



# Presentation to APSE NI Regional Meeting 17 October 2008

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# Background

- Currently approx 215 full and part time employees
  - Absence management information maintained and produced by Human Resources
  - Regularly reviewed by Management Team and Line Managers
  - Annual LGAO Absence Report produced
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# Background

- Historically Banbridge was a high performing authority with low absence rates
  - Gradually increasing absence figures peaking in 2003-4
  - Acknowledgement that action was required
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# Strategies for improving Attendance

- ❑ having a clear policy on absence monitoring
  - ❑ training managers to manage attendance
  - ❑ training employees to recognise and manage signs of stress
  - ❑ improving employee motivation through training and development opportunities
  - ❑ using return-to-work interviews after illness and informal procedures to keep individuals informed and to resolve problems by consensus.
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# Changes in Approach to Absence Management

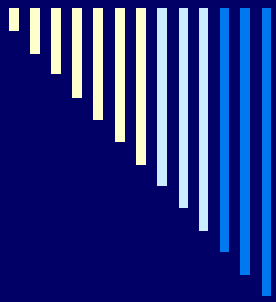
- Introduction of Policy on Managing Attendance – effective from 1 May 2004
  - Introduction of Return to Work Interviews & forms for all absences which capture reasons for absence
  - Initial training of managers and then regular updates
  - Absence Counselling Interviews/Reviews
  - Establishment of ‘triggers’ for absence (more than 10 days/4 occasions in rolling 12 month period)
  - Use of Occupational Health service
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# Changes in Approach to Absence Management

- Absence also now analysed by Cause
  - Internal Management statistics produced by Department, for each Directorate
  - External Counselling service
  - Greater focus on Employee Health & Wellbeing – Council-wide event held June 2008, including Action Cancer ‘Big Bus’
  - Encourage Healthy lifestyle in conjunction with Sports Development and Investing in Health
  - Strategies to encourage and ease return to work
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**"..traditional and inflexible  
work practices require  
people to be absent from  
work for longer than they  
need to be"**

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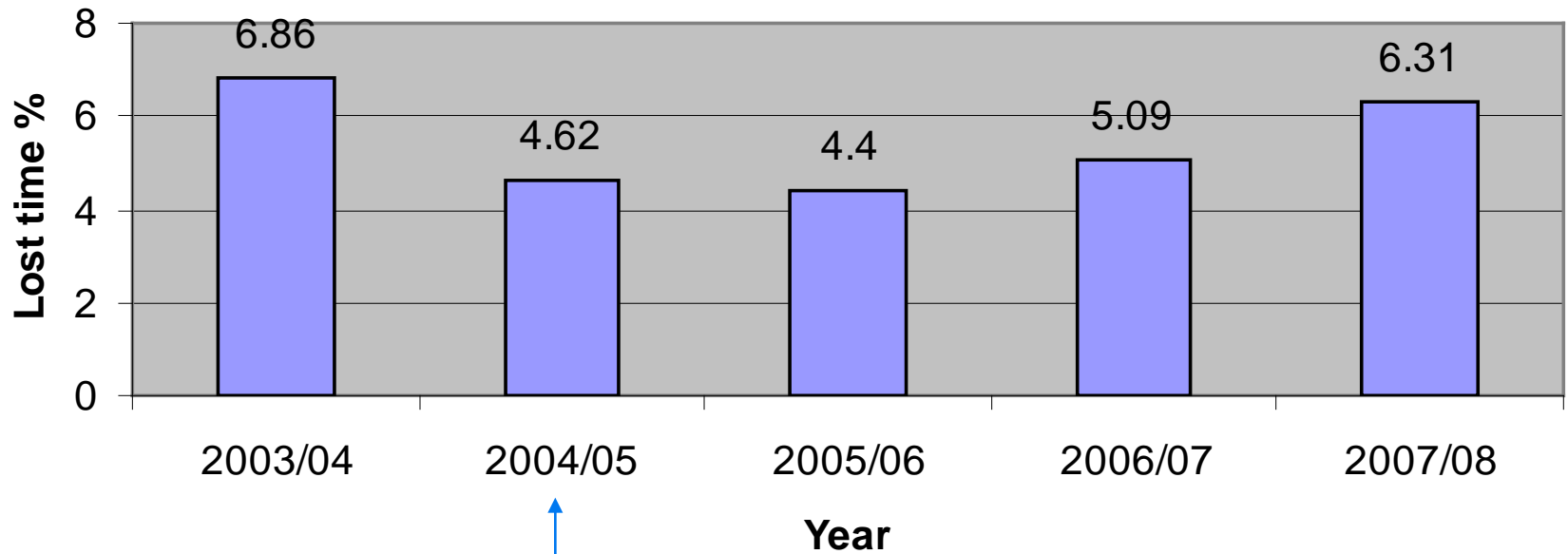
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# Effect of Policy Introduction

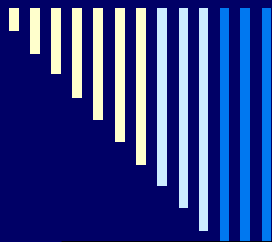
- ❑ Significant reduction in number of days lost and number of occasions due to short term absences, also resulting in reduction in overall absence %
  - ❑ Greater awareness amongst employees of absences being monitored – less likely to take casual absence
  - ❑ Greater involvement of supervisory level employees in managing employees
  - ❑ Long term absence – DDA implications; each case dealt with on individual basis/sensitivity regarding reason for absence
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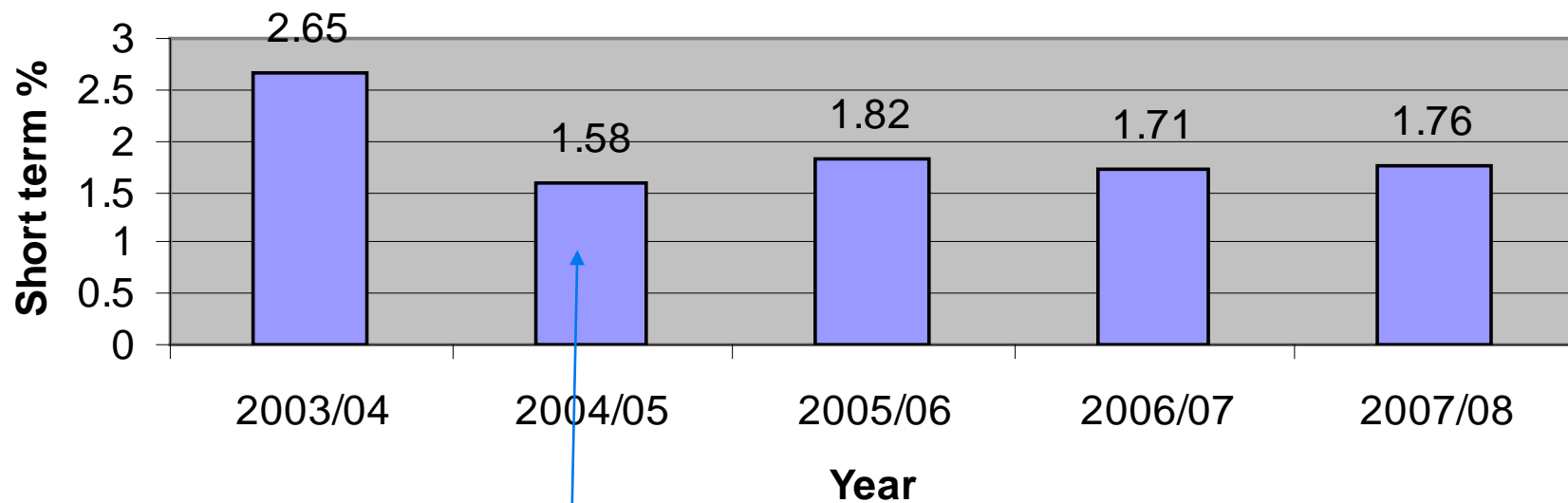
## Lost time rate % 2003/04 to 2007/08



Introduction of Policy on Managing Attendance, May 2004



## Short term absence % (19 or less days absence in one spell)



Introduction of Policy on Managing Attendance, May 2004



# Ongoing practices

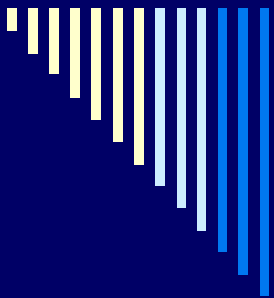
- Use of PAMS system to record absences
  - Notification procedure included in Employee Handbook for all employees
  - Managing Attendance Policy and Notification Procedure included in Employee Induction
  - Regular review of statistics by Management Team
  - Annual report to Council of absence statistics
  - Item included in Team Brief to all employees regarding absence statistics
  - Stress Management /Occupational Health Policy (since 1997)/LeisurePass for employees
  - Requests for 'special leave' considered, based on merits of each case
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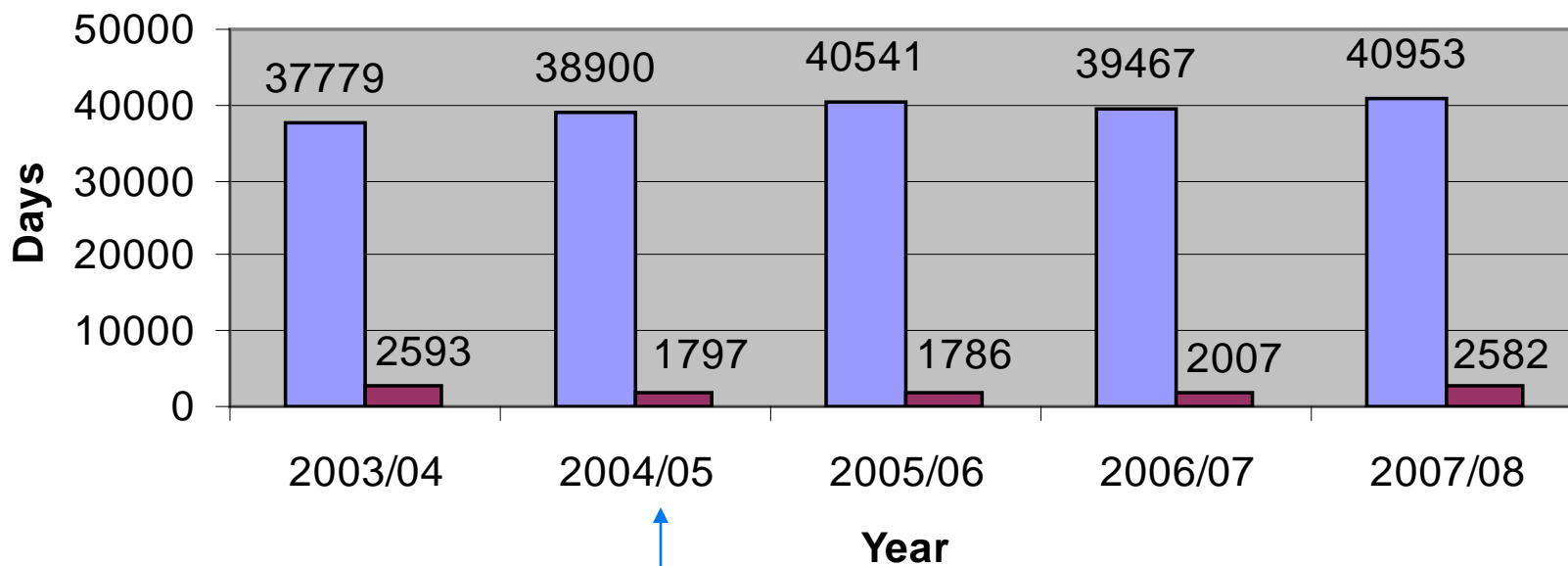
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# Effect of Cancer Related absence

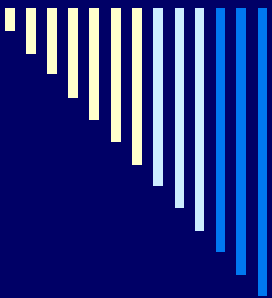
- Long term absence has increased by over 2% due to a sharp increase in cancer related absence in the Council since 2006/7.
  - Overall Total Absence has increased by 2.3% for the same reason
  - Cancer Related long term absences during 2007/08 (5 employees) specifically accounted for 910 FTE days, or 48.87% of the total days lost due to Long Term absence
  - During 2006/07 and 2007/08, statistics produced for Management Team for 2007/08 compare Ex-Cancer Related with LGAO Absence Return statistics
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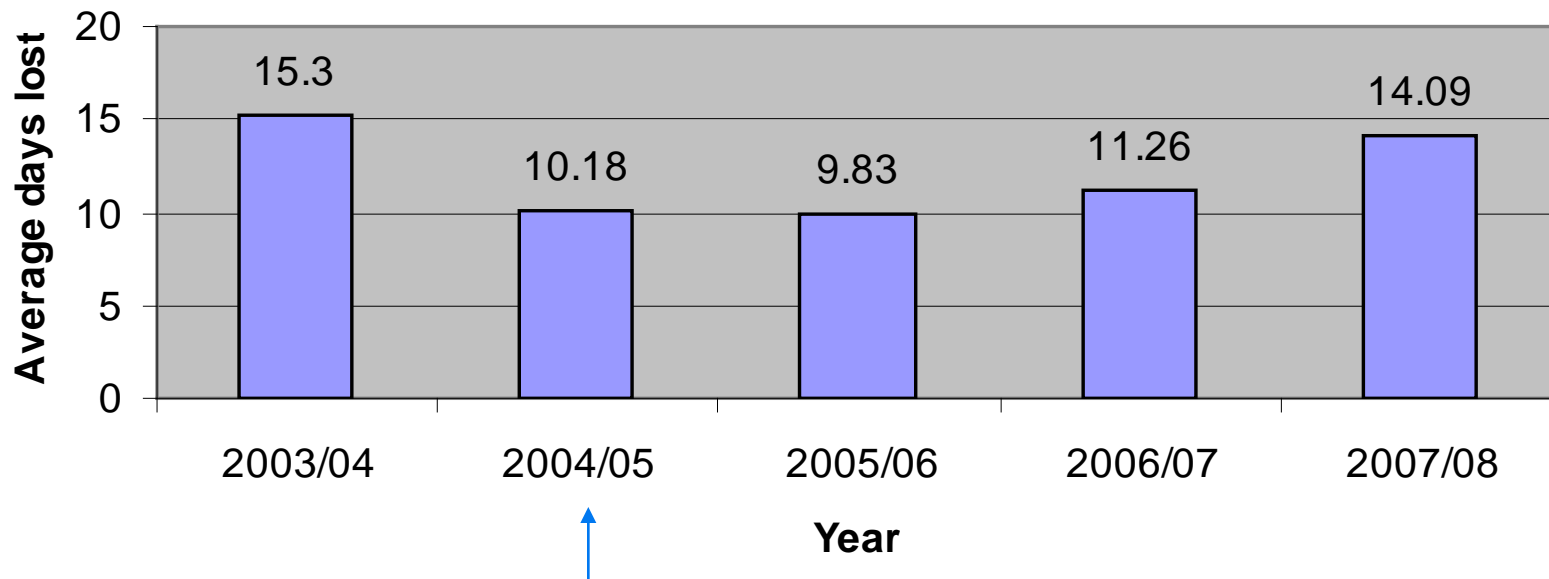
## Total FTE possible days and Total FTE days lost



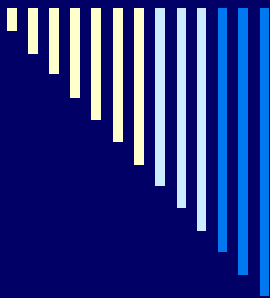
Introduction of Policy on Managing Attendance, May 2004



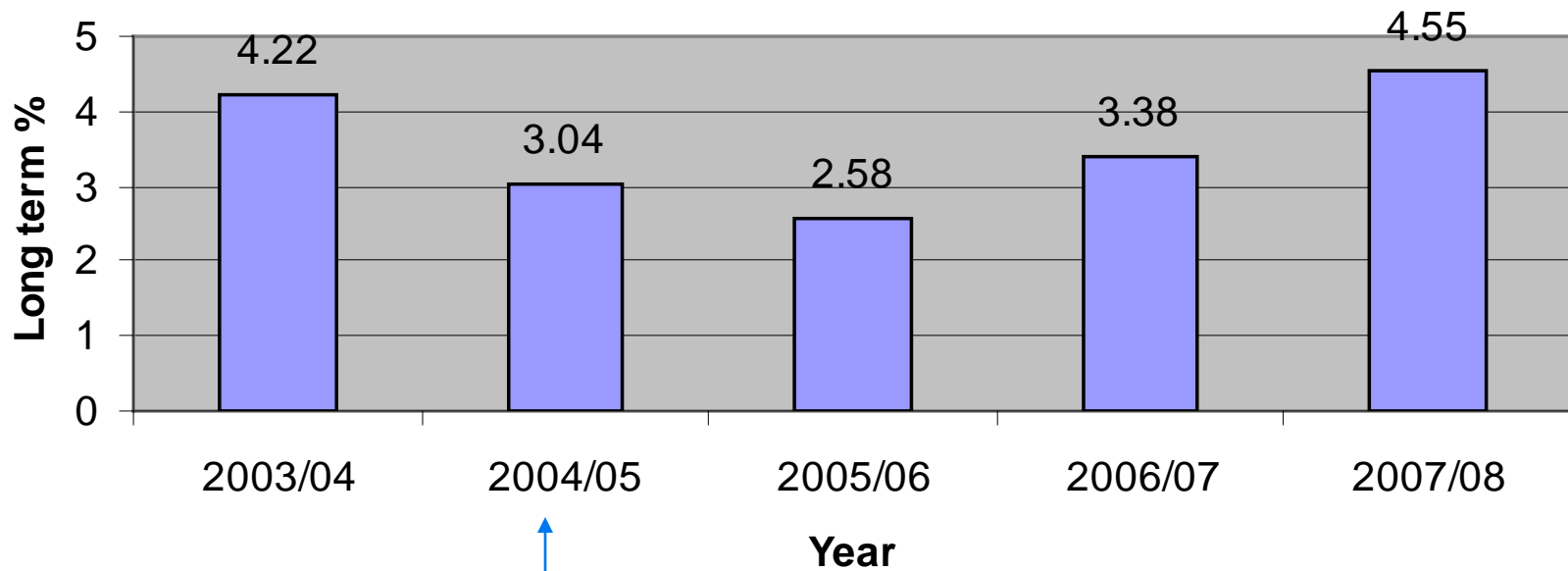
## Overall average days lost per employee



Introduction of Policy on Managing Attendance, May 2004



## Long term (20 or more days absence in one spell)



Introduction of Policy on Managing Attendance, May 2004



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# What next?

- Keep Management of attendance high on the agenda
  - Continue to support and encourage line managers to manage attendance
  - Investigate ways of enabling employees to return to work
  - Further analyse absence trends
  - Remember – people will get ill – support when necessary.
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