



Report to Resources Committee

8 September 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 to June 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 to 30 June 2015.
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 2015.
5. Appendix 4 provides in a graphical format, the reason for absence and the number of occurrences and the number of days. An additional report is provided on stress related absence for the month of April, May and June 2015, in the service areas where stress related absence has occurred and the number of people absent with stress in the period 1 April to 30 March 2015.
5. In comparing absence between 1 April and 30 June 2015 with the same period in the previous year, the following trends have occurred:
6. The total sickness absence for the period equates to 1.62 days per person, compared to 2.00 days for the same period last year, which is a decrease of 19%.
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.

8. Short term absence for the period was 0.82 days per person. This compares with 0.76 days for the same period last year. This represents an increase of 7.32%.
9. Long term absence for the period was 0.80 days per person this compares with 1.24 days for the same period last year. This represents a decrease of 34.48%
10. The biggest cause of absence for the period 1 April to 30 June 2015 was stress with 168.50 days lost compared to 171.5 days lost last year. This is a decrease of 1.57%.
11. Of the 168.50 days of stress related absence 115 days was reported as non-work related stress. This equates to 67.87% as non-work related absence and 32.13% work related absence.
12. Of the 168.50 days lost to stress related absence, six employees reported non-work related stress and four employees reported work related stress.
13. 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

14. The Company has held five sickness absence review meetings (short term) in the period 1 April to 30 June 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.
15. Four first written cautions were issued following absence review meetings.
16. 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.
17. Six absence review meetings were held in line with procedure two in the period 1 April to 30 June 2015.
18. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2015, four occupational health physician appointments have been attended as a result of an absence review meeting.
19. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2015, one employee was referred to occupational health to receive cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)/counselling support.
20. Two employees returned to work on phased hours and duties in the period 1 April to 30 June 2015.
21. Management information and guidance on managing sickness absence is provided to managers on a monthly basis.

22. Four weekly meetings are established with an Occupational Health Physician and an Occupational Health Nurse to review complex cases.

Sickness Absence Benchmarking

23. We continue to report sickness absence quarterly to the Housemark Benchmarking Club.
24. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2015, 121 organisations submitted data to Housemark. The Company's sickness absence of 1.62 days lost in the same period places us in the upper median quartile range.
25. We share our absence data with Gateshead Council. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, Gateshead Council report 10 days sickness absence compared to 8.9 days in the company. It is to be noted that our organisations differ in size and occupational work groups and no like for like comparison can be made.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Absence Management Annual Survey Report 2014

26. The CIPD annual survey 2014 reports that the average level of employee absence has fallen compared with last year from 7.6 to 6.6 days per employee. Data from the last five years suggests a fluctuating downward trend in absence levels in all sectors except manufacturing and production, which has seen little change.
27. Average absence levels are highest in the public services and non-profit sectors and lowest in the private services sector. Whilst public sector absence has fallen by almost a day at 7.9 days per employee this figure is still markedly higher than in the private sector of 5.5 days.' *Source CIPD 2014*
28. We are confident that our approach to managing absence compares well to organisations identified in the report as good performers. We will maintain a commitment to maximise attendance and reduce stress related absence through fair and consistent application of our absence policies.

Health and Wellbeing

29. 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.
30. The Company continues to work towards the Better Health at Work Award – Gold level and will be assessed against the criteria in December 2015.

Other HR initiatives and Developments

31. 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.

32. Thirteen employees have applied to purchase a cycle via a salary sacrifice Cycle to Work scheme. Applications are processed via Cycle Solutions who administer the scheme on behalf of the company.

Work Life Balance

33. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2015, the following work life balance applications have been approved:

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

To date, 30 June 2015, we are pleased to report that 61 of 332 employees have a work life balance. This equates to 18.37% of the workforce. Approved work life balance requests are as follows:

- 9 employees work compressed hours
- 39 employees work reduced hours
- 1 employee works increased hours
- 11 employees have changed their working pattern
- 1 return to full time working from term time working

Bullying and Harassment

34. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2015, there was one investigation into bullying and harassment associated to the protected characteristics. This investigation has concluded and appropriate and proportionate action taken.

Other HR Initiatives and Developments

Recruitment

35. Based on data submitted to Housemark by 454 social housing landlords over a three year period ending March 2015, employee turnover is 14.6% in housing associations and 9.6% in local authority/ALMO. In the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, our employee turnover was 6.31% in the upper quartile range along with 21 of 211 organisations.
36. In the period 1 April to 30 June 2015, the Company has advertised nine jobs. Six jobs were advertised across the Company and Gateshead Council and three jobs were advertised externally due to no interest internally.
37. 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

38. The company continues to offer a salary sacrifice scheme. In June 2015, nine employees were in the scheme.
39. The Government were set to introduce a new Tax-Free Childcare scheme in Autumn 2015 which was to benefit self-employed parents and those with more than one child who earn less than £150,00 each but can't get child care vouchers.
40. Two providers of the existing Employer Supported Childcare voucher scheme mounted a legal challenge against the Government's new scheme following concerns about how it would be delivered and the effect it would have on parents trying to access childcare support. The judgement found the process to be 'lawful' however, as the court placed a suspension on the scheme being developed during the 15 month legal proceedings, the new Tax-Free Childcare scheme now won't come into force until 2017.

iTrent System

41. Gateshead Council has procured a software system to replace PSE. The new system iTrent is due to go live in February 2016. The system is used to process employee related activity.
42. In the period April 2015 to December 2015 the new system will be designed, built and then tested with parallel runs on data to take place in December 2015 to January 2016.
43. We have identified a key contact to represent the company at meetings. This means that our specific requirements are communicated and that we respond to requests for information and data gathering in a timely manner.

Learning and Development Activity

44. In the period April to June 2015 the following courses have been delivered:-
 - Management of Health and Safety
 - Asbestos Awareness
 - Principles of COSHH
 - Ipad training
 - Fire safety principles and practice
 - Safeguarding adults and reporting concerns
 - Workshop to raise awareness of Prevent (WRAP)

45. Behavioural Framework

In March 2015, the Board approved the five year strategic plan 2015-2020, which included a revised mission, vision and values for the company. To support the delivery of objectives we have developed a behavioural framework that links directly to our key priority "Investing in our employees and developing new and innovative ways of working to deliver this plan." Behaviours define 'how' we are expected to approach our work and sit alongside 'what' we do, as outlined in job descriptions. Following consultation with employees at all levels across the

organisation, the behavioural framework has been distributed to managers to discuss with their teams prior to a launch in September 2015.

46. The Company is working in partnership with the Learning Curve Group to enrol 13 employees into a variety of fully funded distance learning courses accredited with NCFE this has meant we have been approved £7,150 worth of courses to include; level 2 Team Leading, Mental Health Awareness, Nutrition and Health and Dementia Awareness.
47. The Company is working in partnership with Newcastle College to enrol 12 employees into fully funded microsoft office specialist training.

Investors in People (IiP)

48. In 2015 a sixth generation of the Investors in People(IiP) management Standard will be introduced with organisations accredited against the new framework.
49. The sixth generation reflects the very latest workplace trends, to help every organisation be the best they can be. The Framework sets out the criteria which must be met to achieve accreditation and focusses on 'Outperformers'- the organisations that can offer great services, inspire fantastic loyalty from employees and customers and deliver impressive results.
50. We have attended the Regional Investors in People (IiP) Networking Group which looked at changes to the standard and the impact for the organisation.

Link to values

51. 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

52. 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

53. 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.
54. 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

49. The financial cost of sickness absence to the Company for the period April to June 2015 was £56,605.83 compared to £68,358.24 for the same period last year.

Equality and Diversity Implications

50. 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

51. 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 have accessed fully funded Microsoft specialist training and £7,150 of fully funded distance learning courses. This demonstrates our commitment to invest in our employees and follow value for money principles. We aim to use the most beneficial methods of delivery to maximise the return on our investments 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

52. 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.
53. 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

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

Consultation carried out

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

Recommendation

56. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the update on the Human Resources update.



The Gateshead Housing Company
Working with Gateshead Council



Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2014/15

Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Number of people employed by TGHC				
Male	140			
Female	192			
Permanent Employees	313			
Temporary Employees	19			
Full Time	258			
Part Time	74			
Number of starters (since 01 April 2015)	3			
Number of leavers (since 01 April 2015)	8			
Ill health retirements	0			
Number of employees seeking redeployment	0			
Diversity Monitoring				
Gender				
Male	140			
Female	192			
Age				
Under 18	0			
18 – 25	17			
26 – 35	94			
36 – 45	87			
46 – 55	84			
56 – 65	47			
66 +	3			
Disability				
Perceived themselves as disabled	34			
Do not perceive themselves as disabled	298			



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Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Ethnicity				
White British	321			
White Irish	1			
White Other	1			
White and Black Caribbean	1			
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	2			
Black or Black British Other	1			
Chinese	1			
Other	0			
Recruitment Monitoring				
Number of BME applicants for posts				
Application for employment	23			
Shortlisted for interview	2			
Offered post	0			
Number of disabled applicants for posts				
Application for Employment	23			
Shortlisted for interview	1			
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			



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Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Stage 2 Grievance	0			
Capability	0			
Bullying and Harassment	1			
Whistleblowing	0			
Employment Tribunals	0			
Health and Wellbeing				
Total number of working days lost per employee (target 7.50 April 2015 to March 2016)	1.62			
Total number of working days lost to sickness	472.7			
Number of Occupational Health appointments	4			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New referrals • Review appointments 	4			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgery appointments • Home appointments 	0 0			
Number of employee counselling/CBT sessions	1			
Number of Absence Management Reviews	11			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Long Term 	5 6			
Number of employees who have had a phased return	2			
Learning and Development				
Number of new staff receiving induction	3			
Number of staff undertaking professional Qualifications	4			

Appendix 2

2015/2016	Customers & Communities - Customer Services	Customers & Communities Neighbourhood Services	Customers & Communities Property Services	Corporate Services Finance	Corporate Services Support Services	All employees TGHC	TGHC cumulative	2014/15 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	0.82	0.47	1.87	0.00	0.06	0.64	0.64	0.91	187.40	0.39	33.00	0.25	4.00
May	0.71	0.24	1.78	0.00	0.13	0.50	1.14	1.65	144.70	0.25	24.00	0.25	4.00
June	0.45	0.40	1.83	0.00	0.00	0.48	1.62	2.00	140.60	0.18	18.00	0.30	4.00
July								2.62					
August								3.30					
September								4.13					
October								4.68					
November								5.45					
December								6.25					
January								6.99					
February								8.01					
March								8.90					
Cumulative by service area	1.98	1.11	5.48	0.00	0.19	1.62							

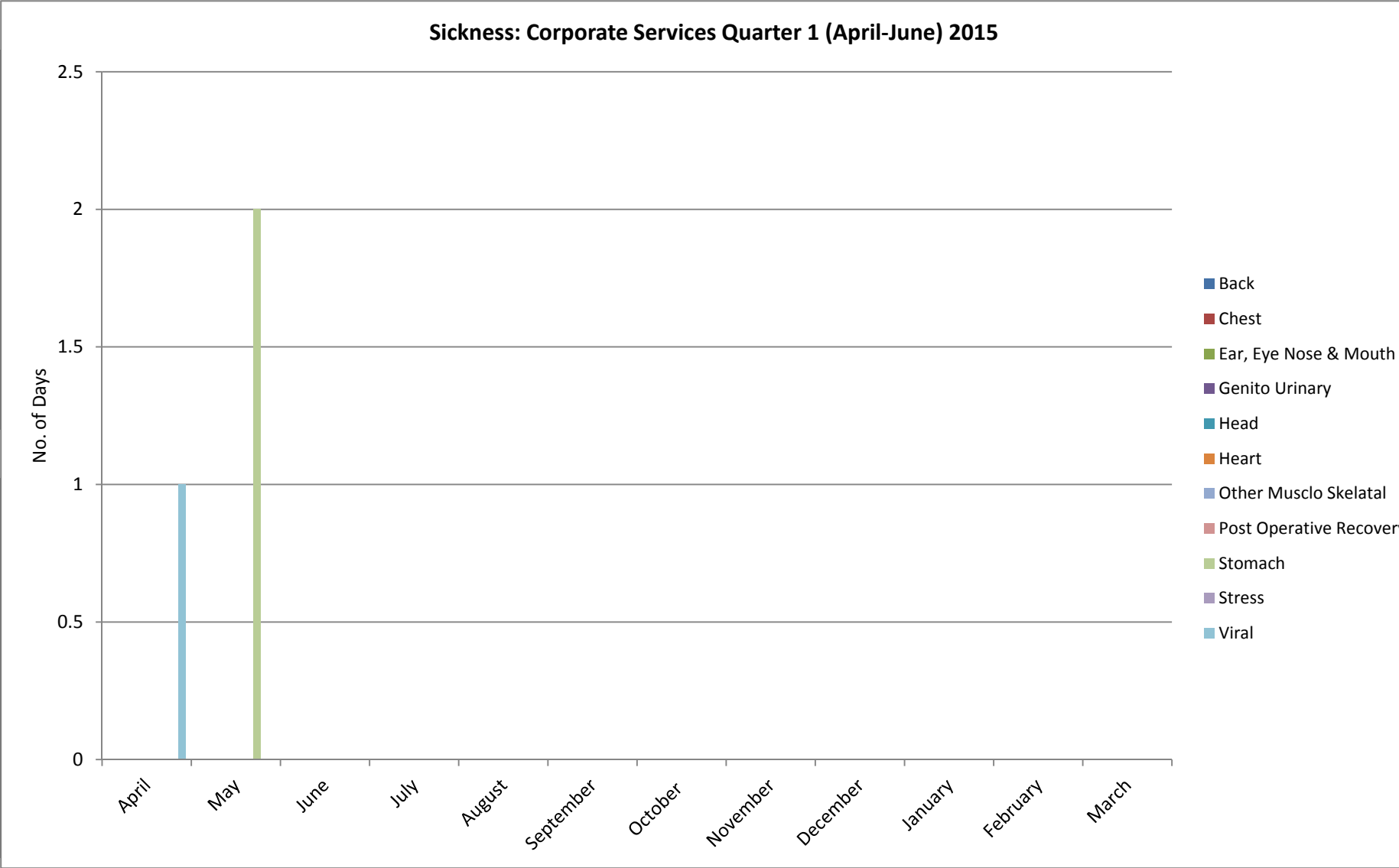
* Days Lost = No of days absence / FTE in the service

BV12

excludes temp employees with <12 months service

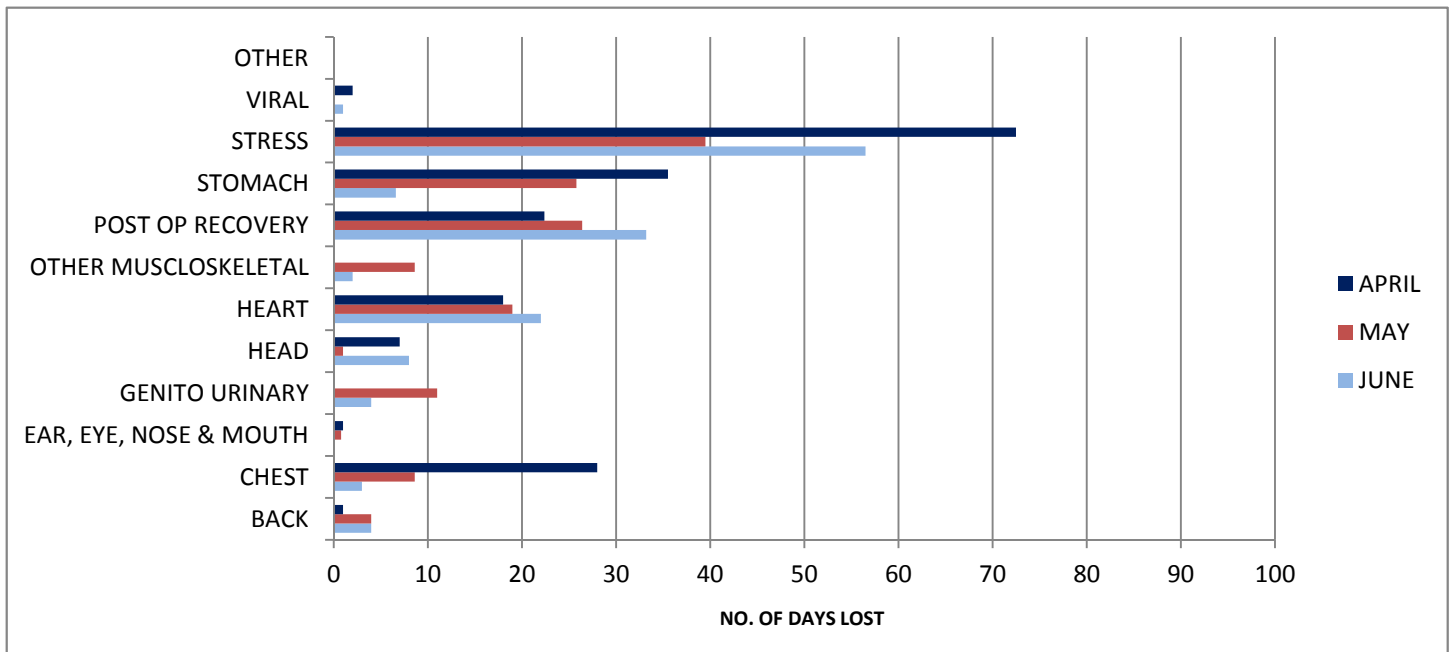
Benchmarking

2015	TGHC rolling 12 months	Gateshead Council	CIPD Public Sector Survey Oct 14	CIPD Private sector Survey Oct 14
March	8.9	10	7.9	5.5
April	8.6	not available		
May	8.4	not available		
June	8.5	not available		
July	8.7	not available		



SICKNESS BY REASON (DAYS LOST)	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	TOTAL
BACK	1	4	4	9
CHEST	28	8.6	3	39.6
EAR, EYE, NOSE & MOUTH	1	0.8	0	1.8
GENITO URINARY	0	11	4	15
HEAD	7	1	8	16
HEART	18	19	22	59
OTHER MUSCLOSKELETAL	0	8.6	2	10.6
POST OP RECOVERY	22.4	26.4	33.2	82
STOMACH	35.5	25.8	6.6	67.9
STRESS	72.5	39.5	56.5	168.5
VIRAL	2	0	1	3
OTHER	0	0	0	0

SICKNESS: DAYS LOST BY REASON/BY MONTH



SICKNESS: DAYS LOST BY REASON OVERALL (QUARTER 1)

