



Report to Resources Committee

24 February 2015

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 2014 to December 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

3. Attached at Appendix 2 is an analysis of the sickness absence levels for the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014.
4. Appendix 3 provides, in a graphical format, the reasons for absence within each directorate of the company for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014.
5. In comparing absence between 1 April 2014 and 31 December 2014 with the same period in the previous year, the following trends have occurred:
6. The total sickness absence for the period equates to 6.26 days per person, compared to 5.52 days for the same period last year, which is an increase of 11.82%
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 2.67 days per person and long term absence was 3.59 days. This compares with 2.14 days short term absence and 3.38 days long term absence for the same period last year. This represents an increase of 19.85% in short term absence and an increase of 5.85% in long term absence.

8. The biggest cause of absence for the period April 2014 to 30 December 2014 was stress related with 491.50 days lost compared to 373 days lost last year. This is an increase of 24.11%.
9. 270.05 days of stress related absence was reported as non work related stress. This equates to 54.94% as non-work related absence and 45.06% work related absence.
10. Of the 491.50 days lost to stress related absence, this equated to 20 employees, 12 of which reported non-work related stress and eight reported work related stress.
11. Post operation related absence was 461.20 days for the period April 2014 to December 2014, compared to 516 days for the same period last year. This equates to a 10.62% decrease.
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 24 sickness absence review meetings (short term) in the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 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. Three first written cautions were issued, one final written caution was issued and two extensions to existing cautions were 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. 17 absence review meetings were held in line with procedure two in the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014.
17. In the period 1 April 2014 to December 2014, nine occupational health physician's appointments have been attended as a result of an absence review meetings.
18. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014, 65 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 2014 to 31 December 2014, 70 occupational therapy sessions were supported by the company.

20. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014, 36 employees were referred to occupational health for an initial assessment and 41 employees attended an occupational health review.
21. Fifteen employees returned to work on phased hours and duties in the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014.
22. Management information and guidance on managing sickness absence is provided to managers on a monthly basis.

Health and Wellbeing

23. 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.
24. The Company continues to work with Gateshead Council to more closely align our services through sharing information and initiatives.

Review of Occupational Health

25. In February 2014 the company headquarters co-located in Gateshead Council's Civic Centre. The co-location has meant that there are some difficulties in delivering the same service in the new location. The most pressing concern is room availability and confidentiality to deliver the two weekly occupational health appointments and delivery of wellbeing initiatives.
26. Gateshead Council offer occupational health referral and review with slot in appointments with a qualified Doctor, OH nurse or counsellor. Since the company co-located employees have accessed the chiropody and pay day pamper service from a dedicated suite at the civic centre and no problems have been reported.
27. Several meetings have been held with Gateshead Council to consider sharing services. Whilst it is difficult to compare like with like, we are of the view that there are efficiencies to be gained if the council provides a comparable service to Service Medical. The cost of the Council's service provision is £9.70 per employee (c. £3,113.70 for 321 employees) to include physiotherapy, which is a reduction on the cost per employee for Service Medical.
28. We have discussed the importance of close working relationships with Gateshead Council to help us develop individual and companywide solutions and initiatives which may fall outside of a service level agreement. Gateshead Council are supportive of our approach and have confirmed they will do all they can to work with us on this aspect of activity.
29. Our options for the service include remaining with the current provider Service Medical and to manage the concerns about room availability and confidentiality or to appoint Gateshead Council to provide an occupational health and wellbeing service which would result in an overall efficiency saving.

30. Having considered the difficulties with the current service provision it is recommended that we appoint Gateshead Council to deliver an Occupational Health service as part of a Service Level Agreement (SLA).
31. Appendix 4 provides a breakdown of using Gateshead Council compared with a Service Medical.

Other HR initiatives and Developments

32. In November 2014, employees were offered the opportunity of onsite influenza vaccines. 16 employees took advantage of the initiative.
33. The Company continues to offer a 'pay day pamper' and chiropody service from the Occupational Health suite at Gateshead Civic Centre. Employees are offered a wider range of appointment dates and times. We will continue to offer these initiatives off site, subject to demand, whenever possible.
34. The Company continues to work towards the North East Better Health at Work Award, Silver accreditation. An initial assessment took place 22 January 2015 and our submission will be referred to the regional TUC for verification.

Work Life Balance

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

No of Applications	Type of Work Life Balance Request
5	Application to reduce working hours
1	Application to increase working hours
3	Application to change working pattern

On 31 December 2014, 51 of 330 employees have a work life balance. This equates to 15.45% of the workforce. Approved work life balance requests are as follows:

- 10 employees work compressed hours
- 31 employees work reduced hours
- 1 employee works increased hours
- 8 employees have changed their working pattern
- 1 employee works term time only

Investigation and Disciplinary

36. In the period April 2014 to December 2014, there were three formal investigations and one disciplinary hearing. There were no appeals.

Grievances

37. In the period 1 April 2014 to 30 December 2014, there was one reported grievance.

Bullying and Harassment

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

Probity (including whistleblowing, bribery, fraud and corruption)

39. In the period 1 April 2014 to 30 December 2014, there were no reported incidents.

Other HR Initiatives and Developments

Recruitment

40. In the period April 2014 to December 2014, the company has advertised thirty-four jobs. Two jobs were ring fenced to company employees only, twenty-four were advertised across the Company and Gateshead Council and eight adverts went external due to no interest internally.

Child Care Scheme

41. The company continues to offer a salary sacrifice scheme. In December 2014, eleven employees were in the scheme.

Learning and Development Activity

Training Delivered

42. The HomeRepairs Team attended a training event. The facilitated event was arranged following a number of changes in the team. The aim was to promote creativity and collaboration and for colleagues to get to know each other in a fun but work based setting.
43. Participants were split into smaller teams and asked to design a logo, team name and strapline. Following a vote, the winning design (a target) and strapline ("we repair because we care") will be used internally by the HomeRepairs team.
44. Each team designed a product to help their customers and pitched their ideas which ranged from apps to live repair-finding systems, with a multi-function damp solution voted as the winner.

Health and Safety Training

45. In the period April 2014 to December 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
- CDM (Construction Design Management) training carried out with specific groups to fulfil company obligations

ICT Training

46. In the period April 2014 to December 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 employees via a Team Brief.
- Training guides have been provided to key users within Housing Offices for the Document Management System (DMS). The guides detail how to scan and index customer documentation (e.g. housing files, letters) into the DMS and how to retrieve existing documentation from the Northgate Housing System.

Link to values

47. 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

48. 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

49. 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.

50. 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

45. The financial cost of sickness absence to the Company for the period April to December 2014 was £212,649.55 compared to £204,670.58 for the same period last year.

Equality and Diversity Implications

46. 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

47. 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

48. 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 North East Better Health at Work Award Bronze level and continuation to Silver level in January 2014.
49. 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

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

Consultation carried out

51. The Company's HR consultants EEF Northern and Trade Unions have been consulted on aspects of the report.

Recommendations

52. The committee is asked: -
- to approve the appointment of Gateshead Council to deliver Occupational Health Services in an SLA with effect 1 March 2015 for a period of 12 months and to receive updates on progress;
 - whether it is satisfied with the update on HR initiatives and developments.





Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2014/15

Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Number of people employed by TGHC				
Male	137	136	138	
Female	182	182	192	
Permanent Employees	315	310	317	
Temporary Employees	4	8	13	
Full Time	257	260	264	
Part Time	62	58	66	
Number of starters (since 01 April 2014)	0	5	10	
Number of leavers (since 01 April 2014)	6	4	2	
Ill health retirements	1	0	0	
Number of employees seeking redeployment	0	0	0	
Diversity Monitoring				
Gender				
Male	137	136	138	
Female	182	182	192	
Age				
Under 18	0	0	0	
18 – 25	18	17	21	
26 – 35	95	95	95	
36 – 45	80	79	83	
46 – 55	78	79	83	
56 – 65	44	45	45	
66 +	3	3	3	
Disability				
Perceived themselves as disabled	35	32	32	
Do not perceive themselves as disabled	284	286	298	



Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2014/15

Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Ethnicity				
White British	305	306	318	
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	3	2	2	
Black or Black British Other	1	1	1	
Chinese	1	1	1	
Other	0	0	0	
Recruitment Monitoring				
Number of BME applicants for posts				
Application for employment	4	1	25	
Short listed for interview	3	1	6	
Offered post	0	0	0	
Number of disabled applicants for posts				
Application for Employment	0	1	6	
Short listed for interview	0	1	2	
Offered post	0	0	0	
HR advisory issues				
Investigations	0	1	2	
Disciplinary	0	0	1	
Suspensions	0	0	0	
No Further Action	0	1	1	
Oral Warning	0	0	0	
First Written Warning	0	0	0	
Final Written Warning	0	0	0	
Dismissals	0	0	0	
Appeals Submitted	0	0	0	
Stage 1 Grievance	0	0	0	
Stage 2 Grievance	0	0	0	
Capability	0	0	0	
Bullying and Harassment	0	0	0	

				
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2014/15				
Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Whistleblowing	0	0	0	
Employment Tribunals	0	0	0	
Health and Wellbeing				
Total number of working days lost per employee (target 7.50 April 2014 to March 2015)	2.00	2.13	2.13	
Total number of working days lost to sickness	592	626.50	623.10	
Number of Occupational Health appointments	30	17	30	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New referrals • Review appointments 	13 17	11 6	12 18	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgery appointments • Home appointments 	30 0	17 0	30 0	
Number of employee counselling/CBT sessions	43	64	28	
Number of Absence Management Reviews	27	9	5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Long Term 	14 13	5 4	5 0	
Number of employees who have had a phased return	3	7	6	
Learning and Development				
Number of new staff receiving induction	0	5	10	
Number of staff undertaking professional Qualifications	13	7	7	

Appendix2

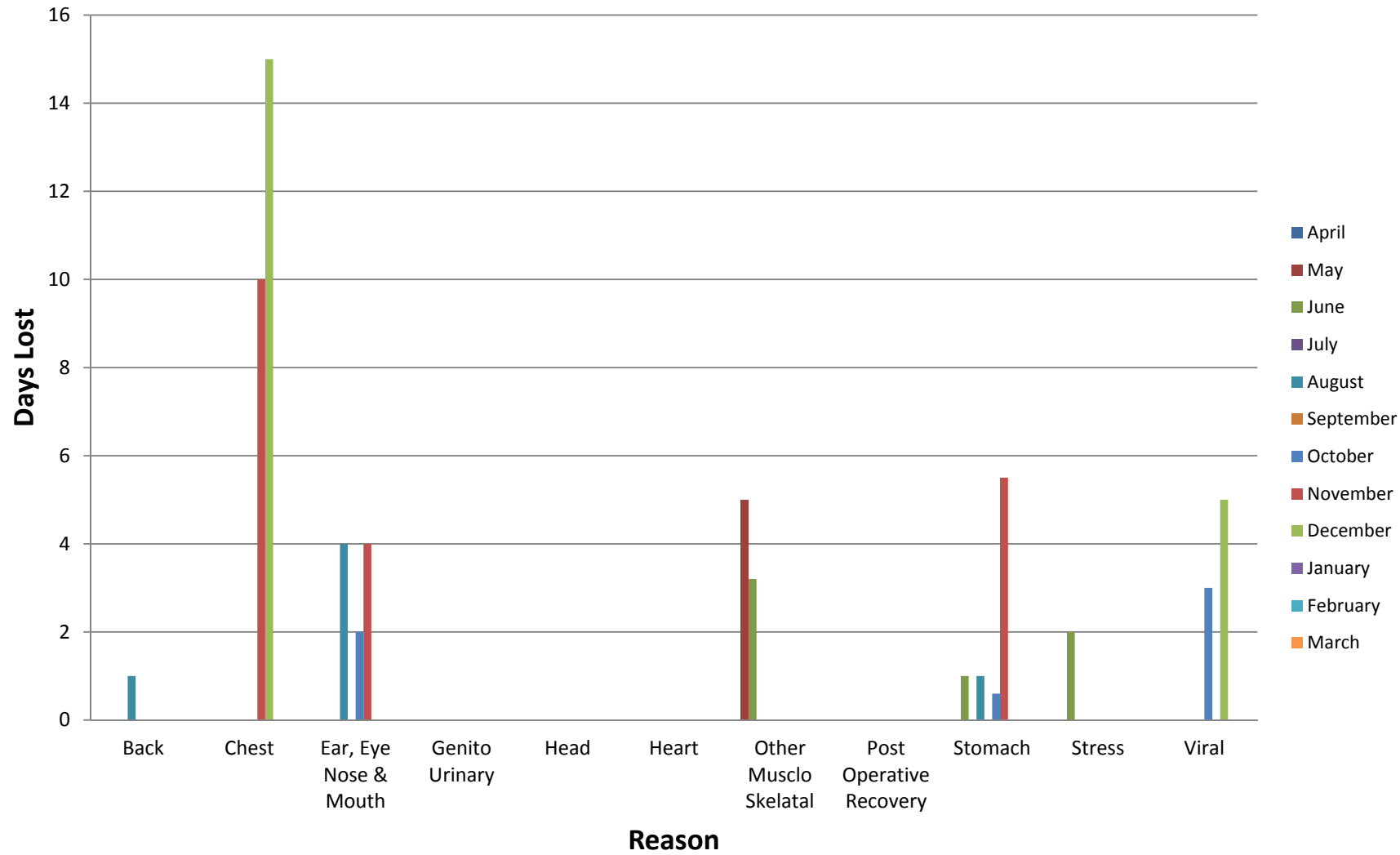
2014/2015	Customers & Communities - Customer Services	Customers & Communities Neighbourhood Services	Customers & Communities Property Services	Corporate Services Finance	Corporate Services Support Services	All employees TGHC	TGHC cumulative	2013/14 TGHC Cumulative	Days Lost per month	Days Lost Short 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	1.04	0.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.62	2.62	2.32	184.10	0.29	19.00	0.33	5.00
August	1.00	0.57	0.94	0.23	0.12	0.68	3.30	2.94	200.00	0.27	22.00	0.41	6.00
September	1.06	0.78	1.40	0.00	0.00	0.83	4.13	3.52	242.40	0.42	29.00	0.41	6.00
October	0.77	0.36	1.40	0.15	0.18	0.55	4.68	4.23	160.80	0.33	29.00	0.22	3.00
November	1.10	0.53	1.31	1.07	0.06	0.78	5.45	4.88	227.30	0.44	38.00	0.34	5.00
December	1.29	0.51	0.91	0.87	0.27	0.80	6.25	5.52	235.00	0.16	15.00	0.64	10.00
January								6.46					
February								7.59					
March								8.58					
Cumulative by service area	7.84	6.30	6.57	2.97	0.63	6.26		49.23	1841.60	2.67	220.00	3.59	54.00

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

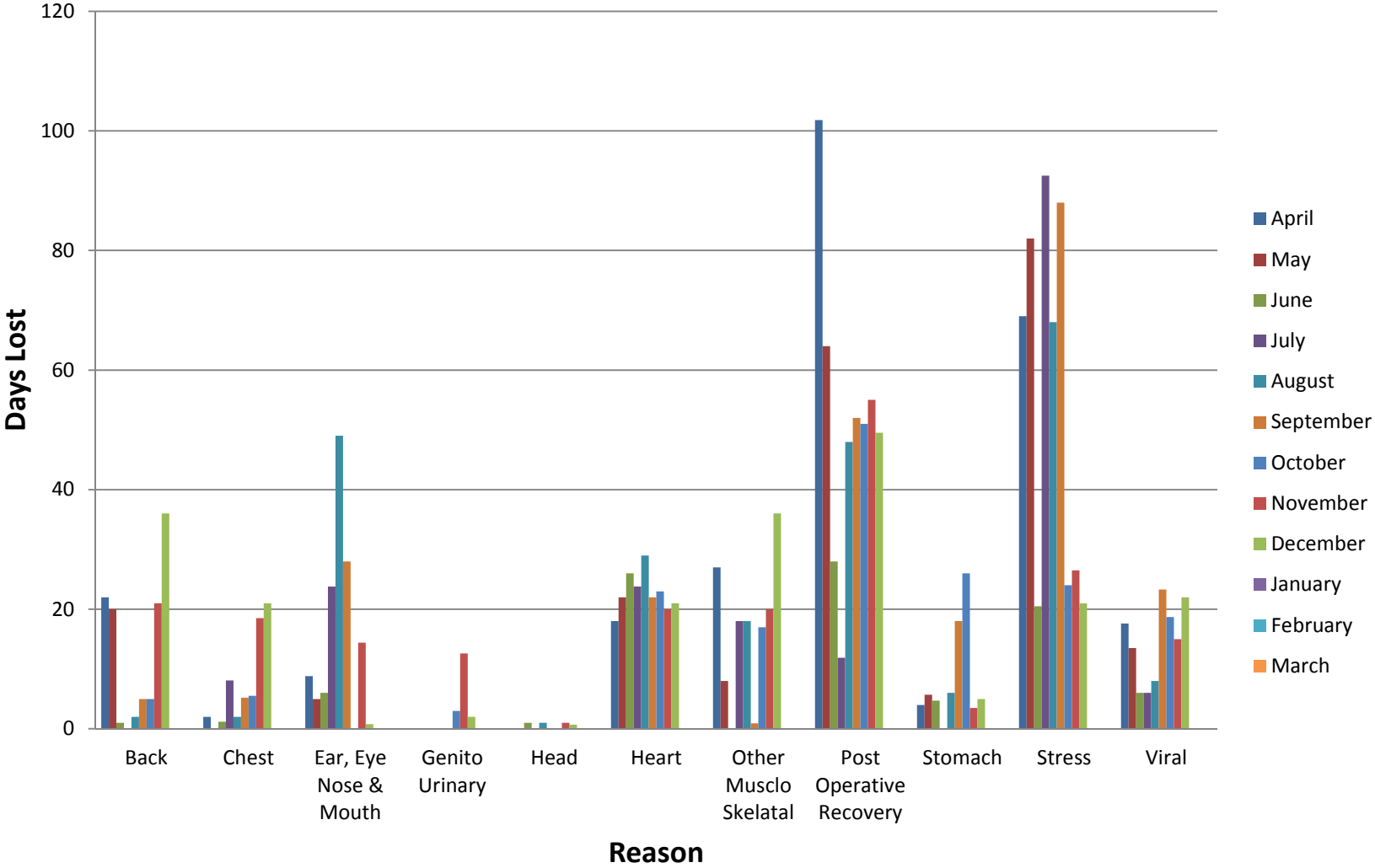
BV12

excludes temp employees with <12 months service

Corporate Services 2014/15



Customers & Communities 2014/15



**Occupational Health Comparison
(December 2014)**

	Service Medical	Gateshead Council
Annual contract cost	£5070.00	£3094.30 (319 employees)
Cost per employee	£15.89	£9.70
Nurse Referral	Included in contract	Included in contract
Physicians referral	£150 initial £100 follow up	Included in contract
Pre-employment Checks	Included in contract	Included in contract
Administration support	Included in contract	Included in contract
Health surveillance Assessments i.e. Vision Screening, Driver Medicals, Hand, Arm Vibration	Included in contract	Included in contract
Return to work assessments/rehabilitation	Included in contract	Included in contract
Case Conference with nurse	Included in contract	Included in contract
Case Conference with Physician	£150.00	Included in contract
Flu Jabs	Administering included in contract + £7.75 pp	Not offered
Counselling	Not offered. Outsourced service £25 - £45 per session	£35 per session
Display Screen Eye Testing with an optician	Not offered – currently use Spec Savers at a cost of £17.	£17 – referred via Occupational Health
GP Reports	Prices vary depending on GP practice – up to £85	Prices vary depending on GP practice – up to £85
Physicians Report	Prices vary depending on GP practice – up to £150	Prices vary depending on GP practice – up to £150
Physiotherapy	Not offered – outsourced if required.	£20 per appointment