

Report to Resources Committee

25 February 2014



Title: Sickness Absence and Human Resources Update

Report of: Support Services Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with an update on general HR initiatives and developments from 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2013 to include sickness absence, and learning and development activity.

Employee and HR Monitoring Digest

2. Attached at Appendix 1 to this report is an analysis of the key employee data and HR monitoring to provide the committee with an overview of the Company's performance and key priorities. There are no areas to highlight

Sickness Absence Update

3. Attached at Appendix 2 is an analysis of the sickness absence levels for the period from April to December 2013.
4. Appendix 3 provides in a graphical format the reasons for absence within each directorate of the company for the period April to December 2013.
5. In comparing absence between April and December 2013 with same period in the previous year, the following trends have occurred.
6. The total sickness absence for the period equates to 5.52 days per person compared to 5.76 days for the same period last year which is a reduction of 4.17%.
7. Short term absence is defined as a period of less than 15 working days in duration and long term absence is greater than 15 days in duration. Short term absence for the period was 2.14 days per person and long term absence was 3.38 days. This compares with 2.28 days short term absence and 3.49 days long term absence for the same period last year. This represents a reduction of 6.14% in short term absence and an increase of 3.15% in long term absence.

8. The biggest cause of absence was post operation recovery with 516 days lost compared to 315 days lost last year. This is an increase of 38.95%.
9. Stress related absence was 373 days for the period April to December 2013 compared to 746 days for the same period last year. This equates to a 50% reduction.
10. 267 days of stress related absence was reported as non work related stress. This equates to 71.6% as non work related absence and 28.4% work related absence.
11. A personal support package continues to be provided to employees who are absent due to stress to include occupational health, home visits, counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Managing Sickness Absence

12. The company has held 18 sickness absence review meetings (short term) in the period April to December 2013. These meetings are triggered in response to four periods of absence or two periods of 15 days or more in a rolling 12 month period.
13. Five first written cautions were issued and one second written caution was issued following an absence review meeting.
14. Under procedure two an absence management review (long term absence) considers an employee's health and future employability with the company. Options discussed at the absence reviews include phased return to work, redeployment, work life balance, reduced hours, reasonable adjustments to the working environment and ill health retirement.
15. Eleven absence review meetings were held in the period April to December 2013.
16. In the period April to December 2013, four employees attended an occupational health physician's appointment as a result of absence review meetings.
17. In the period April to December 2013, seven cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)/counselling sessions were supported by the company.
18. In October 2013 the company started working with an Occupational Therapist who specialises in supporting individuals with impaired mental wellbeing.
19. In the period October to December 2013 14 occupational therapy sessions were supported by the company.
20. In the period April to December 2013, 23 employees were referred to occupational health for an initial assessment. 43 employees attended an occupational health review.
21. Nine employees returned to work on phased hours and duties in the period April to December 2013.

22. Management information and guidance on managing sickness absence is provided to managers on a monthly basis.

NE Health and Wellbeing Award

23. Amacus Ltd. attended the Housing Company in December to assess the company against the Better Health at Work Award standard. The award comes in three levels, bronze, silver and gold. Organisations cannot move straight to gold by must pass through each level in turn.
24. The assessment consisted of a portfolio review of the company's health and wellbeing activity, initiatives and policies and procedures. Findings from the assessment were submitted to a regional coordinator for verification.
25. In January 2014 we were informed that our portfolio and on site assessment had achieved Bronze level. The assessor was extremely complimentary of our portfolio submission and commented that it reflected silver or gold level.

Health and Wellbeing

26. In November 20 employees attended occupational health for a Flu vaccination. The treatment was on site and offered to employees at a reduced cost by occupational health services.
27. The company held a "Souper Day" event in December. The aim of event was to encourage employees to think about soup as a simple healthy lunch option.
28. Jon Mallen-Beadle and Neil Bouch, along with the Heads of Service and employees accepted the challenge to 'peddle' the length and breadth of the borough on the "Fender Blender" cycle located in Keelman House reception. They blended a variety of hot soups for employees and distributed across the housing office network on the day.
29. In December employees were also encouraged make healthy homemade soup for colleagues. Several teams entered and in return had a chance of winning one of four soup making hampers.
30. We continue to investigate initiatives that will help us to better understand the causes of depression, anxiety and stress. We aim to use the knowledge gained in this area to research new initiatives to assist employees to manage their condition and remain in work.

Information Sharing

31. The Company continues to work with Gateshead Council to more closely align our services through sharing information and initiatives.

Other HR initiatives and Developments

32. The chiropodist has attended Keelman House on nine occasions in the period April 2013 to December 2013. 93 appointments were attended by employees. The chiropodist also carried out appointments at Blaydon housing office where

seven employees attended and Wrekenton housing office where five employees attended.

33. The Pay Day Pamper Days have been reintroduced. Eight sessions have been held and 50 employees attended appointments in the period April 2013 to December 2013.

Work Life Balance

34. In the period April to December 2013, the following work life balance applications have been approved:

No of Applications	Type of Work Life Balance Request
7	Applications to reduce working hours
2	Application for compressed hours

Investigation and Disciplinary

35. In the period April to December 2013 the following activities have taken place:

Investigation	Outcome
3	1 Progressed to Disciplinary meeting
Disciplinary	Outcome
1	1 Dismissal
Appeal	Outcome
1	Not Upheld

Grievances

36. In the period April to December 2013, there were no reported grievances.

Bullying and Harassment

37. In the period April to December 2013 there were no allegations of bullying or harassment.

Probity (including whistleblowing, bribery, fraud and corruption)

38. In the period April to December 2013, there was whistleblowing incident reported.

Other HR Initiatives and Developments

Recruitment

39. In the period April to December 2013, the company has advertised 18 jobs as follows: -

Job title	Method of recruitment	Number of applications
Housing Manager – Customers & Communities	Internal TGHC & Gateshead Council	8
Older Persons Housing Manager – Customers & Communities	Internal to TGHC employees only	5
Administration Assistant Housing Services – Customers & Communities	Internal TGHC & Gateshead Council	3
Leasehold Officer – Corporate Services	Internal TGHC & Gateshead Council	19
Customer Service Assistant – Customers & Communities	Advertised Externally	80
Technical Clerk – Corporate Services	Internal TGHC & Gateshead Council	5
Administration Assistant Housing Services – Customers & Communities	Advertised Externally	128
Administration Assistant, Legal Recovery – Customers & Communities	Advertised Internal TGHC & Gateshead Council initially then went External	3 Initially then 111
Electrical Auditor - Customers & Communities	Internal TGHC & Gateshead Council	3
Advice Assistant (6posts) – Customers & Communities	Internal Vacancy ring fenced to TGHC Repairs Reporting & Improvement Team Only	14
Housing Management Assistant – Customers & Communities	Internal TGHC & Gateshead Council	4
Project Officer – Corporate Services	Internal TGHC & Gateshead Council	4
Rent & Income Officer – Customers & Communities	Internal TGHC & Gateshead Council	10
Housing Management Assistant (Multi Storey) – Customers & Communities	Internal TGHC and Gateshead Council	10
Clerical Assistant, Finance – Corporate Services	Internal TGHC and Gateshead Council	1

Job title	Method of recruitment	Number of applications
Clerical Assistant, Investment & Development	Internal TGHC and Gateshead Council	1
Building Surveyor, Investment & Development	Internal to TGHC employees only	1
Housing Officer – Customers & Communities	Internal TGHC and Gateshead Council	8

Child Care Scheme

40. The company continues to offer a salary sacrifice scheme. In December 2013, 11 employees were in the scheme.

Learning and Development Activity

Repairs Team Event

41. The repairs team has gone through significant structure changes. In conjunction with the Home Repairs Manager, organisational development has developed a team build event to help develop new relationships and build on existing relationships. The event re-invigorated the team and has helped them to prepare for the challenges of working to a revised structure. The event was delivered in a local community hall.

Customer Service Training

42. We have developed and delivered Customer Service Training. The training has been rolled out to 250 employees in facilitated workshops. Delegates provided suggestions on ways the company can improve customer service. Feedback has been shared at the service managers meeting and will form part of service plans and appraisal objectives.

North East (NE) Employment and Skills Network

43. We continue to attend the NE Employment and Skills Network. This provides a valuable way of sharing best practice about apprenticeship schemes, financial inclusion and worklessness and increasing employment opportunities for the wider community.

Training Matrix

44. Meetings have been held with managers to review and confirm training needs for all roles within the company. We are carrying out a gap analysis to ensure employees training needs are identified. The updated training matrix will be available on the appraisal system for managers to review and prioritise attendance on training. Priority will be given to mandatory courses to include health and safety.

Investors in People

45. During October Lesley Curtis provided feedback on the outcomes of the IIP mini diagnostic. A working group led by Neil Bouch has been set up to focus on the development areas in preparation for the assessment due in June 2014.

Health and Safety Training

46. In the period April to December 2013, the following health and safety training has been delivered:
- Asbestos Awareness
 - Appointed first aider training (3 days with test to become a first-aider)
 - COSHH Interactive
 - COSHH - classroom
 - Driving Safety
 - DSE Interactive
 - Fire Safety
 - Health and Safety for Managers
 - Induction Safety Interactive
 - Manual Handling Interactive
 - Office Safety Interactive
 - Stress Management
 - Risk Assessment one day course and refresher
 - One day first aid training
 - Water Mains Connection and L8 Regulations and How this affects what we Do (one hour workshop delivered by Gateshead Council)

ICT Training

47. In the period April to December 2013 the following ICT training has been delivered:
- May 13: Informal training for asset management team in Microsoft Project.
 - June 13 – July 13: Keystone Asbestos Register E-Learning. 35 individuals from across the company completed an e-learning module.
 - Nov 13 – Jan 14 – Northgate v6 Tenancies Signup manuals (currently in production and review by Housing Management)

Link to values

48. This report links to the following company values: -
- Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being motivated, trained and committed across the company
 - Being caring and respecting
 - A commitment to all our employees
 - Embracing equality

Impact on Customers

49. Sickness absence impacts on the level of service provided to customers. Every effort is taken to keep this to a minimum. Managing absence and delivering in our commitment to have a well trained and responsive workforce will directly lead to improved services to customers.

Risk Management Implications

50. Manager's not managing sickness in accordance with Policy has been identified as an operational risk and controls and future actions are in place to mitigate the risk.
51. Absence due to an epidemic has also been identified as an operational risk and if there was an epidemic which significantly reduced the workforce, this would be addressed through the Business Continuity Plan once it has been launched and gone live.

Financial Implications

52. The financial cost of sickness absence to the Company for the period April to December 2013 was £185,924 as compared to £199,353 for the same period last year.

Equality and Diversity Implications

53. The Company's commitment to being an equal opportunities employer is an integral part of every aspect of the company's activities. All training is designed to meet the diverse needs of the community and employees.

Value for Money implications

54. We continue to manage sickness absence in order to maximise service delivery to tenants and customers. Through an increased use of internal delivery and development value for money is being achieved. We aim to use the most beneficial methods of delivery to maximise the return for the benefit of the company and customers. Value for money principles are followed in all aspects of the service to include work life balance requests, recruitment and selection.

Health Implications

55. The initiatives and prevention work that has been introduced over the past year have had a positive impact on the health of our employees. The clearest measure of this is the achievement of Investors in People (IiP) Gold award and Health and wellbeing award and the North East Health and Wellbeing Award Bronze level (January 2014)
56. The Company's commitment to learning and development is embedded in the Investors in People award (IiP) and is applied consistently across the company. Our approach to provide tailored learning will have a positive impact on employee's health and overall wellbeing and will minimise any stress.

Environmental Implications



57. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.



Consultation carried out



58. The Company's HR consultants EEF Northern and Trade Unions have been consulted on aspects of the report. Trade Unions are always consulted prior to any changes being implemented and we continue to enjoy a good relationship with them. A number of the courses delivered and developed were identified by employees, as part of the annual appraisal process.

Recommendation

59. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the update on HR initiatives and developments.

 The Gateshead Housing Company Working with Gateshead Council					
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2013/14					
Performance Measure		Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Number of people employed by TGHC					
Male		137	140	143	
Female		187	181	187	
Permanent Employees		323	320	325	
Temporary Employees		1	1	5	
Full Time		261	259	263	
Part Time		63	62	67	
Number of starters (per quarter)		6	4	10	
Number of leavers (per quarter)		6	7	1	
Ill health retirements		0	0	0	
Number of employees seeking redeployment		0	0	0	
Diversity Monitoring					
Gender					
Male		137	140	143	
Female		187	181	187	
Age					
Under 18		0	0	0	
18 – 25		21	18	20	
26 – 35		108	106	106	
36 – 45		71	72	75	
46 – 55		88	84	84	
56 – 65		35	40	42	
66 +		1	1	3	
Disability					
Perceived themselves as disabled		36	37	36	
Do not perceive themselves as disabled		288	284	294	

 The Gateshead Housing Company Working with Gateshead Council					
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2013/14					
Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	
Ethnicity					
White British	310	307	316		
White Irish	2	2	2		
White Other	1	1	1		
White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0		
White and Black African	1	1	1		
White and Asian	1	1	1		
Asian or Asian British Indian	1	1	1		
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0	0	0		
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1	1	1		
Asian or Asian British Other	1	1	1		
Black or Black British Caribbean	0	0	0		
Black or Black British African	4	3	3		
Black or Black British Other	1	1	1		
Chinese	1	1	1		
Other	0	1	1		
Recruitment Monitoring					
Number of BME applicants for posts					
Application for employment	12	1	0		
Short listed for interview	5	1	0		
Offered post	0	0	0		
Number of disabled applicants for posts					
Application for Employment	10	0	2		
Short listed for interview	3	0	2		
Offered post	0	0	Ongoing		
HR advisory issues					
Investigations	1	0	1		
Disciplinary	1	0	0		
Suspensions	1	0	0		
No Further Action	0	0	1		
Oral Warning	0	0	0		
First Written Warning	0	0	0		
Final Written Warning	0	0	0		
Dismissals	1	0	0		
Appeals Submitted	1	0	0		
Stage 1 Grievance	0	0	0		
Stage 2 Grievance	0	0	0		

				
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2013/14				
Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Capability Bullying and Harassment Whistleblowing Employment Tribunals	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 1	0 0 1 1	
Health and Wellbeing				
Total number of working days lost per employee (target 7.50 April to March 2014)	1.63	1.89	2.00	
Total number of working days lost to sickness	488.8	563.5	600.8	
Number of Occupational Health appointments				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New referrals • Review appointments 	8 12	8 16	7 15	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgery appointments • Home appointments 	2 0	0 0	2 0	
Number of employee counselling/CBT sessions	7	0	0	
Number of Absence Management Reviews				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Long Term 	6 0	7 0	5 7	
Number of employees who have had a phased return	2	3	4	
Learning and Development				
Number of new staff receiving induction	5	4	10	
Number of staff undertaking professional Qualifications (report in Qtr 2)	4	13	13	

* Days Lost = No of days absence / FTE in the service

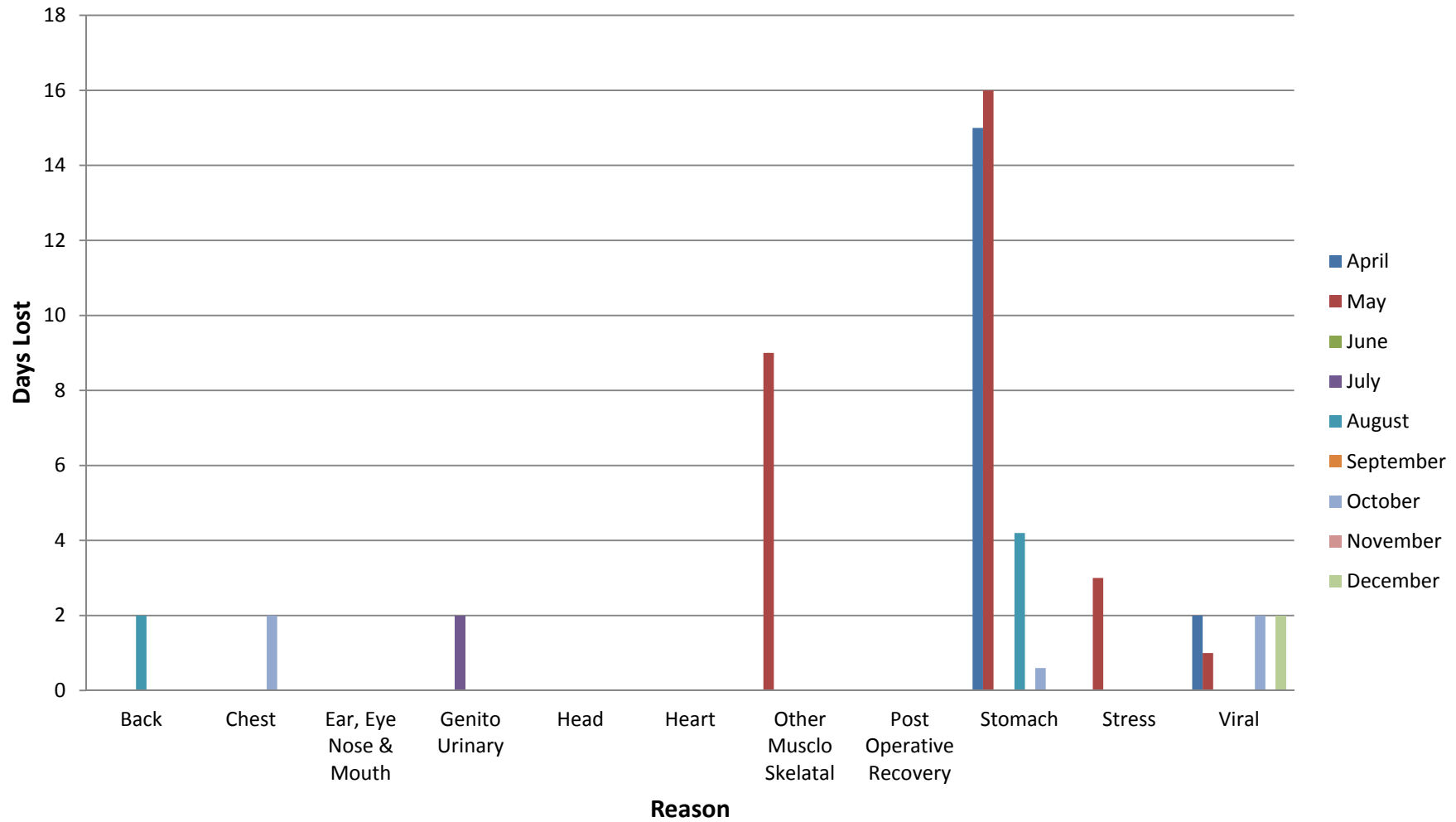
2013/2014	Customers & Communities - Customer Services	Customers & Communities Neighbourhood Services	Customers & Communities Property Services	Corporate Services Finance	Corporate Services Support Services	All employees TGHC	TGHC cumulative	2012/13 TGHC Cumulative	Days Lost per month	Days Lost Short Term Absence	No of Occurences Short Term	Days Lost Long Term Absence	No of Occurences Long Term
April	0.54	0.72	0.03	0.35	0.38	0.54	0.54	0.95	161.00	0.34	29.00	0.20	3.00
May	0.15	0.70	0.19	0.59	0.65	0.48	1.02	2.06	144.50	0.23	21.00	0.25	4.00
June	0.59	0.95	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.61	1.63	3.01	183.30	0.26	23.00	0.35	6.00
July	0.37	1.22	0.15	0.09	0.00	0.69	2.32	3.57	205.40	0.23	19.00	0.46	7.00
August	0.24	1.08	0.40	0.18	0.08	0.62	2.94	3.96	185.90	0.22	17.00	0.40	6.00
September	0.46	0.92	0.31	0.00	0.00	0.58	3.52	4.22	172.20	0.17	18.00	0.41	6.00
October	0.91	0.94	0.15	0.11	0.09	0.71	4.23	4.69	213.50	0.35	31.00	0.36	5.00
November	0.43	1.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.65	4.88	5.27	195.50	0.21	20.00	0.44	7.00
December	0.52	0.98	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.64	5.52	5.76	191.80	0.13	19.00	0.51	9.00
January								6.67					
February								7.18					
March								7.67					
Cumulative by service area									1653.10				53.00

* Days Lost = No of days absence / FTE in the service

BV12

excludes temp employees with <12 months service

Corporate Services



Customers & Communities

