

Monitoring of Sickness Absence in Schools Period 1/8/12 – 31/7/13
Summary Report

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1** This report sets out details of performance on sickness absence in Lewisham schools for the period 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013. The data capture date was 13 August 2013. The data shows the reported sickness absence levels across Lewisham schools as a whole, as well as individual school performances. The scope of the data is restricted to those schools that remain on the Lewisham Council payroll; schools supported by external payroll providers are not included.
- 1.2** The average number of days lost due to sickness absence for the year ending 31 July 2013 was **7.73 days per employee**. In the previous year, ending 31st July 2012, the average number of days lost to sickness absence in schools was **7.67 days per employee**. This represents a 0.78% increase.
- 1.3** Excluding all long term absences the average number of days lost per employee was **3.57 days per employee**. In the corresponding period in the previous year this figure was **3.84 days**. This represents a 7% reduction.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1** Schools' Forum is asked to:
- Note the latest monitoring data to 31 July 2013 as detailed in the appended charts and listings (to be tabled at the meeting).
 - Suggest any further actions to be taken to manage / reduce sickness absence.

3. Context

- 3.1** According to the CIPD 2012 Annual Survey Report on Absence Management, public sector workers had an average 7.9 days off due to sickness absence in the year. This compares to an average of 7.7 days across the whole of the UK workforce. The cost in the public sector averages £600 per employee per annum and factors included in the calculation of average cost are occupational sick pay, statutory sick pay, temporary cover, additional overtime costs and lost service provision.

4. Main Findings – Lewisham Schools

4.1 Secondary Schools Performance

4.1.1 During the period 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013, the average sickness absence per employee was **8.03 days**. This compares to a figure of 7.44 days in the previous year – an increase of 8%.

4.1.2 The increase occurred as a result of the impact of long term absence cases at Sydenham and Bonus Pastor Catholic College. These cases are being dealt with through the formal process as are many other such cases in schools. It is anticipated that the upward trend over the last 12 months will be reversed in 2013/14. At both schools the short term absence rates are low.

4.1.3 A chart showing the performance of each school, during the latest reported 12-month period, will be tabled at the 26th September meeting.

4.2 Primary and Nursery Schools Performance

4.2.1 During the period 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013, the average sickness absence per employee was **7.01 days**. This compares to a figure of 6.87 days in the previous year – an increase of 2%.

4.2.2 A chart showing the performance of each school during the latest reported 12-month period is attached.

4.3 Special Schools Performance

4.3.1 During the period 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013, the average sickness absence per employee was **11.49 days**. This compares to a figure of 13.46 days in the previous year.

4.3.2 A chart showing the performance of each school during the latest reported 12-month period is attached – a reduction of 14.6%.

5 UK workforce comparisons

The annual Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey carried out in 2012 reported the following:

- Public sector average days lost per employee - 7.9 days
- Non-profit sector average days lost per employee - 8.2 days
- Education sector average days lost per employee - 9.2 days
- Health organisations average days lost per employee - 9.4 days
- Private sector average days lost per employee - 5.8 days

- UK workforce overall average days lost per employee – 7.7 days

6 Schools not on the Lewisham payroll

- 6.1** Academies and Lewisham schools with external payroll providers were asked to provide absence data for the purpose of comparison. These requests were sent to the following schools:

Prendergast (Vale, Hilly Fields and Ladywell Fields), Knights Academy, Tidemill Academy, Deptford Park, Sedgemoor, Rushey Green, Turnham, St Matthew Academy, Haberdashers Askes.

Only Turnham (9.26 days per employee) and St Matthew Academy (7.91 days per employee) responded.

7 Reasons for absence

The main reasons for absence during the 2012/13 school year, which account for 70% of the total of all absences, are:

'Stress related'	13%
'Infection'	13%
'Musculo-skeletal'	11%

Reasons not reported / recorded 33%

8 Summary

Performance across schools overall has 'flat-lined' over the last 12 months.

Performance overall in primary and secondary schools has deteriorated – primary schools by 2%; secondary schools by nearly 8%.

Performance in special schools has improved by 14.6%

The CIPD 2012 Annual Survey Report on Absence Management gives an indication that overall Lewisham schools' performance compares favourably with the average absence rates drawn from the public sector organisations that contributed to the Survey. Human Resources will continue to lead on the development of good practice and generate new ideas to manage absence, where appropriate. However, to support a sustained reduction school leadership must continue to actively monitor sickness levels and take prompt action in appropriate cases within their schools to ensure attendance levels are improved / absence rates are reduced.

Appendices (to be tabled at the 26 September meeting)

- School to school comparison between performance in 2011/12 and 2012/13
- All schools bar chart – quartiles

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