

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 5 January 2010

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Sickness Absence – 2nd quarter (1July – 30 September 2009)

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a report on the number of working days lost in the second quarter of 2009/10, outlining trends and patterns of sickness.
- 1.2 To provide a report on comparative data from previous quarters, 2008/09 and 2009/10.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) **the content of the report be noted; and**
- (2) **Members make comments as appropriate.**

3.0 SICKNESS DATA

- 3.1 The total number of working days lost due to sickness absence, in the second quarter of the year was 10,789. The breakdown for each directorate is set out below;

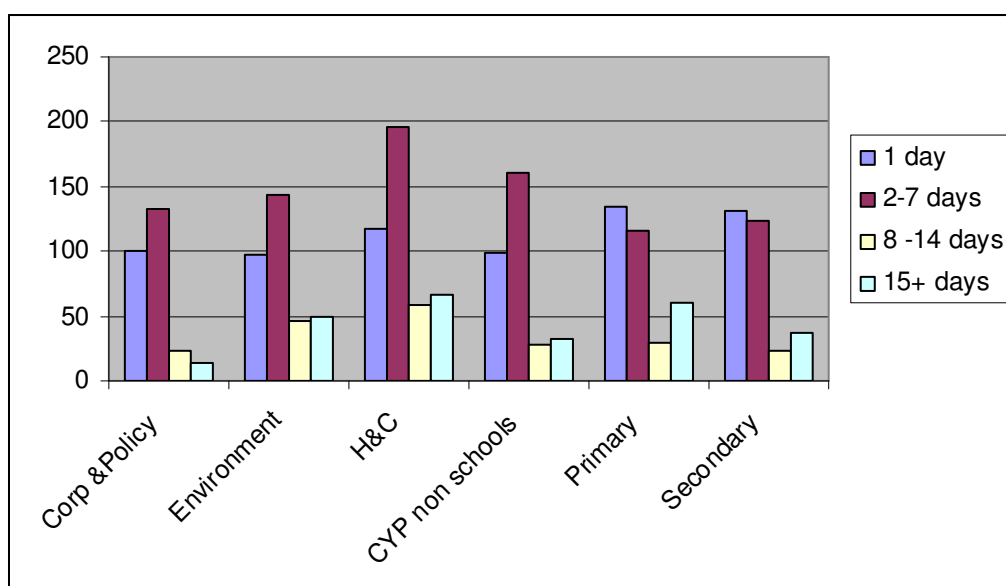
Directorates	Total number of staff	FTE	Total no.days lost 2nd quarter
Corporate &Policy	521	465.02	1016.00
Environment	1046	683.45	2124.50
Health & Community	846	642.39	2764.50
CYP non schools	511	485.68	1586.50
Primary Schools	1411	919.86	1863.00
Secondary Schools	1158	802.36	1434.50
Totals			10,789

- 3.2 The average number of working days lost, due to sickness absence, per employee for the second quarter, 2009/10 is 4.84 as compared with 6.73 in the same quarter 2008/09.

3.3 Absences of between 1 and 7 days continue to account for 76% of all sickness absence and the reasons for short term absence remain colds, infections and stomach problems.

Number of periods of absence by range of days

	1 day	2-7 days	8 -14 days	15+ days
Corporate &Policy	100	132	23	14
Environment	97	144	47	49
Health and Community	118	196	59	67
Children &Young People non schools	98	160	28	32
Primary schools	135	116	29	60
Secondary schools	131	123	23	37



3.4 Long term sickness absence is included in the overall calculation of working days lost for each directorate. Managers across all directorates are continuing to actively monitor employee absence and with the support of the Assistant Personnel/Welfare Officers have successfully resolved a number of long term sickness cases in this quarter.

4.0 OBSERVATIONS ON DATA

4.1 There was a substantial reduction in absences related to colds/infections across each directorate which was to be expected.

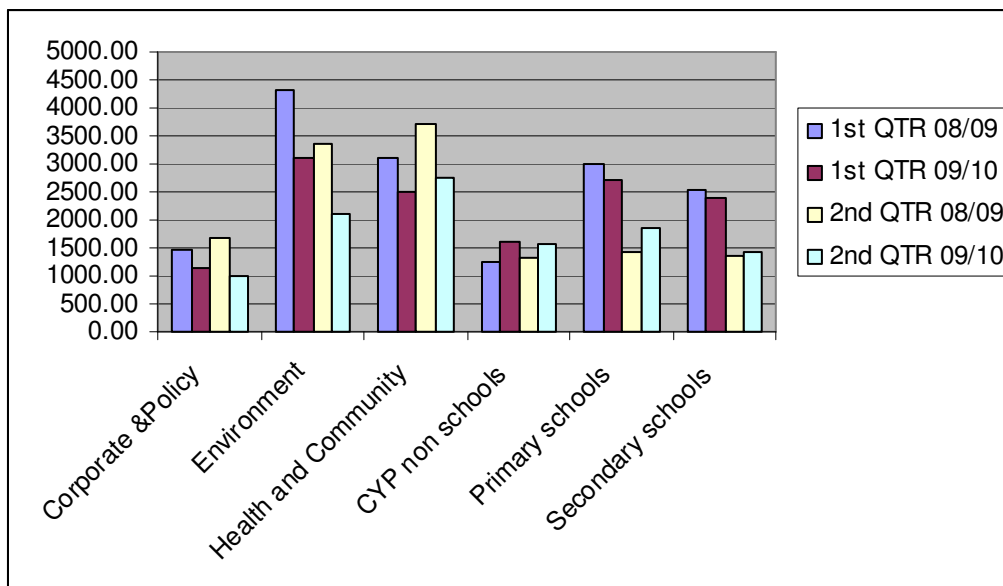
4.2 Through active management of long term sick cases both the Environment and Health & Community Directorates reduced the days lost relating to back pain/musculo skeletal Health in the second quarter.

- 4.3 Across the Authority there has been an overall reduction of 215 days lost due to Personal stress compared to the 1st quarter of this year with CYP (non schools) seeing a substantial reduction. Again this is due to active management of sickness cases.
- 4.4 Absences due to work related stress also reduced from the 1st quarter of this year from 818 days to 707.50. CYP Directorate and secondary schools saw a substantial reduction in days lost due to work related stress.
- 4.5 All staff who are absent from work, long term, suffering from personal or work related stress are being supported by Occupational Health and managers are currently working closely with the Assistant Personnel/Welfare Officers to resolve the ongoing cases.

5.0 COMPARISONS OF DATA – 2008/09 and 2009/10

- 5.1 The table below sets out the total working days lost, due to sickness absence, across the directorates for both the 1st and 2nd quarter 2008/09 and 2009/10. Almost all of the directorates saw a reduction in the number of working days lost in the 2nd quarter of 2009/10 compared with the days lost in the 1st quarter of 2009/10. This can be attributed to managers actively monitoring attendance levels and applying the absence management policy. In comparison with the same quarters in 2008/09 several directorates saw a reduction in working days lost across both quarters. However one directorate, despite a reduction in the days lost in the 2nd quarter 2009/10 when compared to the same quarter 2008/09 the days lost had increased slightly. Further investigations were made into the situation and the reasons for the increase have now been identified. With support from the Assistant Personnel/Welfare Officers the cases have now been resolved.

	1st QTR 08/09	1st QTR 09/10	Difference (days)	2nd QTR 08/09	2nd QTR 09/10	Difference (days)
Corporate & Policy	1,457.50	1,065.50	-392	1,676.50	1,015.90	-660.60
Environment	4,309.50	3,090.00	-1219.50	3,355.00	2,124.50	-1230.5
Health and Community	3,114.50	2,736.00	-378.50	3,709.50	2,764.50	-945
CYP non schools	1,233.00	1,616.00	+383	1,331.50	1,586.50	+255
Primary schools	3,011.00	2,722.00	-289	1,414.00	1,875.00	+461
Secondary schools	2,541.00	2,386.50	-154.5	1,359.00	1,434.50	+75.50
Total days lost	15,666.50	13,616.00	-2050.50	12,845.50	10,789.00	-2056



6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 As we continue to monitor sickness absence across the Authority it is envisaged that the Sickness Absence Policy will be reviewed to ensure absence is managed effectively.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Failure to monitor absence levels and trends may lead to increased levels of ill health and appropriate support may not be given to employees. This may lead to challenge through Tribunal for disability discrimination or insurance claims.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 It is important that the Council can demonstrate that all employees are treated equally and fairly with regard to their sickness absences.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Failure to address levels of sickness absence will lead to increasing costs for the authority.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

10.1 There are no specific implications for the Council's priorities save for the obvious ones relating to the health of the Council's employees.

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.