



Report to Resources Committee

9 September 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 April to June 2014, including 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.

Sickness Absence Update

3. Attached at Appendix 2 is an analysis of the sickness absence levels for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2014.
4. Appendix 3 provides in a graphical format the reasons for absence within each directorate of the company for the period 1 April to 30 June 2014.
5. In comparing absence between 1 April and 30 June 2014 with the same period in the previous year, the following trends have occurred.
6. The total sickness absence for the period equates to 2.00 days per person compared to 1.63 days for the same period last year which is an increase of 18.50%, although this is significantly better than the final quarter of last year when 3.06 days were lost.
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 0.76 days per person and long term absence was 1.24 days. This compares with 0.83 days short term absence and 0.80 days long term absence for the same period last year. This represents a reduction of 8.43% in short term absence and an increase of 35.48% in long term absence.

8. The biggest cause of absence was post operation recovery with 194 days lost compared to 165 days lost last year. This is an increase of 15.07%.
9. Stress related absence was 173 days for the period April to June 2014 compared to 36 days for the same period last year.
10. 85 days of stress related absence was reported as non work related stress. This equates to 48% as non-work related absence and 52% work related absence.
11. Of the 173 days lost to stress related absence, six employees reported non-work related stress and four employees reported work related stress
12. A personal support package continues to be provided to employees who are absent due to stress to include occupational health, occupational therapy, home visits, counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Managing Sickness Absence

13. The company has held 14 sickness absence review meetings (short term) in the period 1 April to 30 June 2014. 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.
14. One first written caution was issued and one final written caution was issued following absence review meetings.
15. 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, and reasonable adjustments to the working environment and ill health retirement.
16. 13 absence review meetings were held in line with procedure two in the period 1 April to 30 June 2014.
17. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, five employees attended an occupational health physician's appointment as a result of absence review meetings.
18. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, six cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)/counselling sessions were supported by the company.
19. We continue to work with an Occupational Therapist who specialises in supporting individuals with impaired mental wellbeing. During the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, 37 occupational therapy sessions were supported by the company.
20. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, 13 employees were referred to occupational health for an initial assessment and 17 employees attended an occupational health review.
21. Three employees returned to work on phased hours and duties in the period 1 April to 30 June 2014.
22. One former employee has been approved ill health retirement.

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

Health and Wellbeing

24. 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.
25. The Company continues to work with Gateshead Council to more closely align our services through sharing information and initiatives.

Other HR initiatives and Developments

26. The Company continues to offer a 'pay day pampers' and chiropody service from the Occupational Health suite at Gateshead Civic Centre. Employees are now offered a wider range of appointment dates and times. We will continue to offer these initiatives off site, subject to demand, whenever possible.

Work Life Balance

27. In the period April to June 2014, the following work life balance applications have been approved:

Number of Applications	Type of Work Life Balance Request
1	Application to reduce working hours

Investigation and Disciplinary

28. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, there were no formal investigations, disciplinaries or appeals.

Grievances

29. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, there were no reported grievances.

Bullying and Harassment

30. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, there were no allegations of bullying or harassment.

Probity (including whistleblowing, bribery, fraud and corruption)

31. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, there were no reported incidents.

Other HR Initiatives and Developments

Recruitment

32. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, the Company has advertised nine jobs. One job was ring fenced to company employees, seven were advertised across the Company and Gateshead Council and one advert was external due to no interest internally.

Employment Law Updates

33. Representatives from Human Resources attended a free employment law update in May 2014.
34. The update focussed on recent changes to the employment tribunal procedure, protected conversations and settlement agreements, the introduction of compulsory conciliation via ACAS, the governments National Health and Work Assessment and Advisory Service, changes to the flexible working regulations and new regulations on TUPE.

Child Care Scheme

35. The company continues to offer a salary sacrifice scheme. In June 2014, 10 employees were in the scheme.

Exit Interviews

36. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2014, six employees left the Company. Of these, four exit interviews were held with an HR Advisor. Two employees declined to attend an exit interview or complete a survey and return it to us in the post.
37. Of the four exit interviews carried out comments indicate:
- Employees enjoyed working for The Gateshead Housing Company
 - Employees indicated they had a good relationship with colleagues and management
 - Employees would return to work for the company in the future

Learning and Development Activity

Investors in People (IiP) Networking Event

38. Representatives from Human Resources attended an event which was organised by the company IiP Assessor. The regular meetings are an opportunity for organisations from all sectors in the region to come together and share best practice. The focus of the recent workshop was reward and recognition.

Investors in People (IiP) Awareness Raising

39. Employees who were randomly selected for interview with the IiP Assessor were invited to an awareness raising session. The session was a relaxed and informal opportunity to ask questions and talk through the interview process.

Interview Skills

40. Two Interview Skills workshops were delivered internally. The two hour sessions focussed on skills and techniques to increase confidence during the interview process.

Health and Safety Training

41. In the period April 2014 to June 2014, the following Health and Safety training has been delivered:
- City and Guilds confined spaces training with 12 building surveyors
 - Asbestos training - job specific with the Repairs Team
 - Refresher training with fire marshals and first aiders in the use of evac chairs on civic centre escape routes

ICT Training

42. In the period April 2014 to June 2014, the following ICT training has been delivered:
- An Adobe Captivate e-learning session was created to demonstrate how to create Notepad entries correctly within Northgate. This was distributed to all staff via a Team Briefing and raised the importance of notepad entries to ASB cases.
 - Throughout the period training guides have been provided to key users within Housing Offices for the Document Management System. The guides detail how to scan and index customer documentation (e.g. housing files, letters) into the Document Management System (DMS) and how to retrieve existing documentation from the Northgate Housing System.

Link to values

43. 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

44. 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

45. Manager's not managing sickness in accordance with the policy has been identified as an operational risk and controls and future actions are in place to mitigate the risk.

46. 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

47. The financial cost of sickness absence to the Company for the period April to March 2014 was £68,358 compared to £54,975 for the same period last year.

Equality and Diversity Implications

48. 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

49. 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

50. The initiatives and prevention work that has been introduced over the past year has had a positive impact on the health of our employees. The clearest measure of this is the achievement of Investors in People (IiP) and Health and Wellbeing Award and the Better Health at Work Award Bronze level.
51. 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 stress.

Environmental Implications



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



Consultation carried out



53. 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

54. 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			
Female		182			
Permanent Employees		315			
Temporary Employees		4			
Full Time		257			
Part Time		62			
Number of starters (since 01 April 2014)		0			
Number of leavers (since 01 April 2014)		6			
Ill health retirements		0			
Number of employees seeking redeployment		0			
Diversity Monitoring					
Gender					
Male		137			
Female		182			
Age					
Under 18		0			
18 – 25		18			
26 – 35		95			
36 – 45		80			
46 – 55		78			
56 – 65		44			
66 +		3			
Disability					
Perceived themselves as disabled		35			
Do not perceive themselves as disabled		284			

 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	305			
	White Irish	2			
	White Other	1			
	White and Black Caribbean	0			
	White and Black African	1			
	White and Asian	1			
	Asian or Asian British Indian	1			
	Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0			
	Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1			
	Asian or Asian British Other	1			
	Black or Black British Caribbean	0			
	Black or Black British African	3			
	Black or Black British Other	1			
	Chinese	1			
	Other	0			
Recruitment Monitoring					
Number of BME applicants for posts					
	Application for employment	4			
	Short listed for interview	3			
	Offered post	0			
Number of disabled applicants for posts					
	Application for Employment	0			
	Short listed for interview	0			
	Offered post	0			
HR advisory issues					
	Investigations	0			
	Disciplinary	0			
	Suspensions	0			
	No Further Action	0			
	Oral Warning	0			
	First Written Warning	0			
	Final Written Warning	0			
	Dismissals	0			
	Appeals Submitted	0			
	Stage 1 Grievance	0			
	Stage 2 Grievance	0			
	Capability	0			
	Bullying and Harassment	0			

					
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2013/14					
Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	
Whistleblowing Employment Tribunals	0 0				
Health and Wellbeing					
Total number of working days lost per employee (target 7.50 April 2014 to March 2015)	2.00				
Total number of working days lost to sickness	592				
Number of Occupational Health appointments	30				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New referrals • Review appointments 	13 17				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgery appointments • Home appointments 	30 0				
Number of employee counselling/CBT sessions	43				
Number of Absence Management Reviews	27				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Long Term 	14 13				
Number of employees who have had a phased return	3				
Learning and Development					
Number of new staff receiving induction	0				
Number of staff undertaking professional Qualifications	13				

2014/2015	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 Occurrences Short Term	Days Lost Long Term Absence	No of Occurrences Long Term
April	0.44	1.61	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.91	0.91	0.54	270.20	0.25	24.00	0.66	10.00
May	0.65	1.05	0.22	0.29	0.00	0.74	1.65	1.02	220.20	0.29	19.00	0.45	7.00
June	0.49	0.30	0.26	0.36	0.00	0.35	2.00	1.63	101.60	0.22	25.00	0.13	2.00
July													
August													
September													
October													
November													
December													
January													
February													
March													
Cumulative by service area	1.58	2.96	0.61	0.65	0.00	2.00			592.00	0.76	68.00	1.24	19.00

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

BV12

excludes temp employees with <12 months service

