

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance Policy and Resources Committee
DATE	4 December 2014
ACTING DIRECTOR	Ewan Sutherland
TITLE OF REPORT	Sickness Absence Update
REPORT NUMBER:	CG/14/156
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report updates Committee on sickness absence performance across the organisation.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee is requested to:

- a) note the sickness absence rate across the Council and the breakdown of sickness absence by Directorate as detailed in Appendix 1
- b) agree from 1 April 2015, the sickness reporting of statistics will only include the new method of calculation

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The main financial implications arising from sickness absence are when alternative resources are required for cover purposes. This is normally in the form of overtime and agency/relief/supply cover.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 **Analysis of the Sickness Statistics**

The number of average days lost to sickness per employee as at 30 September 2014 was 8.9 days working time over the previous 12 months or 3.4 % of working days lost. The overall rate can be viewed in Appendix 1 with a breakdown of this rate by Directorate shown at Appendices 2 (a) and (b).

The recent trend for sickness absence across the Council on the basis of the new calculation has been steady over the past 12 months, which is satisfactory.

In previous years sickness absence has tended to increase during the winter months and reduce during the summer months for obvious reasons. Last year was a relatively mild one and there was no noticeable increase in sickness levels during the winter months. From June the monthly sickness fell and has been maintained at the lower level for the following months.

The challenge going forward is to sustain this improvement and further increase the reduction in the levels of sickness absence. See below measures ongoing or planned for the near future.

Sickness absence continues to be managed, and between 1 March 2014 and 30 September 2014 there have been 3 employees retired due to ill-health and 4 dismissals under the Maximising Attendance Policy. In addition, at the time of drafting this report, a further 7 cases were at stage 3 (the final stage before dismissal) of the Maximising Attendance Policy.

5.2 Plans and Measures to reduce Sickness Absence

Detailed below are **preventative actions** currently being taken to reduced sickness absence and promote good health:

- Annual flu vaccinations for high risk front line service delivery staff
- Employee health checks run by the Council's Occupational Health Provider looking at blood pressure, weight and cholesterol levels. Where employees are outwith norms on any of these tests they are advised to see their GP.

In addition, plans that are being considered for action to seek to reduce the level of sickness include:

Musculoskeletal Action Plan

- When someone is off sick due to a back/lifting related injury, consider option of automatically referring them for refresher Manual Handling training (as already happens in Building Services).
- Serco physio: Process is that employee sees nurse at Serco and then is referred on to physio. Managers do a standard Serco referral but highlight that physio is being requested. There are approximately 25 appointments per month overall. There are a limited amount of appointments per individual (on case by case basis) – approximately 6 appointments per individual.
- Temporary redeployment to less physical roles.
- Tool box talks by Occupational Health.

Stress Action Plan

- Stress Management Good Practice Guide and Checklist/Mini risk assessment to be added to Managers Toolkit focussing on the positive things a manager can do.
- Promotion of Existing Good Practice
- Risk Assessments

- Training – Managers to more effectively manage stress

The ongoing process of HR Business Partners looking at areas of the workforce where sickness levels are high and working with line and service managers to identify reasons for this, and putting the necessary remedial action arrangements in place.

5.3 Reporting of Sickness Statistics

The Finance Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 6 May 2014 approved a different methodology for the calculation of reporting sickness statistics and agreed to show both the results of the old and new methods in reports. It is recommended that from 1 April 2015 reporting of the sickness statistics will only show the new method of calculation but it is noted that the HR&OD service will continue to calculate the old methodology, in case this is required for statutory performance indicator purposes.

6. IMPACT

The impact of not managing sickness effectively is the negative effect this could have on the Council's ability to deliver services.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

If sickness absence is not appropriately managed this has the potential for incurring significant cost and reputational damage for the Council.

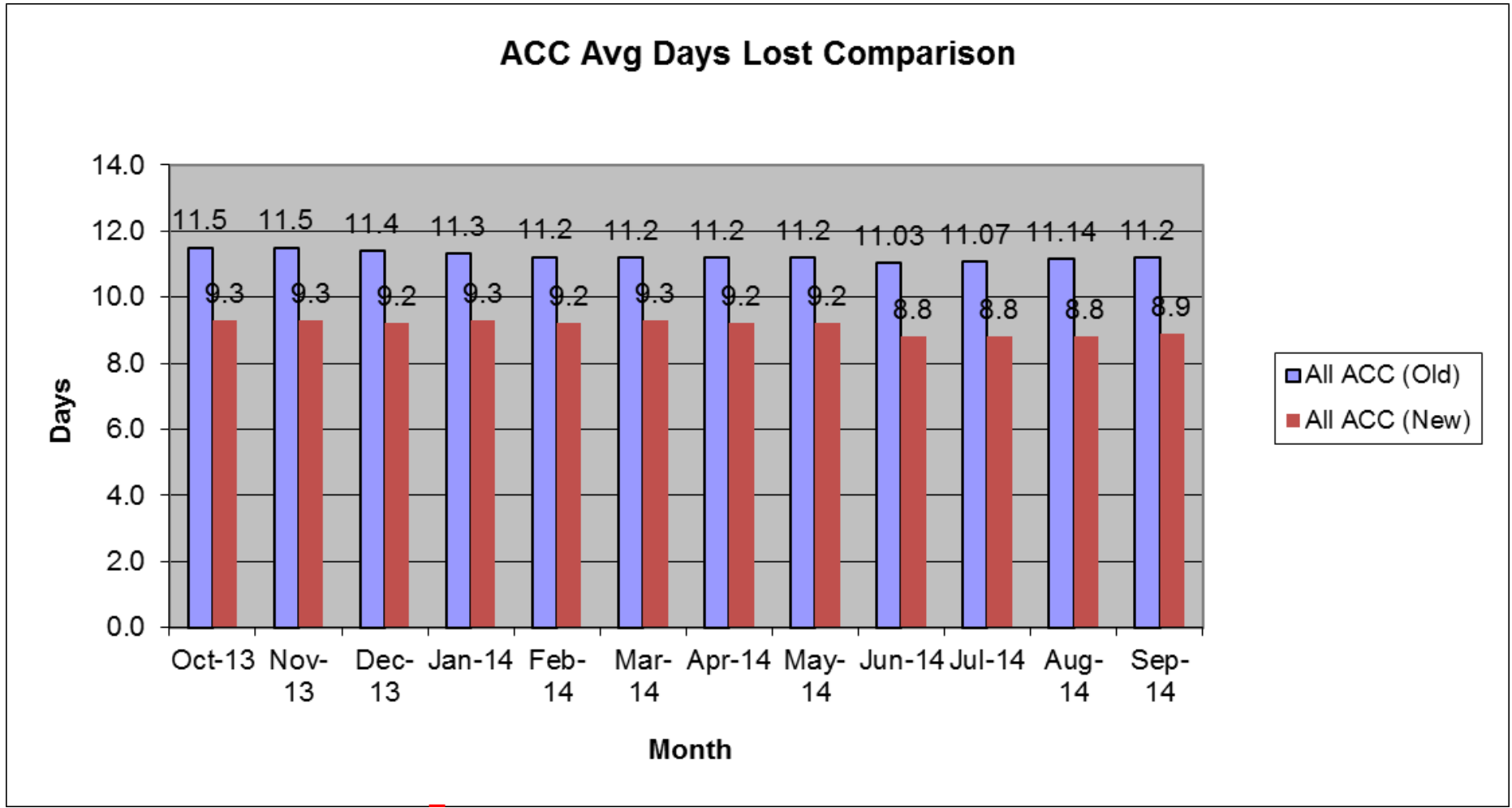
8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

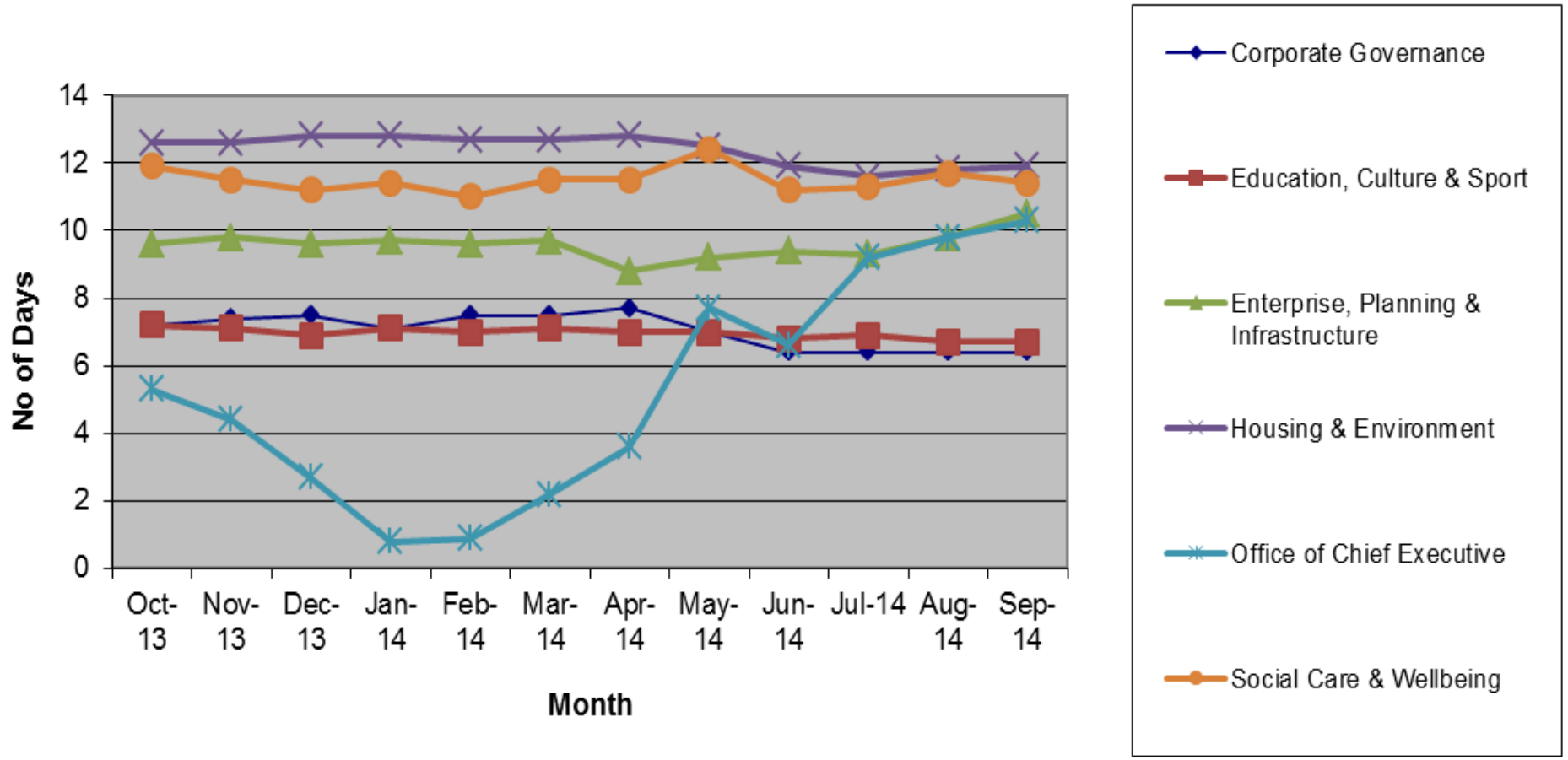
9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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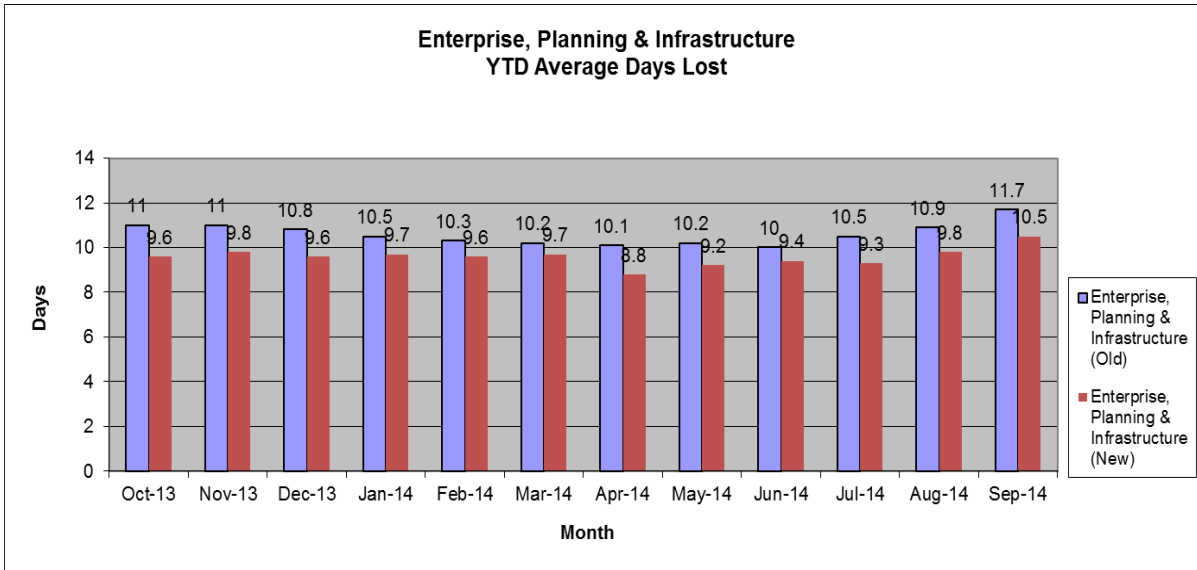
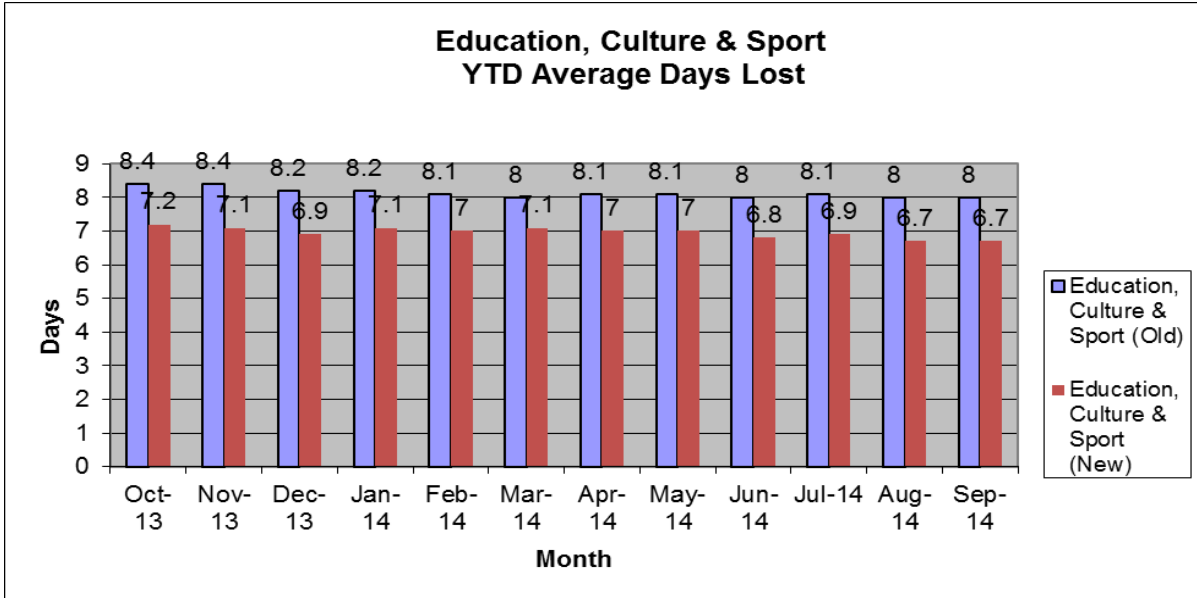
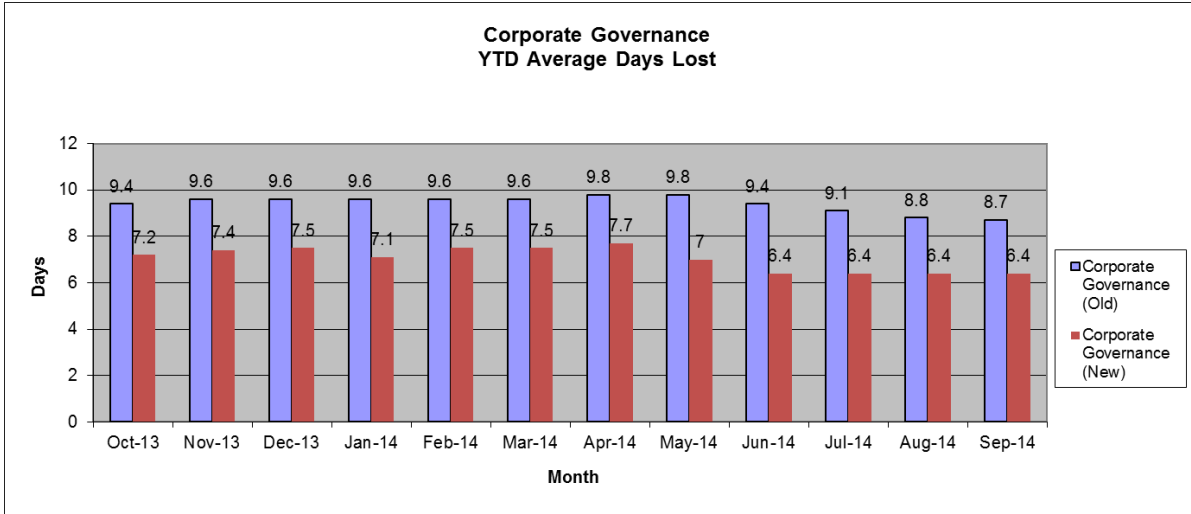
Sickness Rate for Previous 12 month period (old and new method of calculation)



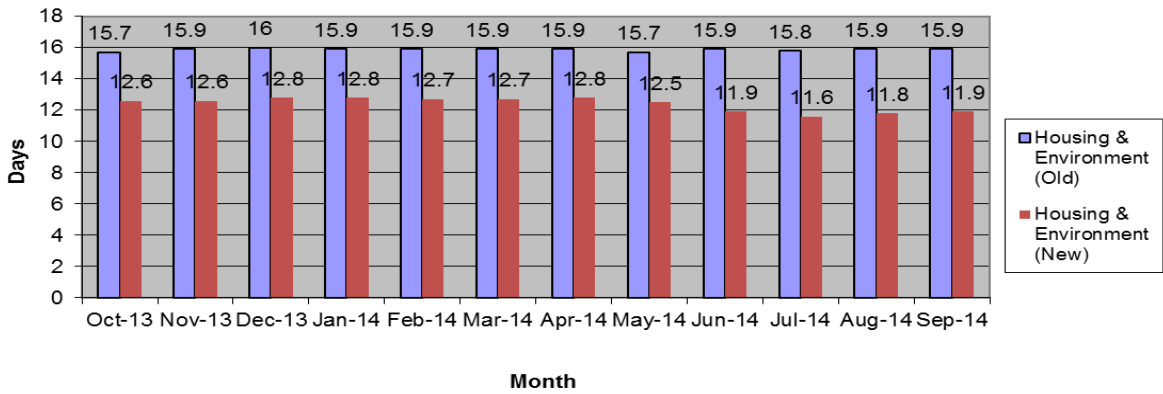
Average Days Lost per Emp (New Method)



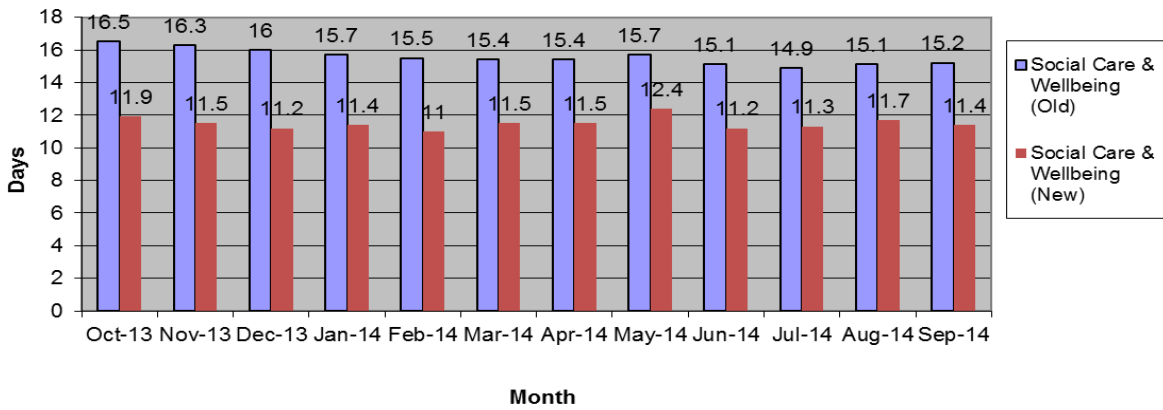
Sickness Rates per Directorate



Housing & Environment YTD Average Days Lost



Social Care and Wellbeing YTD Average Days Lost



Office of Chief Executive YTD Average Days Lost

