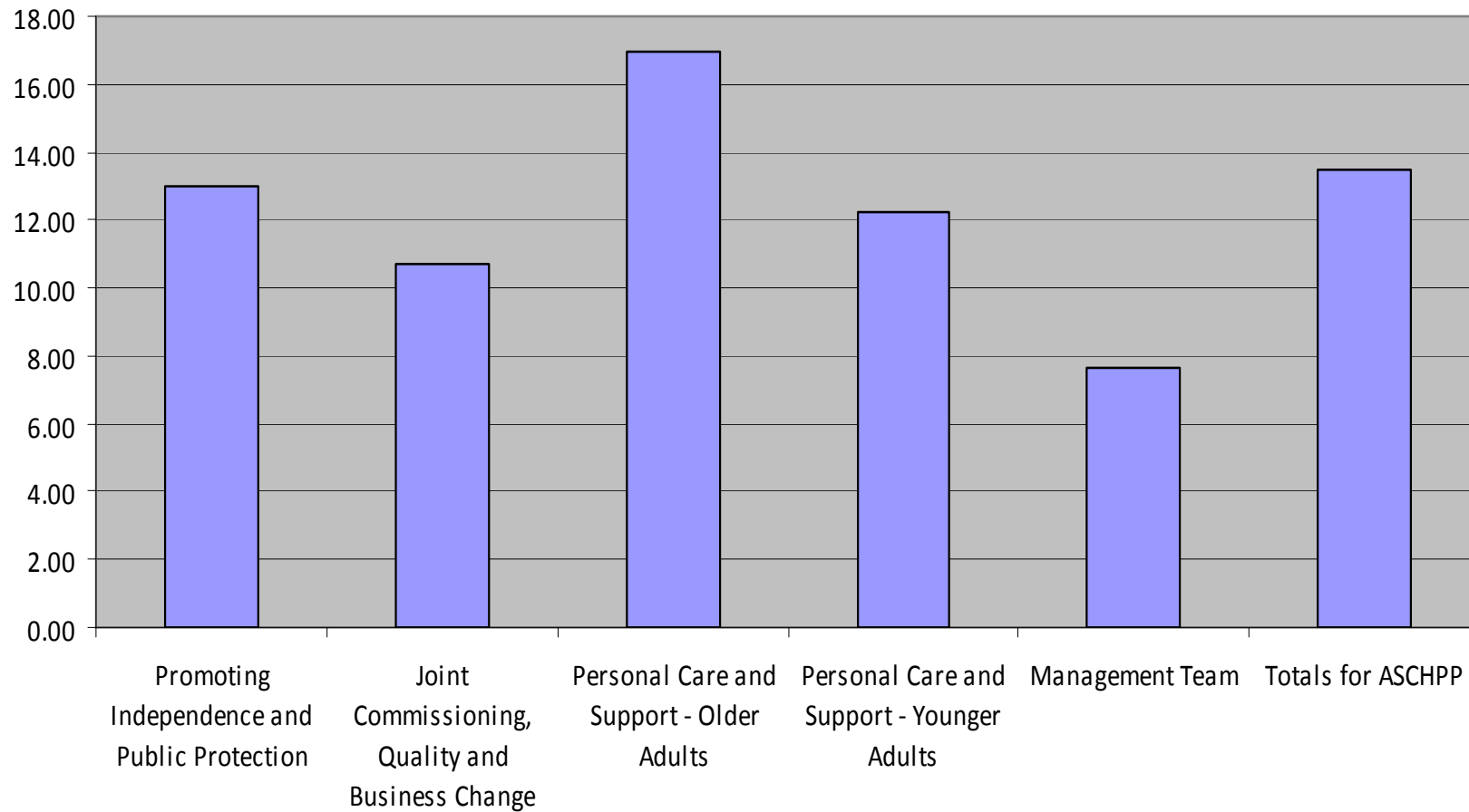
■ July 2011 - Jun 2012

Performance (rolling basis)	October 2010- September 2011	December 2010 - November 2011	April 2011 - Mar 2012	July 2011 - Jun 2012
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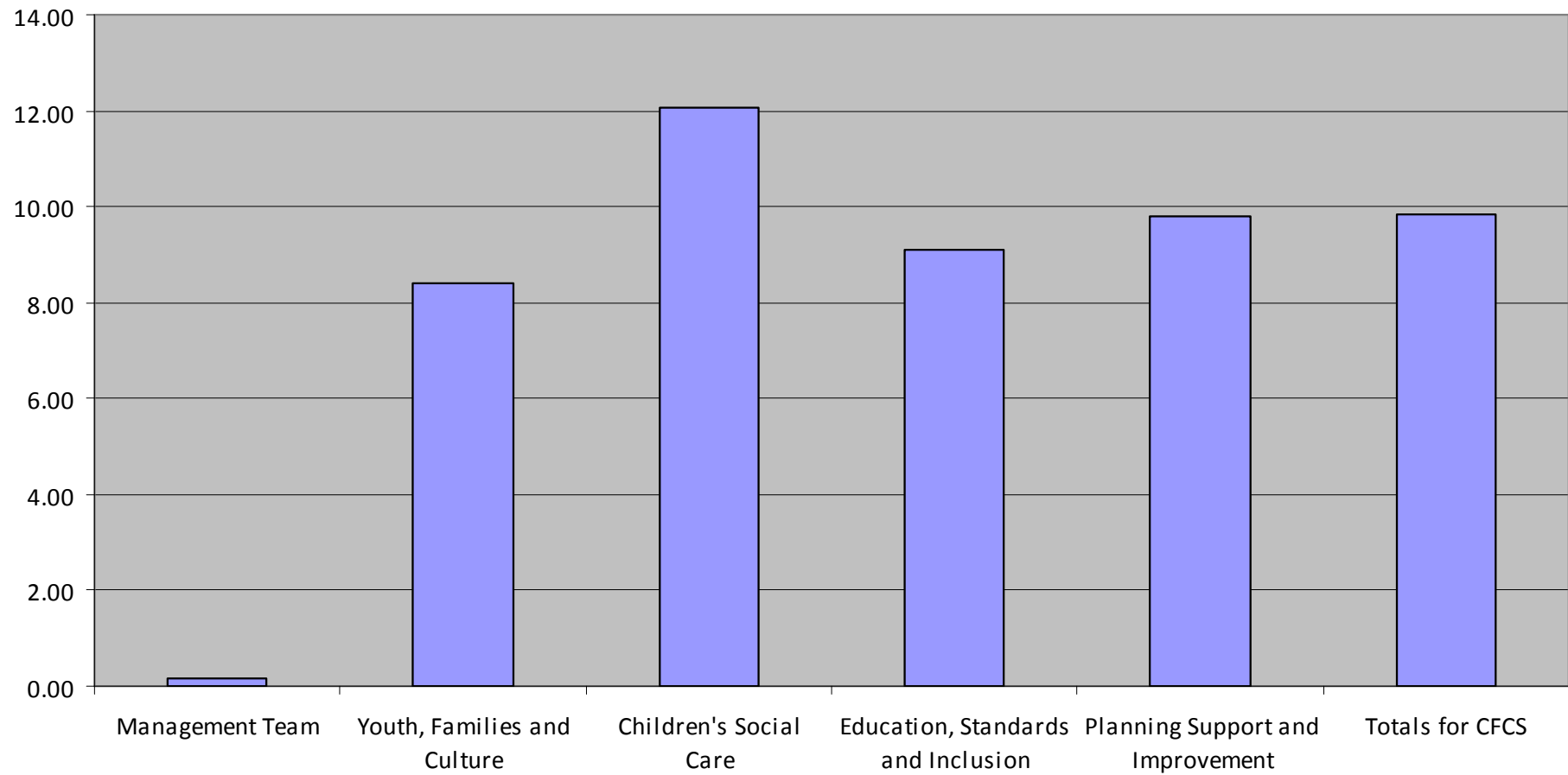
Department:

ASCHPP	13.61	13.63	13.86	13.45
PPCS	8.15	7.99	7.47	6.75
CFCS	10.07	10.05	9.94	9.84
E&R	9.81	9.32	8.85	8.45
Schools	7.45	7.25	6.77	6.54
Authority	8.99	8.81	8.43	8.16
Target	8.50	8.50	8.50	8.25

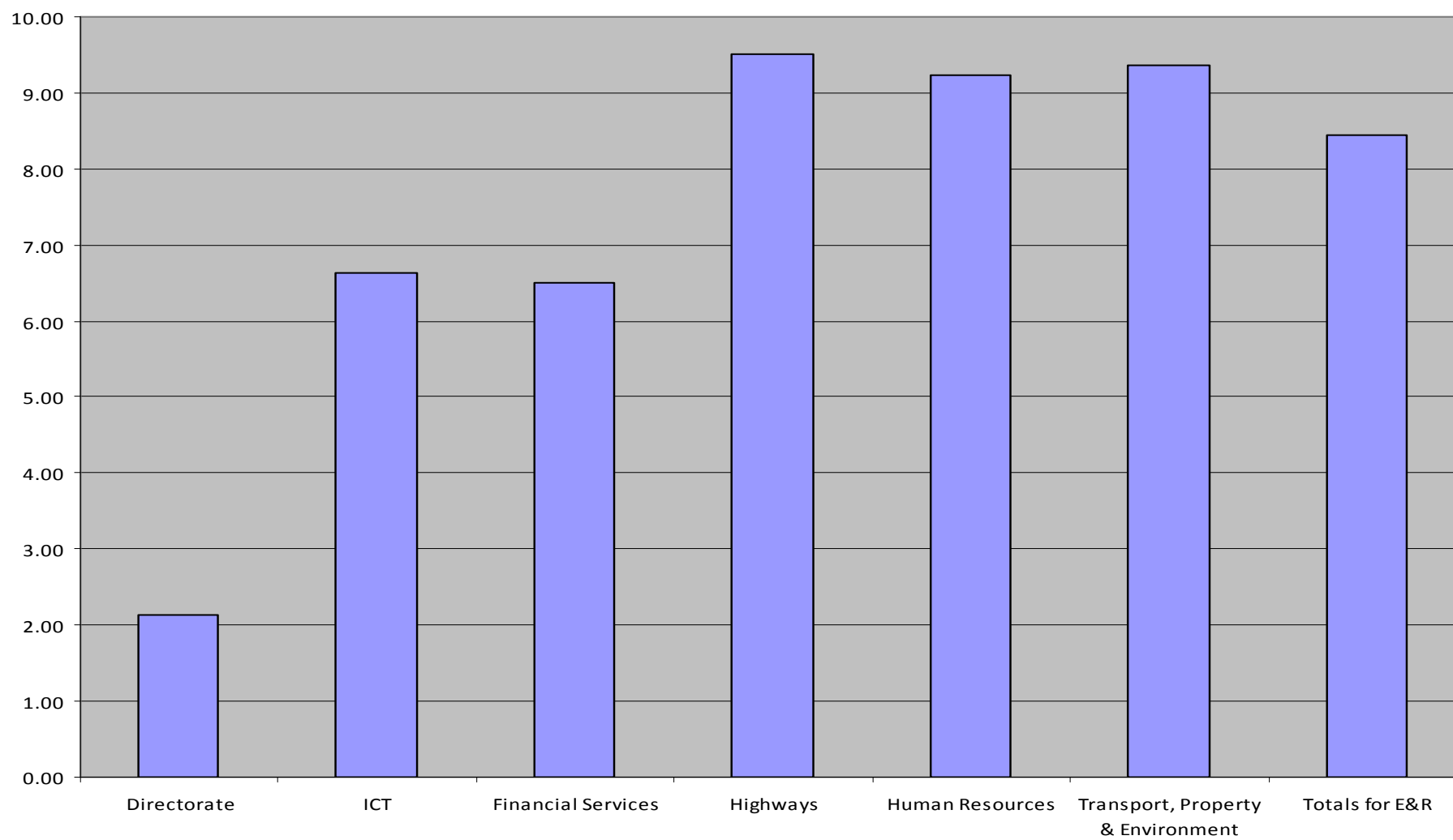
ASCHPP
July 2011 - June 2012



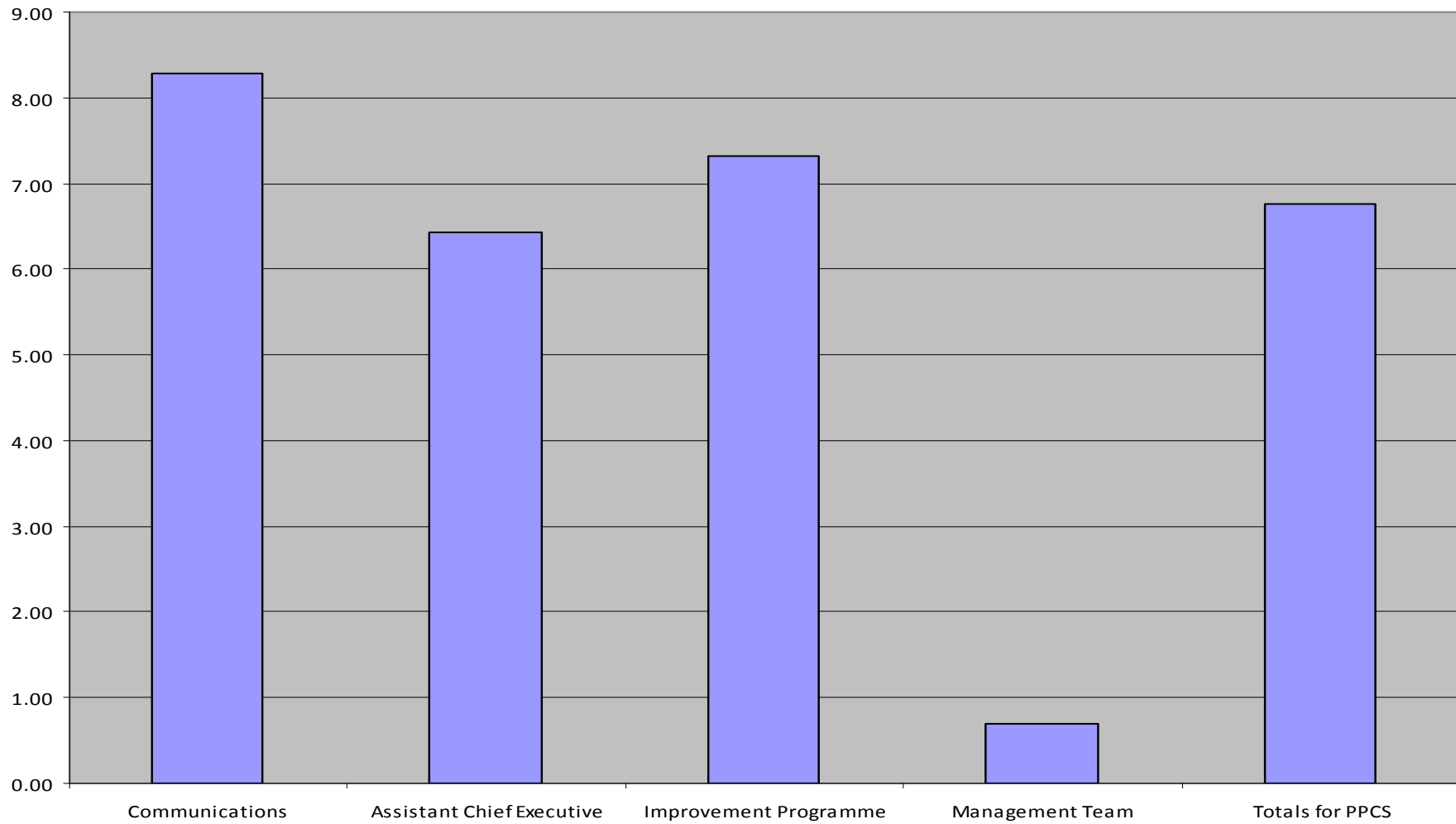
CFCS
July 2011 - June 2012



Environment & Resources
July 2011 - June 2012



PPCS
July 2011 - June 2012



Reasons for Absence 1st April 2012 – 30th June 2012:

	BACK PROBLEM	OTHER MUSC PROBLEM	STRESS / DEPRESSION	COLD / FLU / SORE THROAT	HEADACHE / MIGRAINE	OPERATION / POST OP	CHEST / RESPIRATORY	PREGNANCY RELATED	STOMACH / DIGESTION	HEART / BLOOD PRESSURE	INFECTION	SKIN DISORDER	OTHER	NOT SUPPLIED
Adult Social Care & Health	8.51%	13.21%	21.39%	7.33%	1.58%	16.35%	2.70%	1.36%	7.15%	2.25%	2.76%	0.44%	12.09%	2.88%
Child Families & Cultural Services	3.13%	10.66%	29.43%	8.03%	1.81%	15.39%	3.59%	1.10%	6.92%	1.39%	2.54%	0.29%	14.55%	1.16%
Environment & Resources	9.34%	15.09%	13.71%	7.38%	1.23%	18.77%	2.37%	1.21%	7.23%	2.51%	2.80%	0.28%	16.16%	1.92%
Policy, Planning & Corp Services	4.08%	4.77%	40.37%	10.61%	3.71%	8.64%	2.10%	0.00%	11.06%	2.68%	2.92%	0.26%	3.65%	5.13%
Schools	6.28%	10.60%	19.46%	10.37%	2.27%	17.15%	2.75%	1.66%	9.26%	1.74%	3.03%	0.38%	12.63%	2.42%
Totals	6.68%	11.64%	20.33%	9.15%	1.96%	16.97%	2.78%	1.45%	8.35%	1.91%	2.89%	0.36%	13.24%	2.28%

**Distribution of sickness type
Jul 2011 - Jun 2012**

