

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Corporate Services

Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee: 24 June 2009

Subject: Corporate Services Department – 2008/2009 Year-end Performance Management Report

1 Purpose

- 1.1** This report sets out and details the performance of the Corporate Services Department for 2008/2009 and invites the Committee to consider and note the departmental performance progress and achievements.

2 Background

- 2.1** The new Performance Management Framework introduced to the Council in April 2009 requires all directorates to monitor, review and report their performance to the relevant committees on a quarterly basis.
- 2.2** This year-end report covers the work of the Finance & ICT; Human Resources & Organisational Development; and Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services activities over the 2008/2009 reporting period.
- 2.3** Within the Corporate Services Department, this focuses on:
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs)
 - the progress of the departmental action plan for 2008/2009 and the extent to which corporate and departmental objectives have been achieved
 - quality accreditations and awards
 - departmental sickness absence statistics

3 Main Issues

Key Performance Indicators

- 3.1** The Corporate Services Department now has responsibility for monitoring and reporting 11 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Of these, 6 are reported quarterly and five reported annually. The overall performance of all of these monitored Corporate Services KPIs for 2008/2009 is detailed in Appendix 1B.

Statutory Performance Indicators

- 3.2** The department had responsibility for monitoring and reporting 30 Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) in 2008/2009. 21 of these SPIs are monitored quarterly and 9 are monitored annually. The overall performance of these is detailed in Appendix 1A.

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- 3.3** Of these 30 SPIs, the department had 11 'poor performing SPIs' highlighted through Audit Scotland's Best Value review. Consequently improvement action plans were implemented and regularly monitored to address the key areas and each SPI is now performing better and achieving good performance levels.

Actions from the Corporate Services Departmental Strategic Plan 2008/2012

- 3.4** A number of actions from the preceding Chief Executive's Service Plan were carried forward to 2008/2009. They were managed and monitored through to completion using the 'Covalent' CPM software and form part of the Corporate Services Departmental Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012.
- 3.5** As well as contributing to achievement of corporate objectives, the Corporate Services Departmental Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012 set out service objectives for the Department and identifies actions to help meet these objectives. The overall performance of objectives and actions is detailed in Appendix 2.
- 3.6** Significant achievements in delivering the corporate and service objectives during 2008/2009 have been realised through the commitment and effort of all our staff, set against a particularly testing and complex business and political environment. This is summarised in Appendix 3.

Quality Accreditations and Awards

- 3.7** The department has continued to demonstrate excellence within its service delivery areas through the continued achievement of number of quality certifications and awards. Within 2008/09 the following were achieved:
- Environmental Health Section successfully maintained Charter Mark standard
 - Trading Standards successfully achieved Chartermark
 - Registration Service was reassessed for Chartermark in June 2008 and
 - HR&OD achieved Investors in People reaccreditation
 - ICT maintained their Customer Excellence award after a successful assessment in December 2008.
 - ICT Training within HR & OD are a British Computer Society Qualifications Accredited Test Centre and the Test Centre maintained its "A" status.

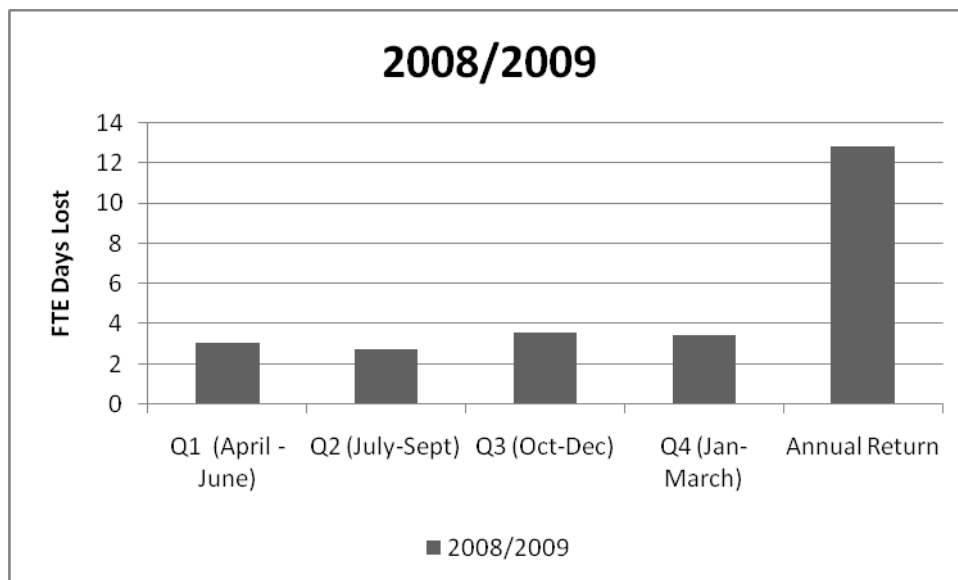
Sickness Absence Statistics

3.8 This is the first annual report since the Statutory Performance Indicator calculation for sickness absence statistics changed from reporting on percentage sickness absence to reporting on Full Time Equivalent (FTE) average days lost per FTE employee. In changing the reporting methodology, an opportunity presented itself to also modernise the reporting on both the absence type and absence duration categorisation.

3.9 *Some Statistical Facts:*

- The national average of days lost due to sickness absence for the public sector is 9.8 days per FTE employee (as reported in 2008 by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development).
- Corporate Services had an average of 12.86 days lost per FTE employee for 2008/2009. This is considerably higher than the national average.
- Annual sickness absence figures for the other Departments and the Council are as follows:
 1. Chief Executive – 16.62 FTE days lost
 2. Social Work and Health – 16.92 FTE days lost
 3. Housing, Economic and Environmental Services – 12.43 FTE days lost
 4. Education (APT&C) – 12.25 FTE days lost
 5. Education (Teachers) – 7.05 FTE days lost
 6. Council overall – 12.48 FTE days lost

Days Lost – Quarterly and Annual Figures



3.10 The graph above shows the breakdown of days lost per quarter in 2008/2009:

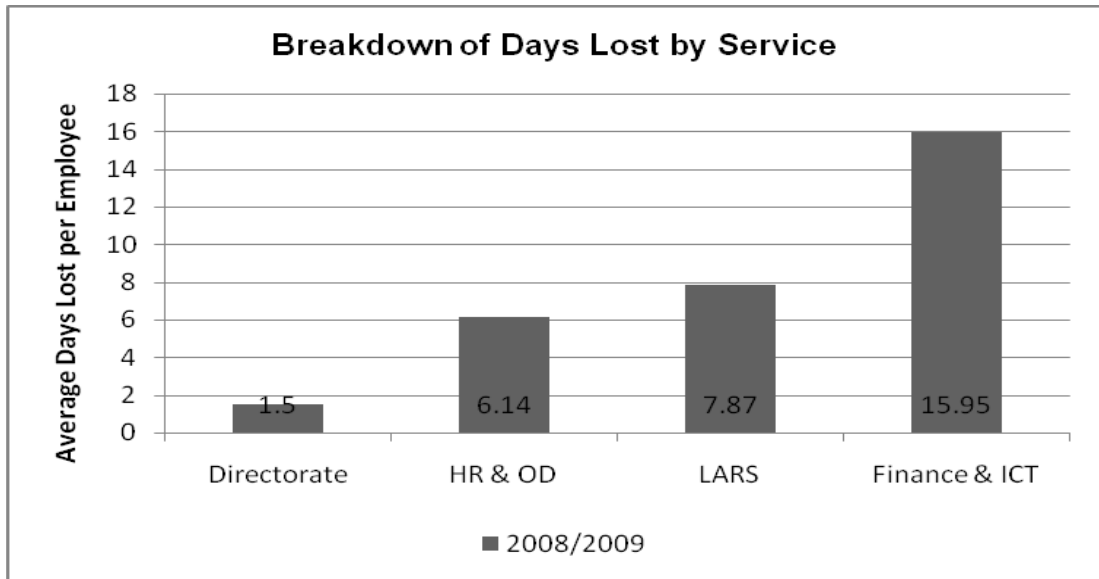
- In Quarter 1 – 2.99 FTE days were lost.
- In Quarter 2 – 2.75 FTE days were lost.
- In Quarter 3 – 3.61 FTE days were lost.
- In Quarter 4 – 3.43 FTE days were lost.

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Overall the figures for 2008/2009 showed that 12.86 FTE days were lost per FTE employee.

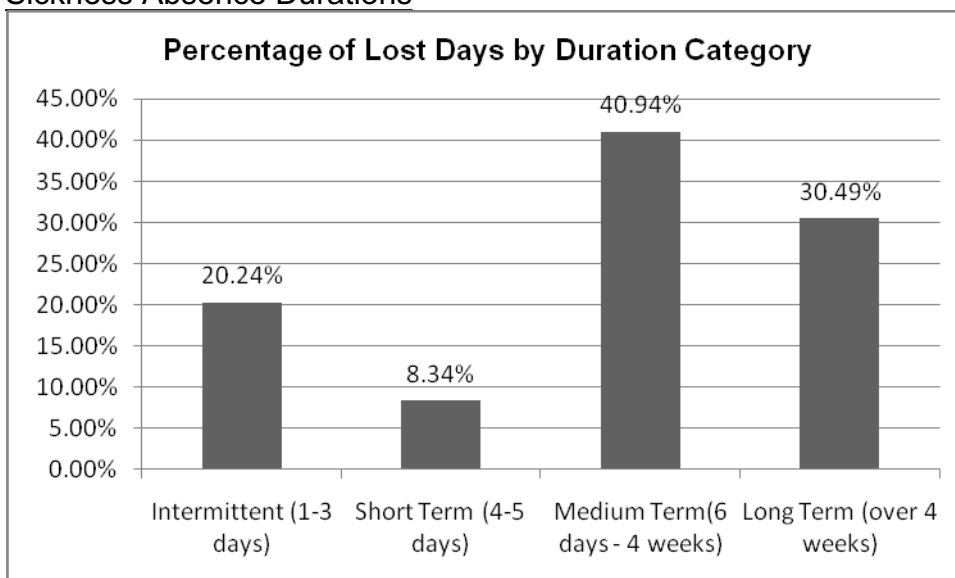
- 3.11** As there are trends in health in line with times of the year (e.g. cold and flu being more predominant in winter months) it is useful to compare the same quarter from previous years to establish if measures put in place are working to reduce absence figures. Comparisons will be drawn in future reports as there will be a year worth of figures in the new calculation method.

Days Lost – Service Breakdown



- 3.12** The graph above outlines the average days lost per employee by service for 2008/2009. A service by service comparison to the previous year is not available due to the old methodology of collating absence statistics, however, this will be available for future reports.

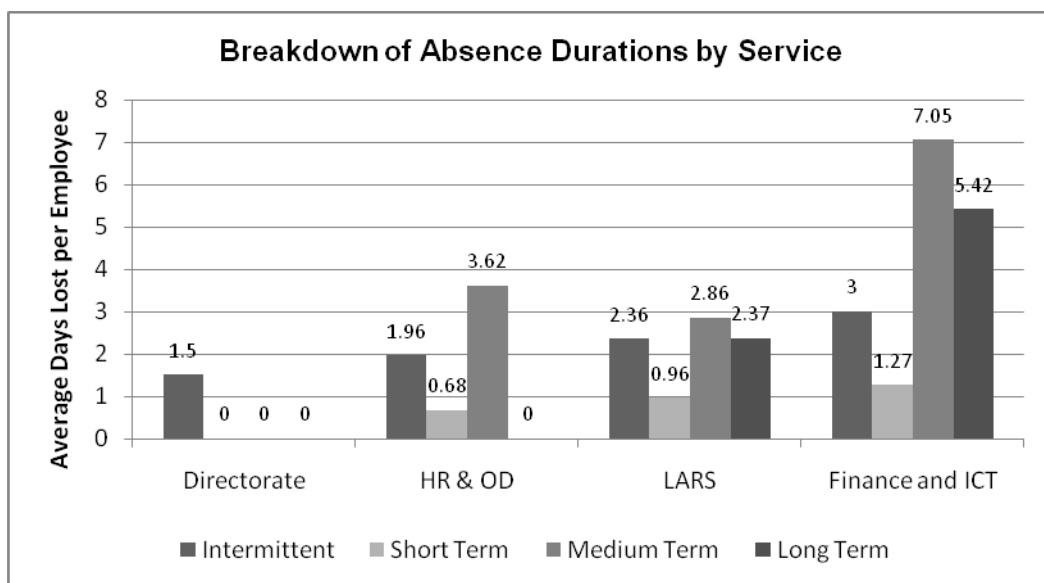
Sickness Absence Durations



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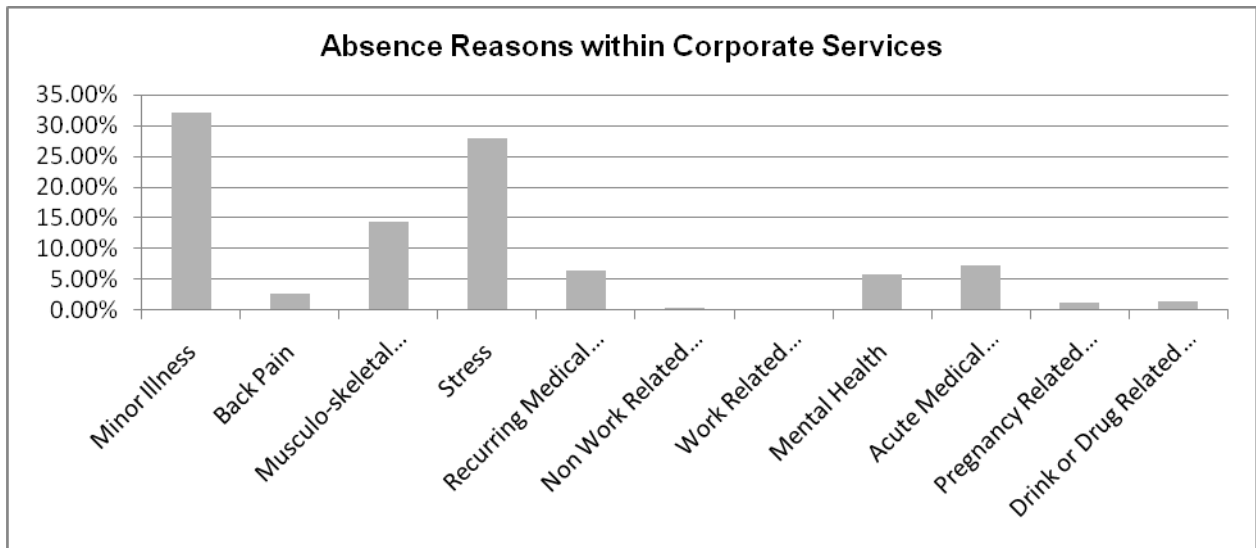
- 3.13** The graph above outlines the breakdown of the days lost by duration category. In order to more clearly identify the duration of absences within the Council the reported durations are now broken down into intermittent absence (1-3 days), short term (4-5 days), medium term (6 days to 4 weeks) and long term (over 4 weeks) categories. Within Corporate Services nearly 70% of absences are less than 4 weeks in duration.
- 3.14** Direct comparisons with the previous year are not available as the information was not collected in this way prior to this year, however, in future these comparisons will be drawn to show if there is any improvement in reducing the duration of absences.

Sickness Absence Durations – Service Breakdown



- 3.15** The above breakdown of absence durations in 2008/2009 by Service shows that:
- Only 1.5 days per employee were lost due to intermittent sickness absence in the Directorate for the whole year.
 - Within Corporate HR and OD absences predominately are between 6 days and 4 weeks in duration.
 - Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services have in excess of 2.35 days lost per employee in 3 absence duration categories (intermittent, medium term and long term).
 - Finance and ICT have lost just over 7 days per employee for absences between 6 days and 4 weeks and just less than 5.5 days per employee for absences greater than 4 weeks.

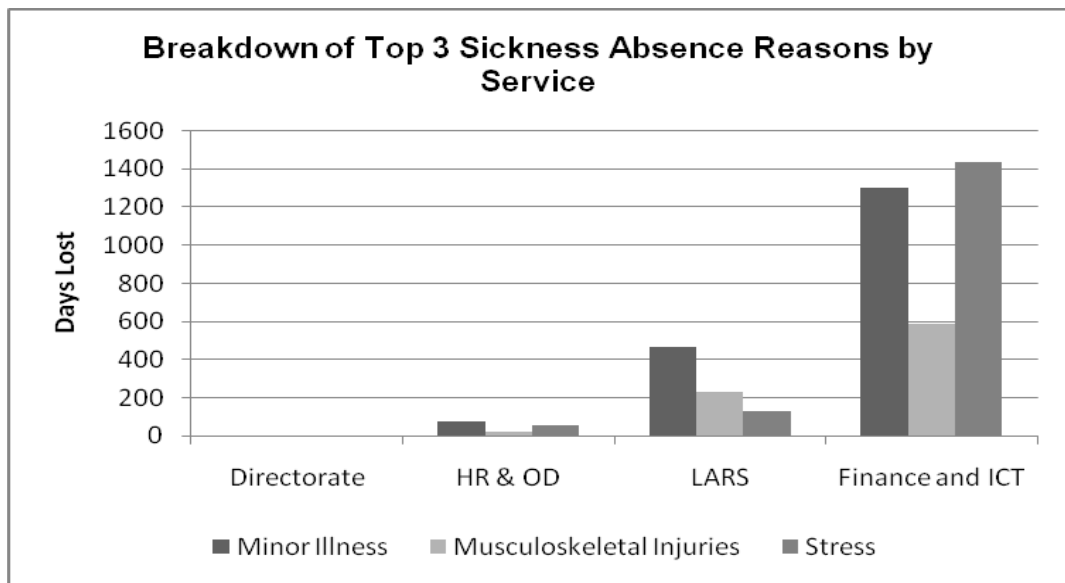
Absence Reasons



- 3.16** The above graph shows that the main reasons reported for sickness absence within Corporate Services for 2008/2009 were Minor Illness, Stress and Musculo-skeletal Injuries. This reflects national trends for both public and private sectors.
- 3.17** The Minor Illness category covers ailments such as: coughs and sore throats, colds and flu, headaches and migraines. These ailments are normally self limiting and little can be put in place to prevent employees from contracting these. Stress and Musculo-skeletal injuries are the second and third top reasons respectively for absence.
- 3.18** Stress is one of the main reasons for absence within the Council and work is being undertaken by the Stress Steering Group to introduce measures to effectively tackle stress within the Council. The Stress in the Workplace Policy is being reviewed by a Working Group. This will provide managers with a framework to manage stress and/or mental health issues within the workplace. A training programme is being developed for managers and employees on stress and mental health.
- 3.19** The physiotherapy service has been increased and will provide a proactive service in terms of support to employees with musculo-skeletal injuries. Workplace assessments are also being undertaken to ensure that workplaces are not detrimental to existing health conditions.
- 3.20** An intervention put in place to tackle stress and musculo-skeletal injuries is early referral to Occupational Health. Recent guidance issued to managers on the use of Occupational Health advised that referrals should be done at the earliest sign that any absence related to either stress or musculo-skeletal injuries will continue beyond 4 weeks.

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Absence Reasons – Service Breakdown



3.21 The above graph shows that::

- Minor Illness is the main reason for sickness absence within the Directorate, HR & OD and Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services.
- Employees are more likely to attribute sickness absence to stress within Finance and ICT.

Way Forward:

3.22 Corporate Human Resources and Organisational Development is focussing on a strategic approach in the management of attendance and wellbeing to ensure the more effective management of absence. In order to achieve this there needs to be continued focus on the following areas of activity:

3.23 Maximising Attendance Policy - One of our key challenges is to change Managers' behaviours to enable them to more confidently address ill health issues within the workplace. Following the implementation of the ACAS Code of Practice on 6 April 2009, the Maximising Attendance Policy will be reviewed and updated to ensure a more robust and consistent approach to managing absence within the Council. The review will also take cognisance of the recent externally facilitated absence management training programmes and will incorporate a number of new ways of working.

3.24 Occupational Health - The Occupational Health service is proactively supporting managers in absence management, specifically in the areas of:

- Early Referrals for musculo-skeletal and stress
- Pre-employment advice
- Health Surveillance
- Triggers and referrals at 4 weeks
- Case Conferences

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- 3.25** Health Promotion - ACAS advice is that providing support and information to employees on health issues can help raise morale and motivation and reduce incidents of ill health. The Wellbeing and Attendance Team is working alongside Occupational Health and the Health Working Lives Group to promote health and wellbeing among staff. Promotional activities are now underway and are focussing on:
- i. Health checks
 - ii. Exercise initiatives e.g. yoga class
 - iii. Information on smoking cessation
 - iv. Healthy eating
- 3.26** Further Interventions - A number of other interventions are being put in place to assist managers:
- i. HR System will enable email triggers/reminders to managers
 - ii. Management information – more detailed analysis will be available
 - iii. Targeted short briefing sessions for managers
 - iv. Use of mediation for employees suffering from work related stress
- 3.27** Target Setting for Improving Performance and Efficiency - To ensure that the absence issues are addressed as efficiently and effectively as possible there are a number of additional Departmental and transactional measures which are being put in place:
- i. Each Executive Director and Head of Service will be given a personal objective to manage attendance and a personal target to reduce the full time equivalent (FTE) days lost per FTE employee within their Department.
 - ii. Absence information/targets will become a standing item on the CMT agenda.
 - iii. Absence statistics, action planning and statistical analysis of areas of concern will be a standing item on each Executive Directors SMT agenda.
 - iv. Executive Directors will ensure that the requirements of the Maximising Attendance Policy are strictly adhered to by their managers and sanctions are imposed where Managers fail to adhere to these requirements ie.:
 - a. Return to Work Interviews being undertaken immediately on return to work for all absent staff
 - b. Attendance Review Meetings for all triggers reached.
 - c. Monitoring Periods and Follow up Attendance Review Meetings are strictly adhered to
 - d. Managers must involve Occupational Health at the earliest stage possible
 - v. Monthly reports to the Chief Executive from Executive Directors on the management of absence within Departments; detailing those absent, the interventions being put in place to manage this, the reasons for absence along with month on month reductions and increases in FTE days lost
 - vi. Executive Directors will ensure reporting and certification procedures are followed.

- vii. Continued support from Departmental HR teams will be given to Executive Directors and Heads of Service.

Complaints and Complaints Processing for 2008/2009

- 3.28** There were a total of 134 formal complaints received in Corporate Services in 2008/2009. All of these complaints were acknowledged within 5 working days and replied to within 20 working days. The classification and outcome of each of these complaints is summarised in Appendix 5.

Freedom of Information Requests

- 3.29** A total of 150 Freedom of Information requests were received, actioned and replied to by the Corporate Services Department in 2008/2009.

4 Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1** There are no financial implications.

6 Risk Analysis

- 6.1** No risk assessment was required.

7 Conclusions and Officers' Recommendations

- 7.1** Members are requested to consider and note the contents of this report.

Joyce White
Executive Director of Corporate Services

Date: 2 June 2009

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Appendices:

Appendix 1a – Corporate Services 2008/2009 Year-end Key Performance Indicators Report

Appendix 1b – Corporate Services 2008/2009 Year-end Statutory Performance Indicators Report

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Appendix 2 – Corporate Services 2008/2009 Year-end Departmental Actions Report

Appendix 3 – Significant Achievements by the Corporate Services Department in 2008/2009

Appendix 4 – Complaints and Complaints Processing for 2008/2009

Background Papers:

Corporate Services Departmental Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012

Wards Affected: All

Appendix 3 – Significant Achievements by the Corporate Services Department in 2008/2009

- Implementation of the Single Status agreement and revised terms and conditions;
- Improved governance frameworks and systems through revisions to Standing Orders;
- Development of a robust financial management framework;
- A focus on customer centric services, improving service and automated processes through better use of technology;
- Establishing a contact centre which is a launch pad for a 'one stop shop' for the customer; and
- Service re-accreditation of business and quality standards including IIP and Customer Service Excellence (formerly Charter Mark).

During 2008/2009, the department's services & contribution to the Council's organisational business included:

- Managed 44,200 properties for Council Tax (£39.8M);
- Managed 2,700 properties for Rates (£58M);
- Processed 145,000 pays, covering almost 6,600 employees;
- Issued 29,000 sundry debtor invoices (£22.6M);
- Council Tax Benefit processed for 14,500 claimants (£9.8M);
- Processed rents for 11,500 council houses (£28M);
- Housing Benefit processed for 8,000 households (£33.8M);
- During 2008/2009 our arrears teams secured debt repayment arrangements covering approximately £10M of debt;
- Monitored corporate revenue and capital budgets totalling in excess of £300M;
- Managed long term borrowings of approximately £215M;
- Managed short term investments of around £45M;
- Processed 162,000 supplier payments (£240M);
- Committee Administration supported 14 Committees, 1 Sub-committee, 2 Forums (Trade Unions), the Children's' Panel advisory committee and 9 Working Groups;
- Carried out 650 food hygiene inspections;
- Carried out 147 health & safety inspections;
- Registered 1,147 private landlords;
- Received 658 complaints to Trading Standards about businesses;
- £57,612 - Total known amount of redress won for consumers following investigations by Trading Standards of their complaints;

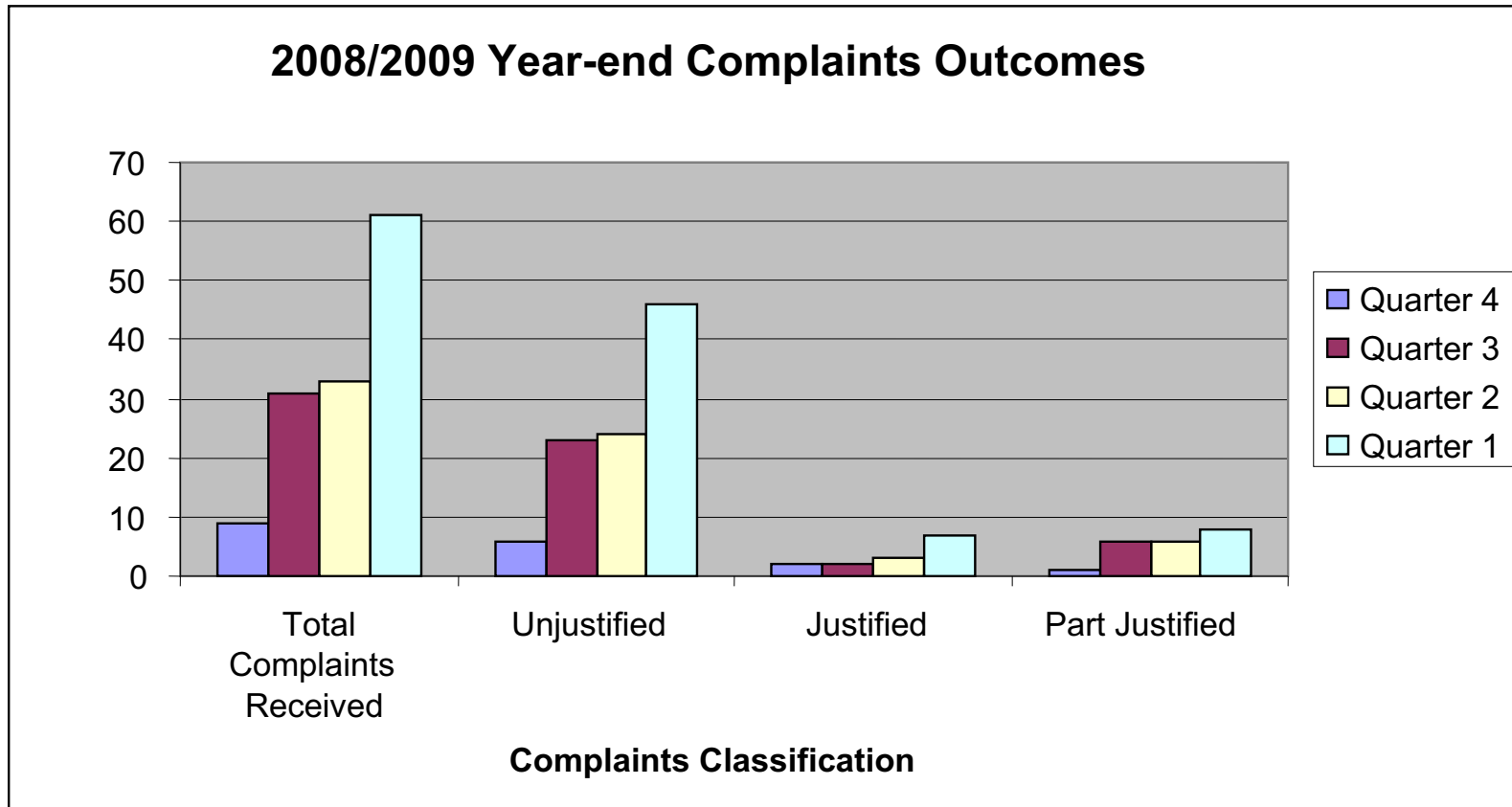
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- Received 49 requests from businesses for Trading Standards advice;
- Received 32,310 calls to the ICT Helpdesk;
- Supported 102 sites for data communication;
- Supported 200 sites for telecoms;
- Supported over 2500 PC's;
- Received 1695 requests for pest control;
- Received 535 requests for dog control;
- Received and investigated 1,136 environmental protection and public health complaints;
- Received 1073 Civic Government Act applications;
- Received 729 liquor licensing applications;
- Received 58 Gambling Act applications;
- Registered 1354 births;
- Registered 1587 deaths;
- Registered 430 marriages;
- Registered 4 civil partnerships;
- Received 32,958 Contact Centre calls received - 18,958 were resolved, 14,015 calls were sent to the back office for advanced processing work and additional information;
- Trained 250 HEEDS employees in Elementary Food Hygiene;
- Reported on case to the Procurator Fiscal in respect of a fatal accident;
- Advertised 247 posts in the last 9 months, with 6055 applications received. 92% received online;
- Launched a new Occupational Health and processed 220 appointments with Senior OH Advisor or consultant physician, 187 health surveillance appointments;
- Issued 5226 new Contracts of Employment for Single Status staff;
- Issued a new employee handbook for all Local Government Employees;
- Delivered 32 sessions, attended by over 350 managers on termination, contract and detriment;
- Trained 350 managers on contractual issues to support implementation of Single Status agreement;
- Briefed 150 managers on Equalities;
- 5 Impact Assessments undertaken on a range of issues;
- Implemented a cross-departmental work based management development programme;
- Led the introduction of a CPD framework for Elected Members; and
- Hosted the STAR awards for recognising staff achievements.

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Appendix 4 – Complaints and Complaints Processing for 2008/2009



Nature of Complaint	Quarter 4	Quarter 3	Quarter 2	Quarter 1
Finance Recovery	5	21	17	43
Council Tax	2	7	10	12
Benefits	1	0	3	1
Others	1	3	3	5
Total Number	9	31	33	61

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