

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda Item:

A.4

Meeting Date: 10 October 2013
 Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources
 Key Decision: No
 Within Policy and Budget Framework: No
 Public / Private: Public

Title: 2013/14 Sickness Absence Report – April to August 2013
 Report of: Chief Executive
 Report Number: CE 10/13

Purpose / Summary:

This report sets out the authority’s sickness absence levels for the period April 2013 to August 2013, 2012/13 benchmarking, Occupational Health usage statistics and other sickness absence related information.

Recommendations:

1. Consider and comment on the information on sickness absence provided in the report.

Tracking

Executive:	N/A
Overview and Scrutiny:	Resources 10 October 2013
Council:	N/A

1. BACKGROUND

The authority experienced an 18% reduction in absenteeism in 2012/13 (year end 9.06 working days lost) compared to the previous year. This was attributed to less stress related absences (the main cause of absence in 2011/12), revised attendance management policies and the introduction of a wider employee assistance programme. Human Resources (HR) Officers also worked closely with managers of teams with high absenteeism.

1.1 2012/13 BENCHMARKING

North West Employers have collated the region's local authority sickness absence statistics for 2012/13. The average (mean) number of days lost per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employee, for all authority types, was 8.66 days. This figure includes all 18 district councils and 18 of 22 upper tier authorities. After three years of improving sickness absence figures this represents an end to the downward trend in the North West, but this is still the second lowest figure since their records began in 2001.

The average (mean) for north west district councils is 8.03 days lost per FTE (up from 7.78 days in 2011/12). This includes data from all 18 districts in Lancashire and Cumbria. Whilst Carlisle's sickness absence levels are still fourteenth out of eighteen north west authorities, we have improved from last place in 2011/12 and our year-on-year reduction goes against the upward trend of days lost in the other north west authorities.

Graph 2 in the appendices shows Carlisle's position in relation to the other north west district councils.

1.2 2013/14 PERFORMANCE

Appendix 1 shows the sickness absence levels split by directorate in the first five months of the year. Compared to the same period of last year, 2013/14 levels have so far reduced by approximately 22% to 2.9 days lost per FTE employee. Profiled over a year this equates to a forecast of 7.1 days per FTE.

Five out of six directorates have experienced a reduction in sickness absence whilst the percentage of sickness that is long term (more than 28 days) has also slightly reduced. The reasons for sickness absence are shown in Table 1 on the next page. As with 2012/13 'other musculo-skeletal problems' continues to be the biggest contributor.

Table 1: Reasons for Sickness Absence 2013/14

Reason for Sickness Absence	Days Lost (FTE)	Proportion of total
02 Other musculo-skeletal problems	445	30%
03 Stress, depression, mental health, fatigue syndromes	305	20%
08 Stomach, liver, kidney & digestion (incl. gastroenteritis)	204	14%
04 Infections (incl. colds and flu)	149	10%
10 Chest & respiratory (incl. chest infections)	113	8%
01 Back and neck problems	81	5%
09 Heart, blood pressure & circulation	42	3%
11 Ear, eye, nose & mouth / dental (incl. sinusitis)	26	2%
06 Genito-urinary / gynaecological	22	1%
05 Neurological (incl. headaches and migraine)	21	1%
12 Other / Not Specified	90	6%

1.3 RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEWS

For the rolling twelve months to end of August 2013, 95.2% of return to work interviews (RTW) were completed. This is similar to 95.5% in 2012/13. Please see Table 2 below for a breakdown by directorate. The majority of the remaining 4.8% can be attributed to employees leaving the organisation whilst absent or employees only briefly returning to work in between periods of sickness absences.

Table 2: Return to Work Interviews Conducted (rolling 12 months)

Directorate	% of RTWs conducted
Chief Executive's Office	100
Community Engagement	95
Economic Development	100
Governance	100
Local Environment	90
Resources	100
All Directorates	95.2

1.4 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

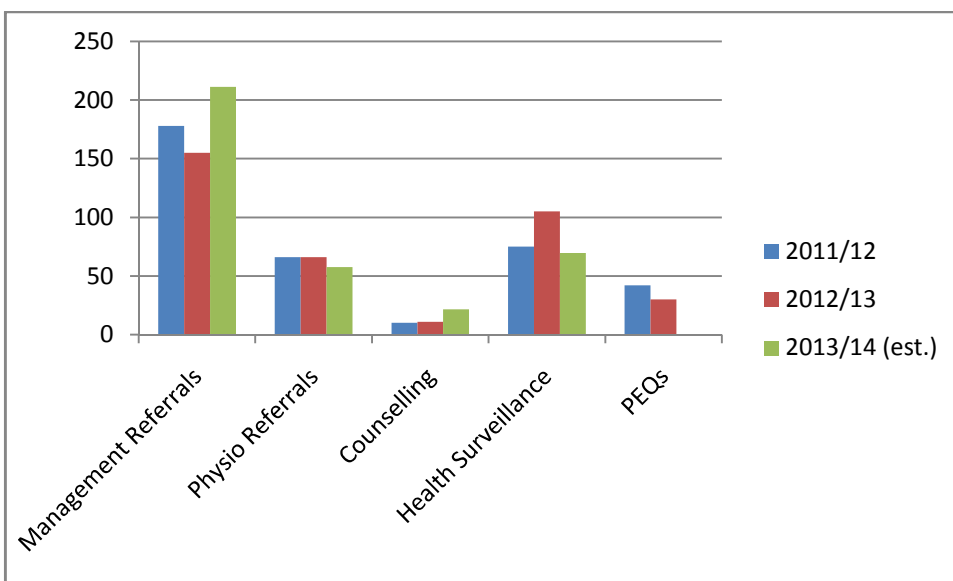
The graph below provides a summary of the usage figures for the authority's Occupational Health provider WellWork Ltd. The 2013/14 figures are estimates based on the first five months of the year.

PEQs stands for Pre Employment Questionnaires and are conducted as part of a new employee's initial health screening. They have been completed online since the end of last year and it is now difficult to quantify usage as if there are no health issues a fitness certificate is automatically generated through WellWork's online system.

Also worth noting is that an accurate total employee usage figure would not be provided if all categories were added together as some people may have used more than one service as part of the same issue e.g. following a PEQ an employee may have required continued health surveillance. The referrals are the number of initial referrals received and seen and not total number of visits as some may be seen more than once

Excluded from these figures are the number of people seen as part of the periodic health and wellbeing days.

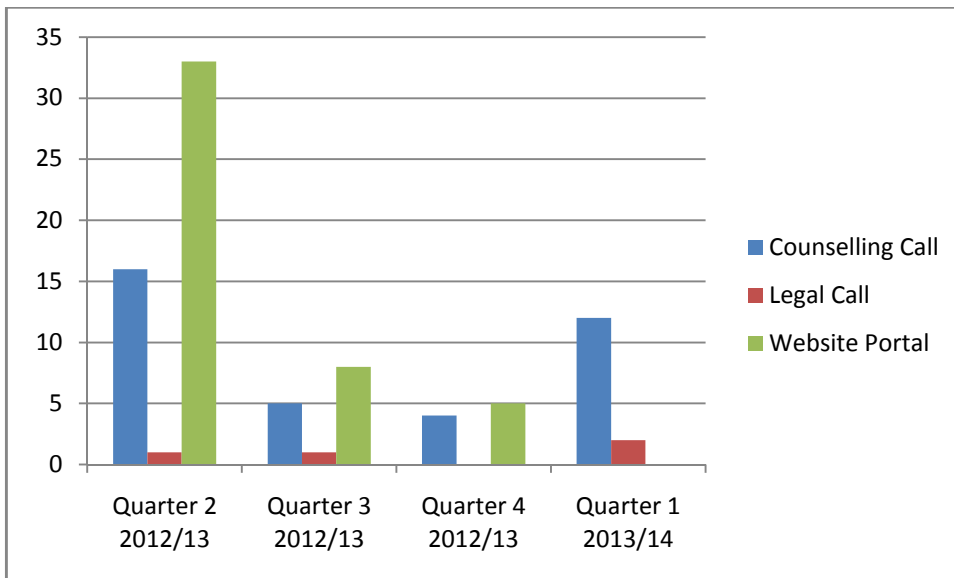
Graph 1: Occupational Health Usage



Since July 2012 the authority's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) has been provided by Health Assured which is an independent external organisation who work to a robust professional code of strict confidentiality. It is intended to help employees deal with personal problems that might adversely impact their work performance, health and wellbeing. It is accessed via a telephone line with further information available on their website portal.

The service usage is shown in Graph 2 below and is split by category.

Graph 2: *EAP Usage*



2. PROPOSALS

The authority continues to monitor sickness absence levels.

3. CONSULTATION

The initial report was reviewed by the Senior Management Team on 6 August 2013.

4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel are asked to comment on the quarter one sickness information with a view to driving continuous improvement.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

Monitoring sickness absence to help ensure the staff resources available to deliver the Carlisle Plan are maximised.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

Appendix 1: Sickness Absence Levels 2013/14 (April to August 2013)

1. All Directorates						
PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	01/04/13-31/08/13	Forecast
CC912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE	9.3	11.1	9.1	2.9	7.1
CC912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	5910 (FTE)	6200	5372	1552	3725
CC923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)	47%	58%	57%	51%	N/A
2. Community Engagement						
PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	01/04/13-31/08/13	Forecast
CE912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	9.2	14	8.8	2.5	5.9
CE912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	2132 (FTE)	2700	1785	456	1094
CE923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)		67%	51%	36%	N/A
3. Economic Development						
PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	01/04/13-31/08/13	Forecast
ED912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	5.7	4.7	4.3	1	2.4
ED912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	320 (FTE)	206	206	43	103
ED923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)		30%	42%	0%	N/A
4. Governance						
PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	01/04/13-31/08/13	Forecast
GV912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	5.8	5.1	5.4	0.8	2
GV 912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	143 (FTE)	108	136	19	46
GV923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)		51%	57%	74%	N/A

5. Local Environment						
PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	01/04/13-31/08/13	Forecast
LE912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	10.2	11.8	9.7	4.6	11.1
LE912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	2262 (FTE)	2436	2042	767	1841
LE923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)		58%	59%	64%	N/A

6. Resources						
PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	01/04/13-31/08/13	Forecast
RS912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	10.2	8.4	13	2.8	6.7
RS912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	840 (FTE)	636	1143	259	622
RS923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)		43%	67%	48%	N/A

7. Chief Executive's Team						
PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	01/04/13-31/08/13	Forecast
CT912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	10.7	6.7	3.3	0.4	1.1
CT912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	214 (FTE)	114	61	8	19
CT923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)		61%	0%	0%	N/A

Graph 3 (Source: North West Employers)

Average sick days per FTE employee - North West District Councils - 2012/13

