

Sir Derek Jones KCB
Ysgrifennydd Parhaol
Permanent Secretary



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Russell George AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Russell,

31st August 2014

You recently submitted a Written Assembly Question (WAQ67620) to the First Minister asking:

Since the start of the Fourth Assembly, how much time has been taken off by civil servants due to illness and what were the associated costs to the Welsh Government in each of those financial years?

The table below details the total number of sickness days taken during each of the last three calendar years and the average working days lost per person in each year. Between 1 January 2014 and 30 June 2014, a total of 20,126.1 days absence have been recorded (FTE adjusted), equating to 3.63 average working days lost per person. The current year figures are, however, subject to change as adjustments are made for some time after a reporting period, primarily to take account of inaccuracies in individual reporting. Sickness absence levels are also greatly influenced by a number of factors throughout the year, such as seasonal changes, public holidays, periodic outbreaks of specific illnesses etc. For these reasons, it would not be appropriate to assume that the six-month position will be reflective of the position at the end of the year.

Calendar Year	Total Days Lost (FTE Adjusted)	Average Working Days Lost (per person)
2011	38,736.30	7.32
2012	39,009.56	7.45
2013	38,301.92	7.07

It is not possible to fully calculate the financial cost of these absences. The costs will vary according to the salary of the member of staff who is taking sick leave, and the actions taken by management in the business area to mitigate the consequences of the absence. This information is not held centrally.

Our absence levels compare favourably with the rest of the public sector in Wales and we are constantly reviewing the way that we manage sickness absence, to further improve our performance in this area. We have established a dedicated Case Management Unit, to support staff with longer term health problems and assist them in returning to work as early as possible, and we are currently developing a programme of support measures to assist managers and staff in dealing with sickness absence.

Yours,
Derek

