

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Communities

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Sickness Absence – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2013/2014

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide information to the Board on the number of working days lost in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2013/14.
- 1.2 To report on comparative data from 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2012/2013 and to outline the overall out-turn figure for sickness absence for the last financial year.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That**

- (1) **the content of the report be noted;**
- (2) **Managers be reminded of the need to proactively apply the Council's sickness policies and seek the support and guidance of the HR Team.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION - SICKNESS DATA**

- 3.1 The breakdown for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2013/14 for each directorate is set out below;

Directorates	Total number of staff	FTE	Total no. days lost 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter (Jan–March)
Policy & Resources	754	666	1803
Communities	1172	813	3671
Children & Enterprise non schools	618	484	2070
Primary Schools	1235	905	4177

Secondary Schools	649	564	1056
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3.2 The cumulative number of working days lost due to sickness absence, per employee, at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2013/14 is 11.24 which has increased as compared to 10.06 days per employee for the same period 2012/13. This is disappointing as the trend, prior to last year, had been downwards.

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	97	149	27	47	320	1803
Communities	121	235	75	104	535	3671
Children & Enterprise (non schools)	47	110	20	73	250	2070
Primary schools	240	285	66	123	714	4177
Secondary schools	110	125	23	18	276	1056

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 HR & Development Officers.

3.5 The table below shows the top reasons for sickness absence lost in the 4th quarter 2013/14.

Absence reason	Days lost 4 <sup>th</sup> qtr 2013/14
Infections, to include colds and flu	1506
Chest & Respiratory	898
Depression	968
Back and neck problems	1006
Personal stress	1339
Stomach, liver, kidney & digestion; to include gastroenteritis	1304

Other musculo-skeletal problems	1360
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### 3.6 OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATA

The number of days lost due to infections (to include colds, flu) and chest/respiratory have increased as would be expected due to the time of year. Days lost to other musculo-skeletal problems has also increased however the number of days lost relating to cancer and stomach and liver problems have decreased slightly due to the resolution of a number of long term sickness cases. The HR & Development Officers continue to work with managers to support attendance management.

### 3.7 COMPARISONS OF DATA – 4th 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

4th quarter	1 day	2-7 days	8-14 days	15+ days	Total no occasions
2012/13	702	1056	247	285	2290
2013/14	615	904	211	365	2095

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 4th quarter 2012/13 and 2013/14.

<b>Absence reason</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> qtr 2013/14 days lost</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> qtr 2012/13 days lost</b>
Cancer	649	804
Back/neck	1006	528
Infections to colds etc	2167	1506
Personal stress	1339	1461

3.10 There has been an increase in the overall number of days lost in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2013/14 as compared to the same quarter 2012/13 across all directorates.

3.11 HR & Development Officers will continue to support managers across the directorates and schools in managing staff attendance.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 As the monitoring of sickness absence across the Council continues, it is envisaged that the Sickness Absence Policy will continue to be reviewed, in consultation with the Trade Unions, to ensure absence is managed effectively.

#### **5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 Failure to monitor absence levels and trends may lead to increased levels of ill health and appropriate support may not be provided to employees. Increased levels of sickness reduce the capacity of the organisation at a time when resources are under pressure.

#### **6.0 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.

#### **7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

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