

Report to Resources Committee

5 May 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 March 2015, 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 March 2015.
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 March 2015.
5. In comparing absence between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 with the same period in the previous year, the following trends have occurred:
6. The total sickness absence for the period equates to 8.90 days per person, compared to 8.58 days for the same period last year, which is an increase of 3.60%.
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 3.91 days per person and long term absence was 5.00 days. This compares with 3.10 days short term absence and 5.48 days long term absence for the same period last year. This represents an increase of 20.72% in short term absence and a decrease of 8.76% in long term absence.

8. The biggest cause of absence for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 was stress related with 686 days lost compared to 630 days lost last year. This is an increase of 8.16%.
9. 347 days of stress related absence was reported as non work related stress. This equates to 49.45% as non-work related absence and 50.55% work related absence.
10. Of the 686 days lost to stress related absence, 22 employees reported non-work related stress and 10 employees reported work related stress
11. Post operation related absence was 642 days for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, compared to 756 days for the same period last year. This equates to a 15.07% 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 29 sickness absence review meetings (short term) in the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. 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. Seven 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. 25 absence review meetings were held in line with procedure two in the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.
17. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, 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 March 2015, 75 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 March 2015, 70 occupational therapy sessions were supported by the company.

- 20. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, 47 employees were referred to occupational health for an initial assessment and 63 employees attended an occupational health review.
- 21. Seventeen employees returned to work on phased hours and duties in the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.
- 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.
- 25. In March 2015 the Company received official notification from the TUC confirming the achievement of the Better Health at Work Silver Award.

Review of Occupational Health

- 26. In March 2015 the Board approved the appointment of Gateshead Council to deliver an Occupational Health Service via a Service Level Agreement (SLA).
- 27. The SLA commenced on 1 March 2015 and quarterly meetings have been established to monitor the contract.
- 28. Four weekly meetings have been set up with an Occupational Health Physician and an Occupational Health Nurse to review complex cases.

Other HR initiatives and Developments

- 29. 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.

Work Life Balance

- 30. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, the following work life balance applications have been approved:

No of Applications	Type of Work Life Balance Request
10	Application to reduce working hours
2	Application to increase working hours
4	Application to change working pattern

On 31 March 2015, 55 of 335 employees have a work life balance. This equates to 16.42% of the workforce. Approved work life balance requests are as follows:

- 9 employees work compressed hours
- 35 employees work reduced hours
- 1 employee works increased hours
- 9 employees have changed their working pattern
- 1 employee works term time only

Investigation and Disciplinary

31. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, there were five formal investigations and two disciplinary hearings. There were no appeals.

Grievances

32. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, there was one reported grievance.

Bullying and Harassment

33. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, there were no allegations of bullying or harassment.

Probity (including whistleblowing, bribery, fraud and corruption)

34. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, there were no reported incidents.

Other HR Initiatives and Developments

Recruitment

35. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, the company has advertised forty one jobs. Two jobs were ring fenced to company employees only, one was ring fenced to Advice Assistants on temporary contracts, one was ring fenced to Library staff, twenty-seven were advertised across the Company and Gateshead Council and ten adverts went external due to no interest internally.
36. We are providing our vacancies to Gateshead Council and Unions for a period of one week to support with the redeployment of employees. At the end of one week jobs not suitable for redeployment will be advertised following our recruitment process.

Child Care Scheme

37. The company continues to offer a salary sacrifice scheme. In March 2015, eleven employees were in the scheme.

Learning and Development Activity

38. A programme of e-learning refreshers for all employees was launched in January that includes Equalities and Diversity and the Data Protection Act. Adobe Captiva for Northgate capped gas procedure was delivered by ICT to nominated employees.

39. Appraisals and performance management has been delivered to support the annual appraisal process.
40. We have attended the Regional Investors in People (IIP) Networking Group which explored employee engagement across different organisations.
41. We have commissioned Gordon Hayes Training to provide bespoke training on the management of health and safety and risk assessment. The mandatory training will be aimed at managers to increase awareness of their duties and responsibilities to manage health and safety and compliance.
42. We are delivering initial training to service managers in May 2015 on the behaviours linked to the revised vision and values.

Link to values

43. This report links to the following company values:
 - Fair
 - Customer focused
 - Open and honest
 - Accountable
 - Inclusive, valuing diversity
 - Innovative
 - Passionate about what we do

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 2014 to March 2015 was £302,693 compared to £289,476 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 is 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 North East Better Health at Work Silver Award.
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.

Recommendation

54. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the update on health and safety activities 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	139
Female	182	182	192	196
Permanent Employees	315	310	317	314
Temporary Employees	4	8	13	21
Full Time	257	260	264	264
Part Time	62	58	66	71
Number of starters (since 01 April 2014)	0	5	10	10
Number of leavers (since 01 April 2014)	6	4	2	5
Ill health retirements	1	0	0	0
Number of employees seeking redeployment	0	0	0	0
Diversity Monitoring				
Gender				
Male	137	136	138	139
Female	182	182	192	196
Age				
Under 18	0	0	0	0
18 – 25	18	17	21	23
26 – 35	95	95	95	96
36 – 45	80	79	83	85
46 – 55	78	79	83	81
56 – 65	44	45	45	47
66 +	3	3	3	3
Disability				
Perceived themselves as disabled	35	32	32	33
Do not perceive themselves as disabled	284	286	298	302



Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2014/15

Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Ethnicity				
White British	305	306	318	323
White Irish	2	2	2	2
White Other	1	1	1	1
White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0	0
White and Black African	1	1	1	1
White and Asian	1	1	1	1
Asian or Asian British Indian	1	1	1	1
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1	1	1	1
Asian or Asian British Other	1	1	1	1
Black or Black British Caribbean	0	0	0	0
Black or Black British African	3	2	2	2
Black or Black British Other	1	1	1	1
Chinese	1	1	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0
Recruitment Monitoring				
Number of BME applicants for posts				
Application for employment	4	1	25	4
Short listed for interview	3	1	6	0
Offered post	0	0	0	0
Number of disabled applicants for posts				
Application for Employment	0	1	6	2
Short listed for interview	0	1	2	0
Offered post	0	0	0	0
HR advisory issues				
Investigations	0	1	2	2
Disciplinary	0	0	1	1
Suspensions	0	0	0	0
No Further Action	0	1	1	0
Oral Warning	0	0	0	0
First Written Warning	0	0	0	2
Final Written Warning	0	0	0	0
Dismissals	0	0	0	0
Appeals Submitted	0	0	0	0
Stage 1 Grievance	0	0	0	0
Stage 2 Grievance	0	0	0	0
Capability	0	0	0	0
Bullying and Harassment	0	0	0	0



Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2014/15

Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Whistleblowing	0	0	0	0
Employment Tribunals	0	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	2.65
Total number of working days lost to sickness	592	626	623	779
Number of Occupational Health appointments	30	17	30	33
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New referrals • Review appointments 	13 17	11 6	12 18	11 22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgery appointments • Home appointments 	30 0	17 0	30 0	33 0
Number of employee counselling/CBT sessions	43	64	28	6
Number of Absence Management Reviews	27	9	5	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Long Term 	14 13	5 4	5 0	5 8
Number of employees who have had a phased return	3	7	6	1
Learning and Development				
Number of new staff receiving induction	0	5	10	10
Number of staff undertaking professional Qualifications	13	7	5	5

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 Occurences Short Term	Days Lost Long Term Absence	No of Occurences 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	5.46	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	0.95	0.70	0.96	0.49	0.00	0.74	6.99	6.46	216.90	0.35	33.00	0.39	6.00
February	1.48	0.91	1.09	0.52	0.00	1.02	8.01	7.59	300.20	0.50	37.00	0.52	8.00
March	1.10	0.97	1.00	0.00	0.18	0.89	8.90	8.58	262.70	0.39	43.00	0.50	7.00
Cumulative by service area	11.37	8.88	9.62	3.98	0.81	8.91	8.91	8.58	2621.40	3.91	333.00	5.00	75.00

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

BV12

excludes temp employees with <12 months service

Customers and Communities

