

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: Wednesday 22nd January 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Policy & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Sickness Absence – 2nd Quarter 2013/2014

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a report on the number of working days lost in the 2nd quarter 2013/14.
- 1.2 To report on comparative data from 2nd quarter 2012/2013.

2.0 RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION - SICKNESS DATA

- 3.1 The breakdown for the 2nd quarter of 2013/14 for each directorate is set out below:

Directorates	Total number of staff	FTE	Total no. days lost 2 nd quarter (July–Sept)
Policy & Resources	754	666	1785
Communities	1172	813	3418
Children & Enterprise non schools	618	484	1655
Primary Schools	1235	905	1613
Secondary Schools	649	564	529

3.2 The cumulative number of working days lost due to sickness absence, per employee, at the end of the 2nd quarter 2013/14 is 5.14 has increased as compared to 4.35 days per employee for the same period 2012/13.

3.3 Number of periods of absence by range of days

	1 day	2-7 days	8 -14 days	15+ days	Total no. of periods of absence	Total days lost
Policy & Resources	74	110	30	49	263	1785
Communities	113	155	63	108	439	3418
Children & Enterprise (non schools)	44	81	27	50	202	1655
Primary schools	118	109	18	54	299	1613
Secondary schools	43	32	9	17	101	529

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 with the support of the Employee Welfare Advisers.

3.5 The table below shows the top seven reasons for sickness absence lost in the 2nd quarter 2013/14.

Absence reason	Days lost 2nd qtr 2013/14
Infections, to include colds and flu	534
Work related stress	627
Depression	848
Cancer	927
Personal stress	981
Stomach, liver, kidney & digestion; to include gastroenteritis	1127
Other musculo-skeletal problems	1384

3.6 OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATA

The number of days lost due to depression and personal stress have decreased slightly since the last quarter due to the resolution of a number of long term sickness cases. Absence due to infections to colds has also substantially decreased, as expected, this quarter as compared with the last quarter. Welfare Advisers continue to work with managers to support all employees who are off long term sick especially those who are absent with depression/stress to enable a successful return to work.

3.7 COMPARISONS OF DATA – 2nd quarter 2013/2014 and 2012/13

3.8 The number of occasions of absences for each of the range of days have decreased as compared to the same quarter 2012/13.

Periods of absence by range of days.

2nd quarter	1 day	2-7 days	8-14 days	15+ days	Total no occasions
2012/13	355	485	145	263	1248
2013/14	392	487	147	278	1304

3.9 The table below gives a few examples of categories where there have been reductions/increases in the number of days lost in the 2nd quarter 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Absence reason	2nd qtr 2013/14 days lost	2nd qtr 2012/13 days lost
Heart, blood pressure & circulation	272	78
Cancer	927	395
Chest/Respiratory	258	446
Infections to colds etc	650	534
Other musculo skeletal	1384	998

3.10 There has been an increase in the overall number of days lost in the 2nd quarter 2013/14 as compared to the same quarter 2012/13. Absence levels across Policy & Resources and Children & Enterprise increased slightly however there has been a substantial increase in the number of days lost in Primary schools. This is currently being investigated further.

3.11 Employee Welfare Advisers will continue to support managers across the directorates and schools in managing staff attendance.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

N/A

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**
- 6.2 **Employment, Learning, and Skills in Halton**
- 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**
- 6.4 **A Safer Halton**
- 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

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. Sickness absence has both capacity and financial consequences for the Council if not managed effectively.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The Council is better protected from future challenge of disability or other discrimination if all employees are treated equally and fairly with regard to their sickness absences.

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

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