

Purpose : for Noting

## REPORT TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date : **MONDAY 5 APRIL 2004**

Title : **WORKFORCE INFORMATION**

## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE : IMMEDIATE**

---

### SUMMARY/PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of the Council's workforce profile.

### CONFIDENTIAL/EXEMPT ITEMS

2. This report is not confidential

### BACKGROUND

3. Workforce planning is an important part of the national Pay and Workforce Strategy for local government (reported in the update section on this agenda); a strategy which seeks to ensure that local authorities have 'the right numbers of people in the right places with the rights skills to deliver improved service, better productivity and greater customer focus in front line services'. Future inspections will look for evidence of workforce planning.
4. Accurate information about the workforce is crucial for monitoring changes in the workforce and planning future needs. This report gives details of the Council's workforce profile by gender, age and other workforce information which will be used for workforce planning and development purposes eg sickness absence and employee turnover. The information is not only important for workforce and succession planning but also important for indicating the success or otherwise of the Council's people management policies and practice.
5. **Workforce profile**  
Appendix 1 shows the 'headcount' staffing numbers as at 31 December 2003 broken down by Directorate – schools are shown separately but the Education Directorate figures include Tourism and Wight Leisure services. The Council now employs 4,650 employees compared with 4,633 three years ago. With a headcount of some 2,384 school based staff represent more than half the workforce although during the same three year period the number of school based staff has decreased by 3%. A number of employees have more than one 'employment' eg an employee may work as an Environmental Health Officer and also be a Retained Firefighter, and the total number of jobs within the Council is 5,200.

6. **Gender**

Women make up 74% of the workforce and more than half work part-time. Appendix 2a shows the breakdown of male and female employees by full-time/part-time employment. A greater proportion of women employees are based in Social Services and Education and Community Development. This is not particularly unusual as patterns of women's employment generally reveal that there are still gender differences at work.

7. Women make up a third of all managers. A key performance indicator here is BVPI 11; the number of women in the top 5% of earners and the bar chart at Appendix 2b shows the number of women in the top 5% of earners by Directorate. It is clear that women are well represented in management positions in the Education and Social Services Directorates, less so in Corporate Services and not at all in Environment Services. The Council's overall outturn figure for 2002/3 was 28%, which exceeded the target figure for the year and was above the median figure for similar local authorities. It will probably show a further increase for this year with a likely outturn figure of 34% placing the Council nearer the upper quartile figure. These figures exclude schools, as per the Audit Commission's guideline, but if they were to be included the number of women in the top 5% of earners would be 48%. Nonetheless, this is an area which CPA inspectors and the IDeA Peer Review has commented on as a particular area to watch and initiatives through the Council's People Management Strategy eg to develop a career management scheme, a competency framework and improve opportunities for flexible working will, it is hoped, help to sustain a long-term improvement which reflects the gender balance in the workforce.

8. **Sickness Absence**

Appendices 3a, 3b and 3c show details of sickness absence. The total number of working days lost in 2003 due to sickness absence was 42,511, a slight increase over 2002. Certificated absence ie absence of eight days or more accounts for 70% of all sickness absence. The number of working days lost per employee is 9.5 days which is just below the BVPI 12 median figure of 10 days in similar local authorities. The number of working days lost per employee seems to be consistent across all Directorates with the exception of Social Services and Housing where the days lost figure at 15.7 days per employee, despite showing a small decrease on the previous years figure, is 50% greater than the average for the Council as a whole. The high figure is largely due to the high level of long-term absence which is twice as high as in other Directorates. I know that the Director of Social Services and Housing is concerned about this and his Heads of Service and Service Managers are working closely with HR staff to tackle this problem as a priority area.

9. Appendix 4 shows the reasons for sickness absence. Of particular concern is the fact that stress and stress related absence accounts for a fifth of all absence and in some Directorates accounts for a much higher proportion. This is another area for particular attention, especially in light of Health and Safety Executive concerns about the increasing levels of stress in wider industry.

10. As part of the People Management Strategy we will continue with our Healthy Workforce Strategy ie encourage employees to adopt healthier lifestyles, improve the 'worklife balance' through improved flexible working opportunities

and develop a redeployment/rehabilitation scheme. This is, of course, in addition to ensuring managers apply the Council's attendance management policies and have the necessary people management skills and advice to do so.

**11. Filling vacant posts**

The Council has an annual turnover rate of 11% which means that around 530 permanent employees leave the Council each year. This figure is not high in comparison with other local Councils or in comparison with other sectors. The most difficult to fill posts are in Social Services, particularly for social workers specialising in children's services.

**12. Age**

The Council's age profile, set out at Appendix 5, typically shows a 'bulge' in the 45 – 54 age group and half the workforce are aged 45 or over. Despite the Council adopting an age diversity policy last year and removing the retiring age limit, the Council employs very few employees beyond the normal retiring age. Notwithstanding the current debate on retirement, pensions and changes to pension regulations, it is likely that many of those employees aged 45 plus do not envisage working beyond the age of 65. It is therefore important that, as part of its People Management Strategy, the Council manages the careers of both older and younger workers to ensure that all employees are motivated.

**13.** Local government has not always been seen as an attractive career option for younger people. The Council currently employs a total of 34 Modern Apprentices in the 16 – 22 age group; 14 in Corporate Services, 9 in Education and Community Development, 11 in Environment Services but none in Social Services. As a result of pressures on local authority budgets over the past twenty years, many trainee posts were deleted from Council workforce establishments and this has now resulted in recruitment difficulties in professional areas. The Council embarked on its policy of 'growing it's own' some six years ago and during that time has employed 97 Modern Apprentices, the majority of whom have gone on to secure other posts within the authority. It is important that this policy continues.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

**11.** Local government is highly 'labour' intensive. A significant portion of the Council's revenue budget is spent on the employment of staff and effective people management policies and practice is key to improving service delivery. Workforce planning and regular monitoring of workforce data is essential if we are to ensure that we are able to meet future demands and that our policies are working in practice.

## CONSULTATION

**12.** This report has not been subject to consultation but the same workforce information was considered by the Resources Select Committee on 1 March 2004.

## APPENDICES ATTACHED

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Appendix 1 :           | Staff Headcount                        |
| Appendix 2a:           | Full and part-time employees by gender |
| Appendix 2b :          | Number of women in top 5% of earners   |
| Appendix 3a, 3b & 3c : | Sickness Absence                       |
| Appendix 4 :           | Reasons for Sickness Absence           |
| Appendix 5 :           | Age Profile                            |

## FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

13. There are no direct financial or legal consequences arising from this report and there are no implications under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## OPTIONS

15. To note the report.

## EVALUATION/RISK MANAGEMENT

16. It is important that workforce information is monitored on a regular basis to ensure that Council HR policies and procedures are being applied and working effectively in practice. The data will also be an important component of workforce plans as they are developed as such plans will help to ensure that the council has a sufficient number of employees with the right skills to provide the services required.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

17. That the report be noted.

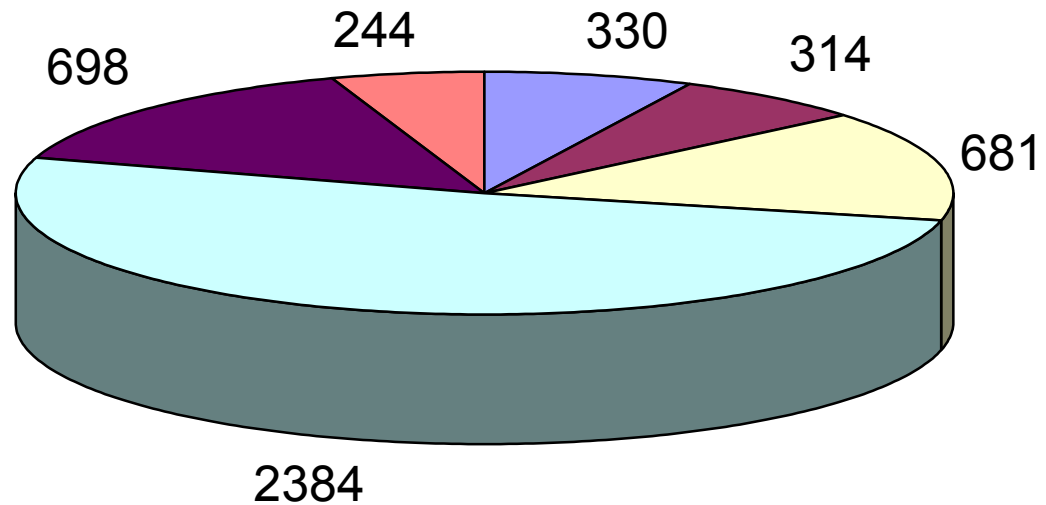
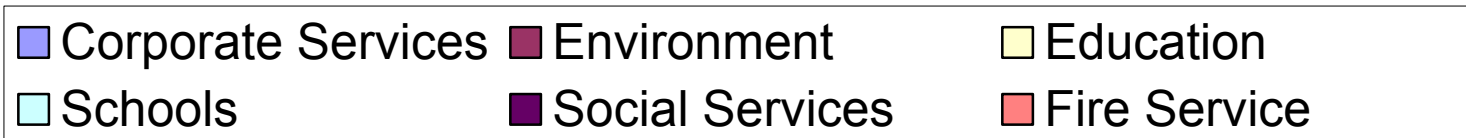
## BACKGROUND PAPERS

18. None

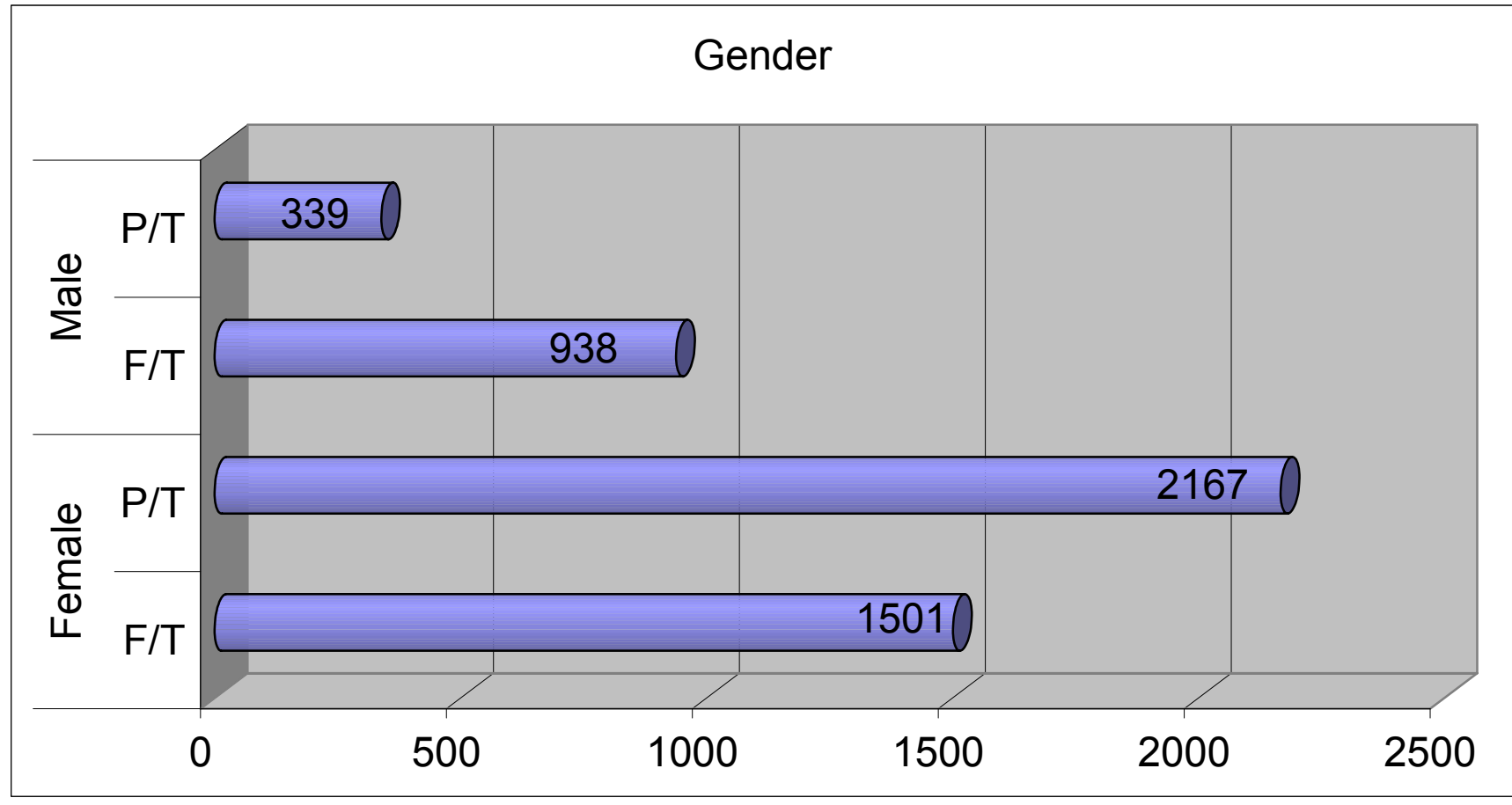
Contact Point : Max Burton. Tel: (01983) 823121 email: max.burton@iow.gov.uk

Max Burton  
Head of Human Resources

## Staff Headcount as at 31 December 2003

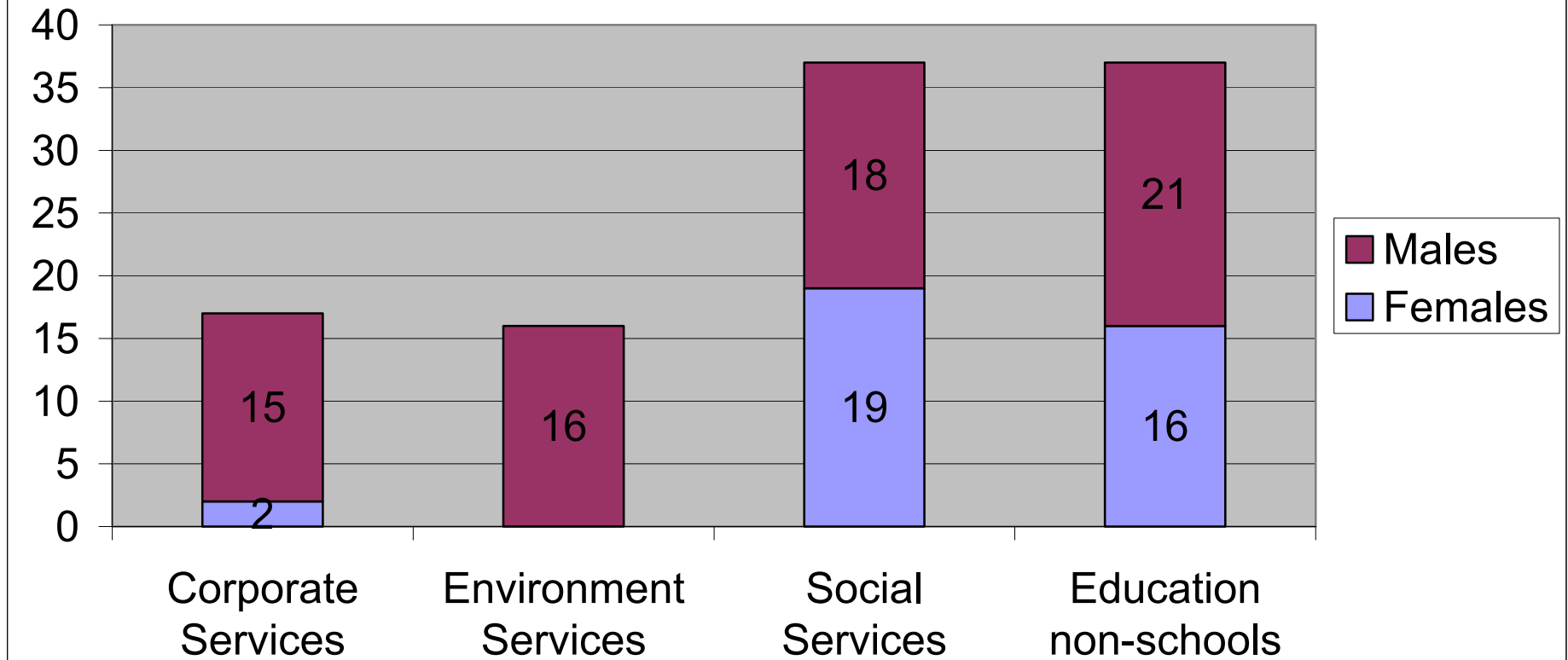


Appendix 2a)



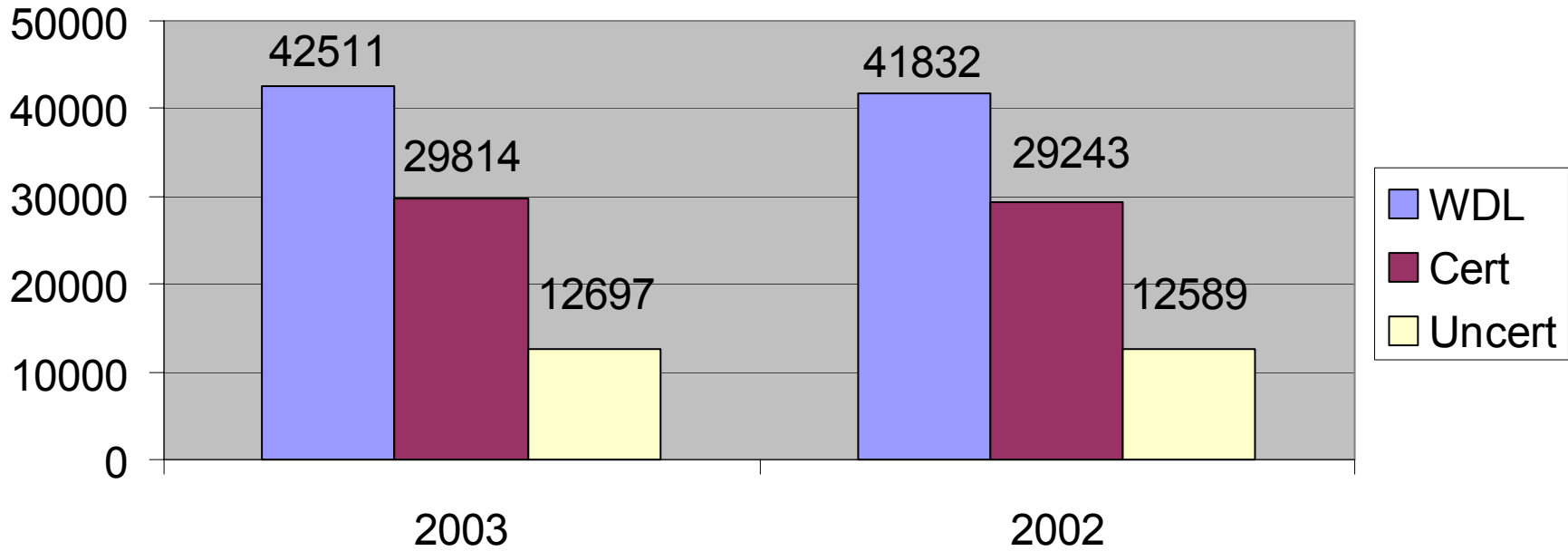
Appendix 2b)

## Gender Breakdown of the Top 5% of Earners



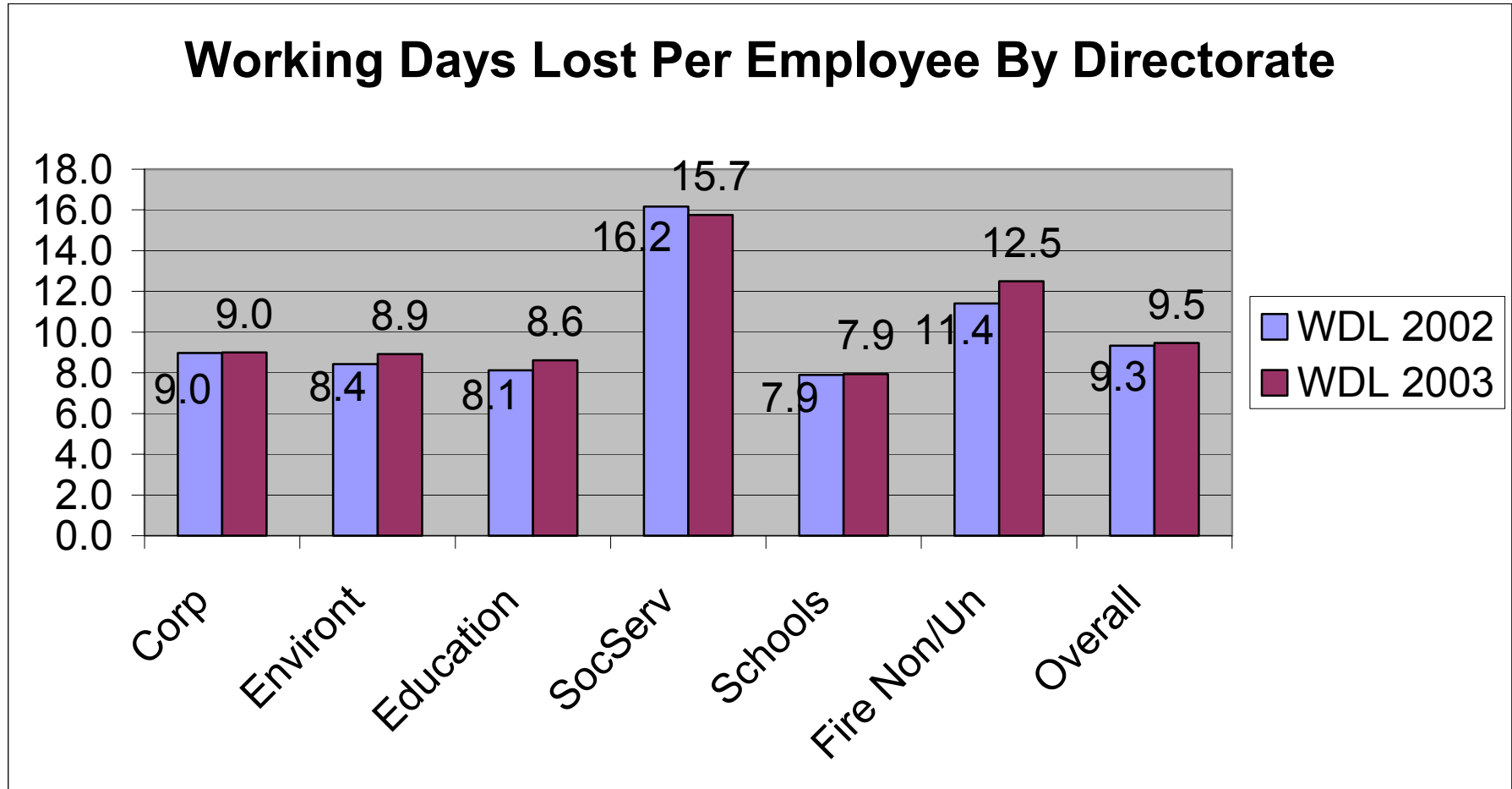
Appendix 3a)

### Comparison of Working Days Lost for Period 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2002 and 2003

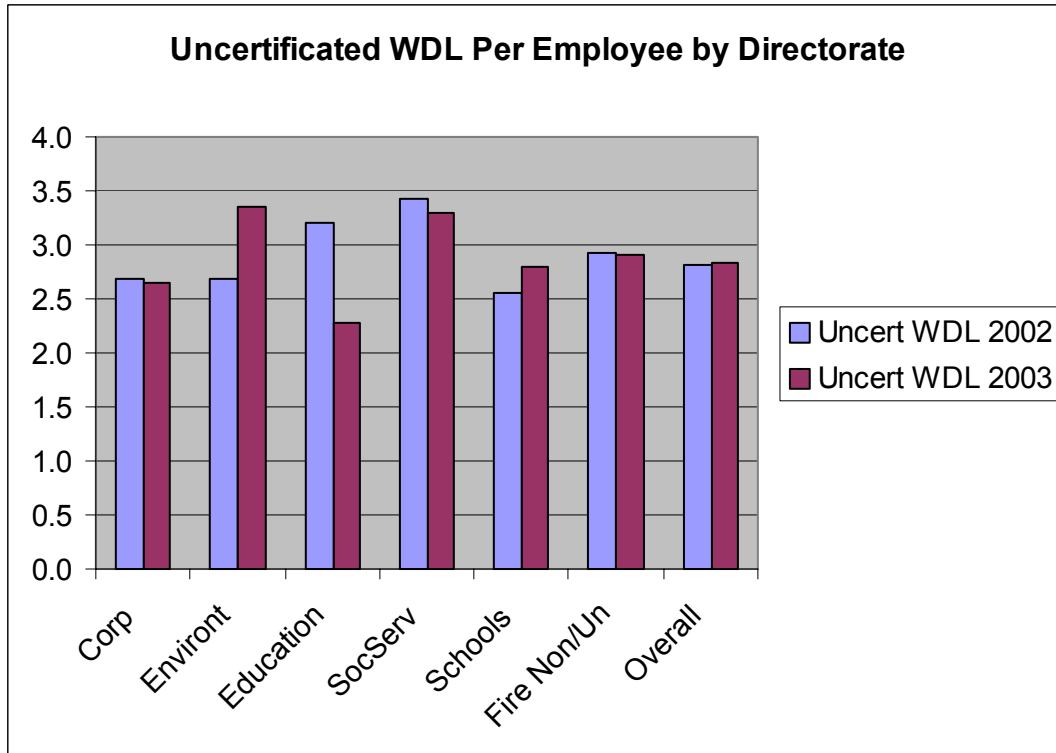
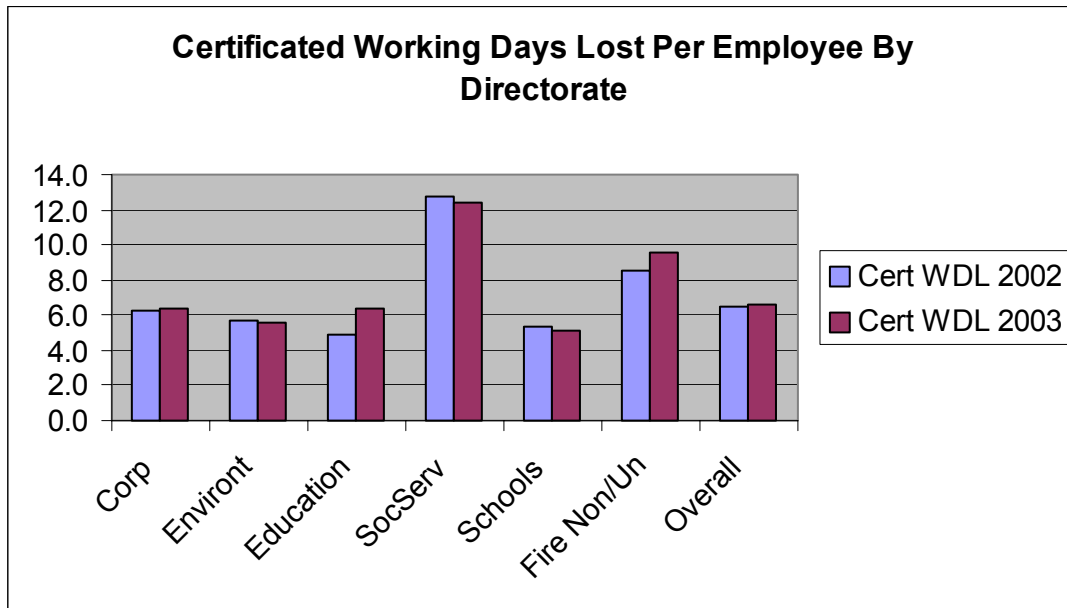




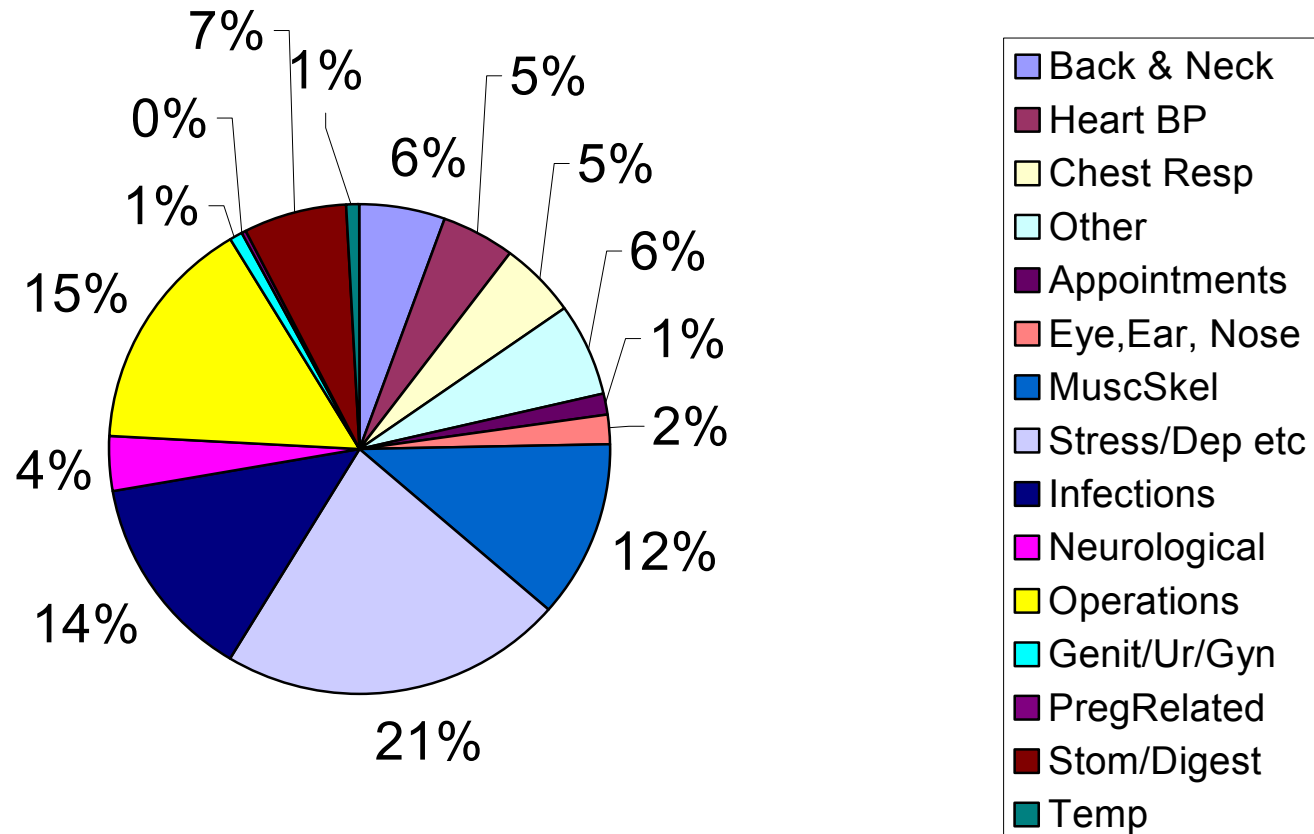
Appendix 3b)



Appendix 3c)



## IWC Absence in Categories 2003



Appendix 5

