



Report to Resources Committee

18 November 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 September 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 September 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 September 2015.
5. In comparing absence between 1 April and 30 September 2015 with the same period in the previous year, the following trends have occurred:
6. The total sickness absence for the period equates to 3.86 days per person, compared to 4.13 days for the same period last year, which is a decrease of 7%.
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 1.64 days per person. This compares with 1.74 days for the same period last year. This represents a decrease of 6%.
9. Long term absence for the period was 2.22 days per person this compares with 2.39 days for the same period last year. This represents a decrease of 7%

10. The biggest cause of absence for the period 1 April to 30 September 2015 was stress with 260 days lost, however this a significant improvement on the same period last year when 422 days were lost, which is a decrease of 38%.
11. Of the 260 days of stress related absence, 178 days were reported as non-work related stress. This equates to 68% as non-work related absence and 32% work related absence.
12. Of the 260 days lost to stress related absence, 11 employees reported non-work related stress and four employees reported work related stress
13. We are working with Gateshead Council's Occupational Health team to review the management of stress related absence, particularly around early intervention.
14. During December, two manager briefing sessions will be delivered by Danny Haplin, Occupational Health Lead Counsellor aimed at providing managers with tips and techniques in managing stress positively.
15. The briefing session is to be attended by all managers with employee responsibility and will include managers in The Gateshead Housing Company and Gateshead Council.
16. 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

17. The company has held ten sickness absence review meetings (short term) in the period 1 April to September 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.
18. Nine first written cautions were issued following absence review meetings.
19. 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.
20. Ten absence review meetings were held in line with procedure two in the period 1 April to 30 September 2015.
21. In the period 1 April to 30 September 2015, eight occupational health physician appointments have been attended as a result of an absence review meeting.
22. In the period 1 April to 30 September 2015, three employees was referred to occupational health to receive cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)/counselling support.

23. Two employees returned to work on phased hours and duties in the period 1 April to 30 September 2015.
24. Management information and guidance on managing sickness absence is provided to managers on a monthly basis.
25. Four weekly meetings are established with an Occupational Health Physician and an Occupational Health Nurse to review complex cases.

Sickness Absence Benchmarking

26. We share absence data with Gateshead Council. In a 12 month period ending September 2015, 10.12 days were lost due to sickness absence in Gateshead Council compared to 8.6 in TGHC. It is to be noted that occupational work groups differ between our organisations.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Absence Management Annual Survey Report 2015

27. The CIPD annual survey 2015 reports that the average level of employee absence has increased slightly compared to last year from 6.6 to 6.9 days per employee.
28. Public sector absence shows an increase from 7.9 to 8.7 days per employee and private sector absence an increase from 5.5 to 5.8 days when compared to the same period last year. *Source CIPD 2015*
29. 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

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.
31. The Company continues to work towards the Better Health at Work Award – Gold level and will be assessed against the criteria in July 2016.

Other HR initiatives and Developments

32. 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

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

No of Applications	Type of Work Life Balance Request
4	Applications to reduce working hours
3	Applications to change working patterns
2	Applications to job share
1	Application for compressed hours

As at 30 September 2015, we are pleased to report that 59 of 330 employees have a work life balance. This equates to 17.87% of the workforce. Approved work life balance requests are as follows:

- 9 employees work compressed hours
- 38 employees work reduced hours
- 1 employee works increased hours
- 10 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 September 2015, there was one investigation into bullying and harassment associated to the protected characteristics. This investigation has concluded with appropriate and proportionate action taken.

Other HR Initiatives and Developments

Recruitment

35. In the period 1 April to 30 September 2015, the company has advertised eighteen jobs. Twelve jobs were advertised across the Company and Gateshead Council and six jobs were advertised externally due to no interest internally.

Child Care Scheme

36. The company continues to offer a salary sacrifice scheme. In September 2015, 14 employees were in the scheme.

Learning and Development Activity

37. In the period April to September 2015 the following courses have been delivered:-
- Safeguarding Adults Reporting Concerns
 - Domestic Abuse and Awareness
 - Drug Awareness
 - Alcohol Awareness
 - Workshop to raise awareness of Prevent
 - Conflict resolution and personal safety
 - Asbestos Awareness
 - Ipad Training

Qualifications

38. Five employees have been supported to study for a professional qualification.

Investors in People (IIP)

39. A sixth generation of the Investors in People(IIP) Management Standard was launched in September 2015.
40. Central to the new process is the organisation's ambition and raising the standard for leadership and development of people.
41. A three year supported accreditation consists of an annual review with the leadership team in year one followed by an annual review in year 2 and an assessment in year 3.
42. There are four levels of accreditation; accredited, silver, gold and platinum. The company is meeting with our assessor in November to discuss the implications of the changes on our organisation.

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 lead directly 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

49. The financial cost of sickness absence to the Company for the period April to September 2015 was £134,537 compared to £140,700 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 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 are 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 as to whether it is satisfied with 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	143		
Female	192	187		
Permanent Employees	313	307		
Temporary Employees	19	23		
Full Time	258	255		
Part Time	74	75		
Number of starters (since 01 April 2015)	3	9		
Number of leavers (since 01 April 2015)	8	14		
Ill health retirements	0	0		
Number of employees seeking redeployment	0	0		
Diversity Monitoring				
Gender				
Male	140	143		
Female	192	187		
Age				
Under 18	0	0		
18 – 25	17	15		
26 – 35	94	95		
36 – 45	87	89		
46 – 55	84	83		
56 – 65	47	44		
66 +	3	4		
Disability				
Perceive themselves as disabled	34	34		
Do not perceive themselves as disabled	298	296		



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Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2014/15

Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Ethnicity				
White British	321	319		
White Irish	1	1		
White Other	1	1		
White and Black Caribbean	1	1		
White and Black African	1	0		
White and Asian	1	1		
Asian or Asian British Indian	1	1		
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0	0		
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1	1		
Asian or Asian British Other	1	1		
Black or Black British Caribbean	0	0		
Black or Black British African	2	2		
Black or Black British Other	1	1		
Chinese	1	1		
Other	0	0		
Recruitment Monitoring				
Number of BME applicants for posts				
Application for employment	23	15		
Short listed for interview	2	1		
Offered post	0	0		
Number of disabled applicants for posts				
Application for Employment	23	3		
Short listed for interview	1	1		
Offered post	0	0		
HR advisory issues				
Investigations	0	1		
Disciplinary	0	0		
Suspensions	0	1		
No Further Action	0	0		
Oral Warning	0	0		
First Written Warning	0	0		
Final Written Warning	0	0		
Dismissals	0	0		
Appeals Submitted	0	0		
Stage 1 Grievance	0	0		
Stage 2 Grievance	0	0		



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
Capability	0	0		
Bullying and Harassment	1	0		
Whistleblowing	0	0		
Employment Tribunals	0	0		
Health and Wellbeing				
Total number of working days lost per employee (target 7.50 April 2015 to March 2016)	1.62	2.24		
Total number of working days lost to sickness	472.7	650.8		
Number of Occupational Health appointments	4	4		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New referrals • Review appointments 	4 0	4 0		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgery appointments • Home appointments 	0 0	0 0		
Number of employee counselling/CBT sessions	1	2		
Number of Absence Management Reviews	11	9		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term • Long Term 	5 6	5 4		
Number of employees who have had a phased return	1	1		
Learning and Development				
Number of new staff receiving induction	3	9		
Number of staff undertaking professional Qualifications	4	5		

Appendix2

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	0.87	0.69	1.58	0.06	0.00	0.74	2.36	2.62	214.50	0.30	16.00	0.44	7.00
August	0.91	0.85	0.96	0	0	0.84	3.20	3.30	245.19	0.23	22.00	0.61	12.00
September	1.06	0.44	1.27	0.15	0.00	0.66	3.86	4.13	191.10	0.29	23.00	0.37	8.00
October													
November													
December													
January													
February													
March													
Cumulative by service area	4.82	3.09	9.29	0.21	0.19	3.86			1123.49	1.64	136.00	2.22	39.00

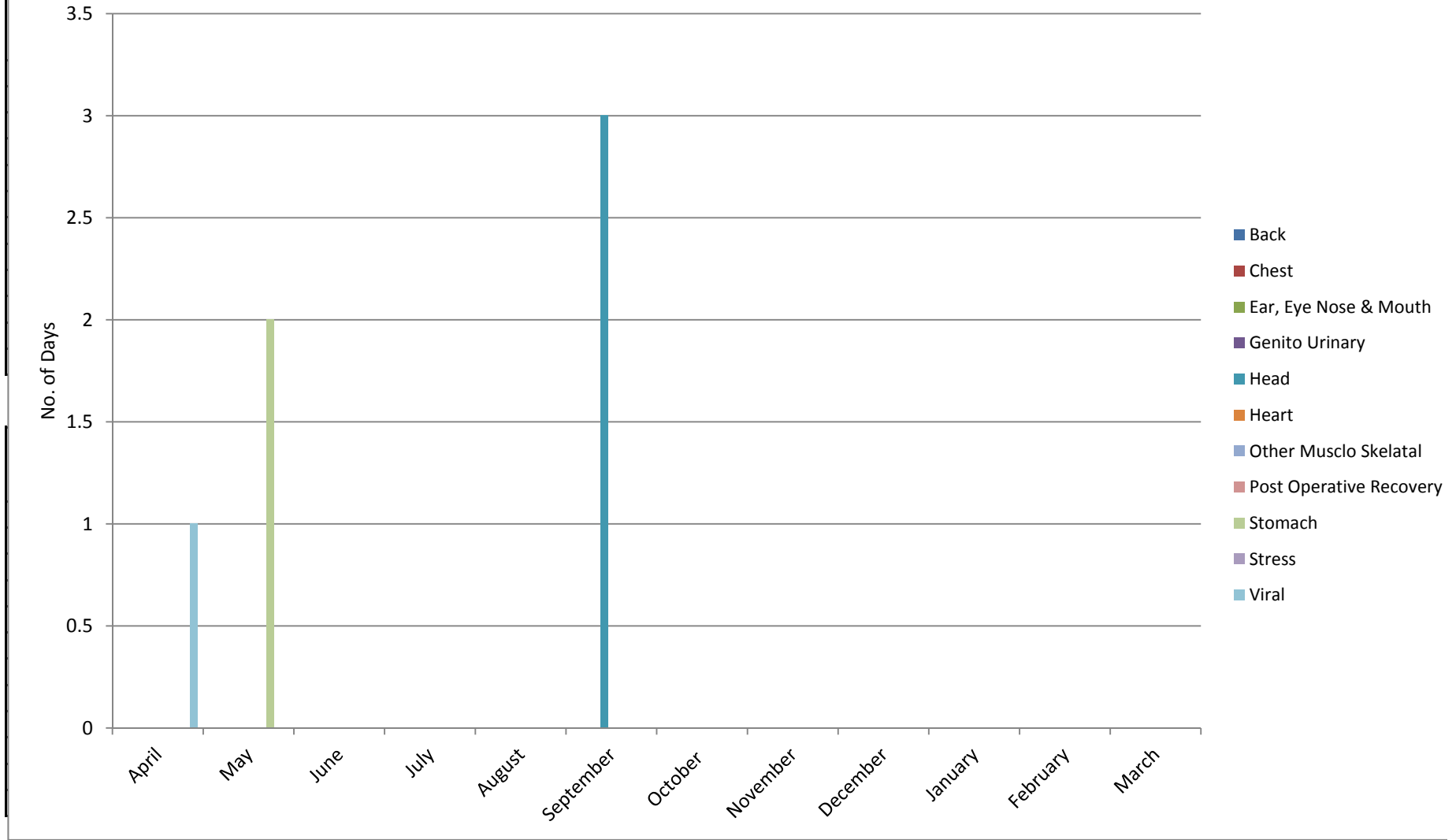
* Days Lost = No of days absence / FTE in the service

BV12 excludes temp employees with <12 months service

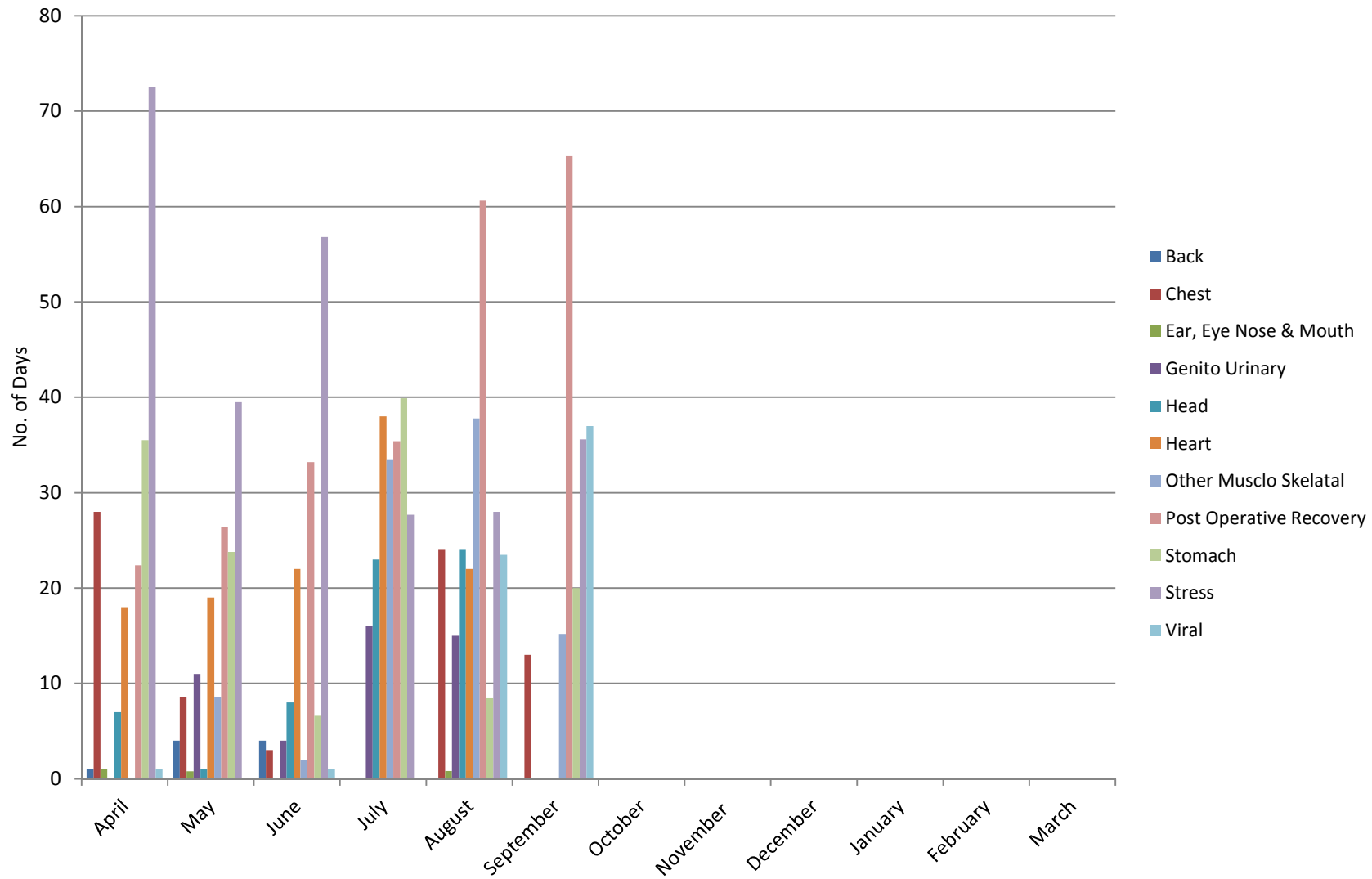
Benchmarking

	TGHC rolling 12 months	Gateshead Council	CIPD Public Sector Survey Oct 15	CIPD Private sector Survey Oct 15
2015				
March	8.9	10	8.7	5.8
April	8.6	9.84		
May	8.4	9.95		
June	8.5	9.98		
July	8.7	10.06		
Aug	8.9	10.05		
Sept	8.6	10.12		

Sickness: Corporate Services Quarter 1+2 (April-Sept) 2015



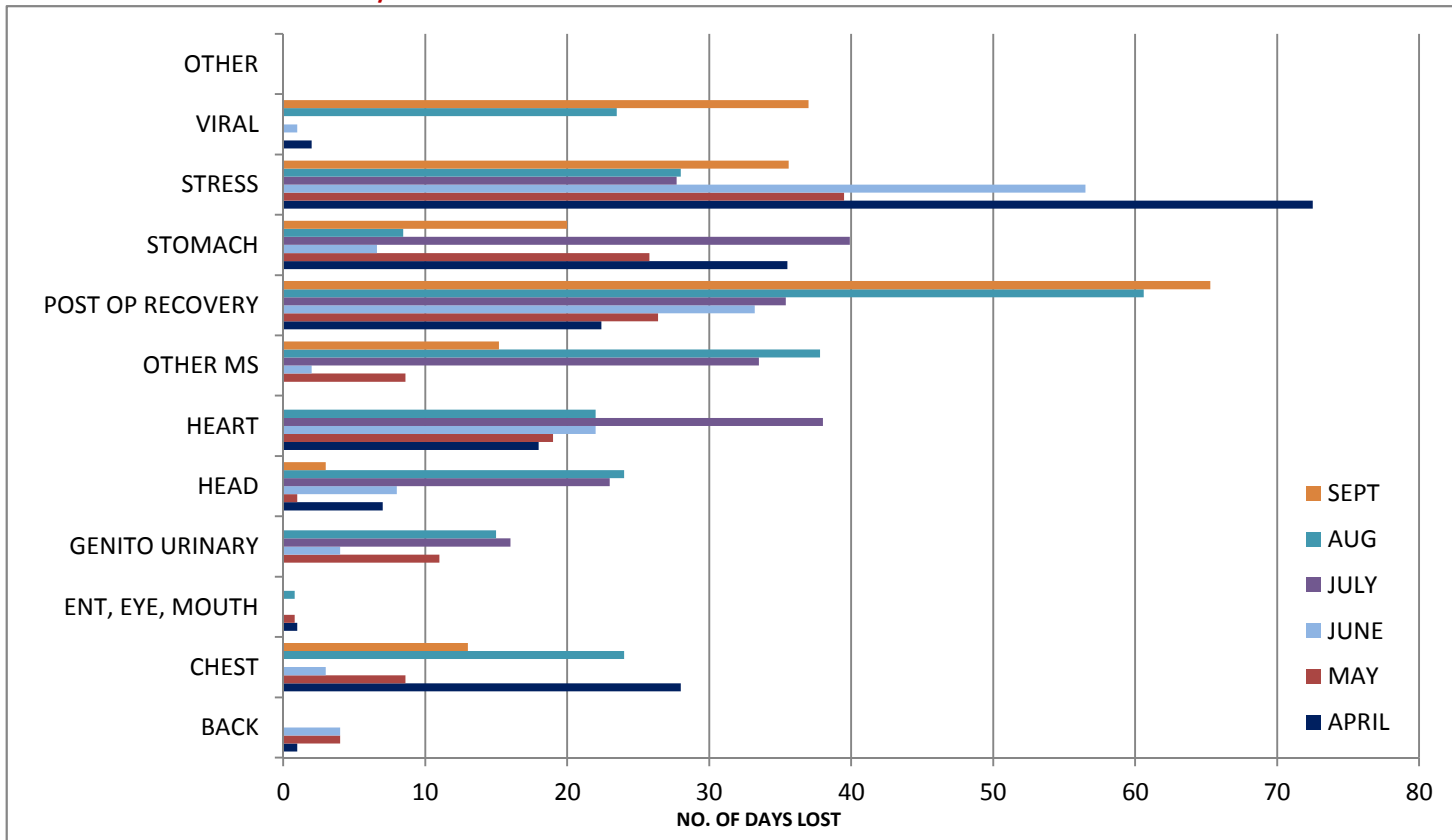
Sickness: Customers & Communities Quarter 1+2 (April-Sept) 2015



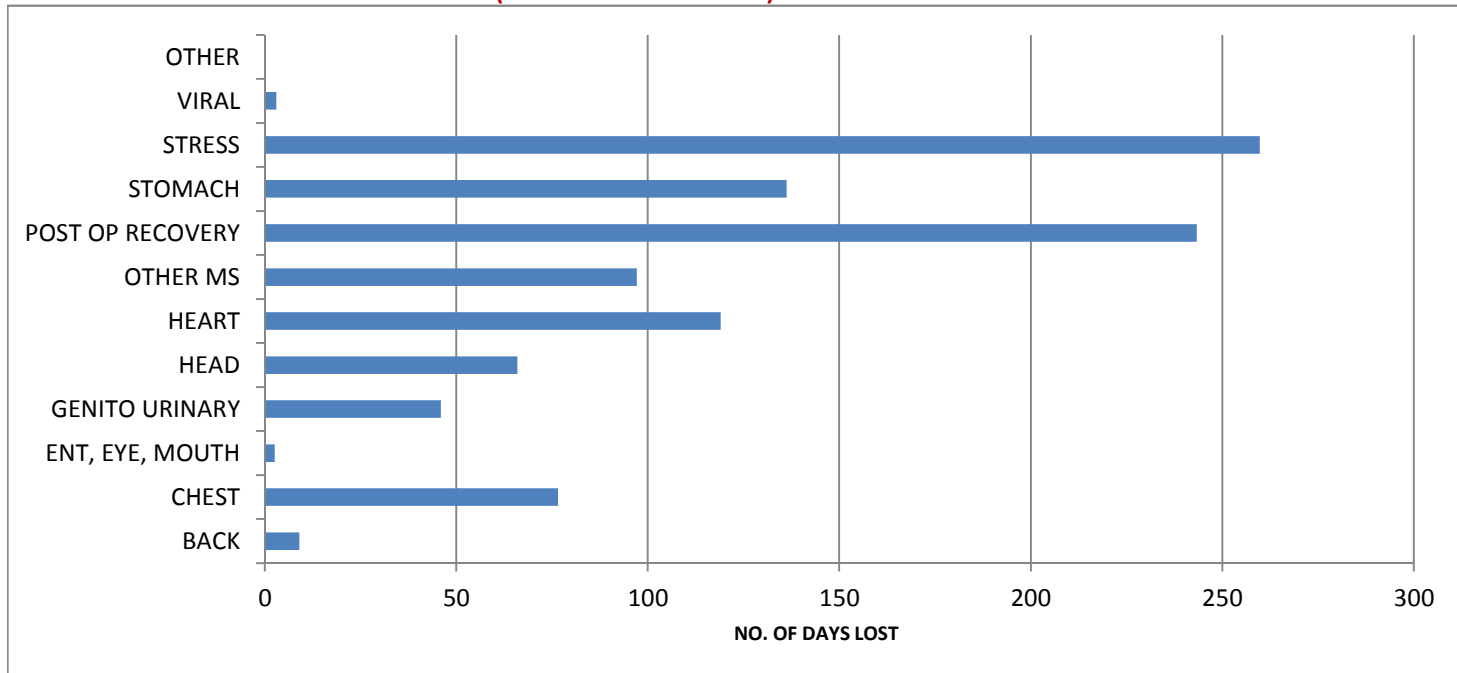
SICKNESS ABSENCE: APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2015

SICKNESS BY REASON (DAYS LOST)	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	TOTAL
BACK	1	4	4	0	0	0	9
CHEST	28	8.6	3	0	24	13	76.6
ENT, EYE, MOUTH	1	0.8	0	0	0.8	0	2.6
GENITO URINARY	0	11	4	16	15	0	46
HEAD	7	1	8	23	24	3	66
HEART	18	19	22	38	22	0	119
OTHER MS	0	8.6	2	33.5	37.8	15.2	97.1
POST OP RECOVERY	22.4	26.4	33.2	35.4	60.6	65.3	243.3
STOMACH	35.5	25.8	6.6	39.9	8.45	20	136.25
STRESS	72.5	39.5	56.5	27.7	28	35.6	259.8
VIRAL	2	0	1	0	23.5	37	3
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

SICKNESS: DAYS LOST BY REASON/BY MONTH



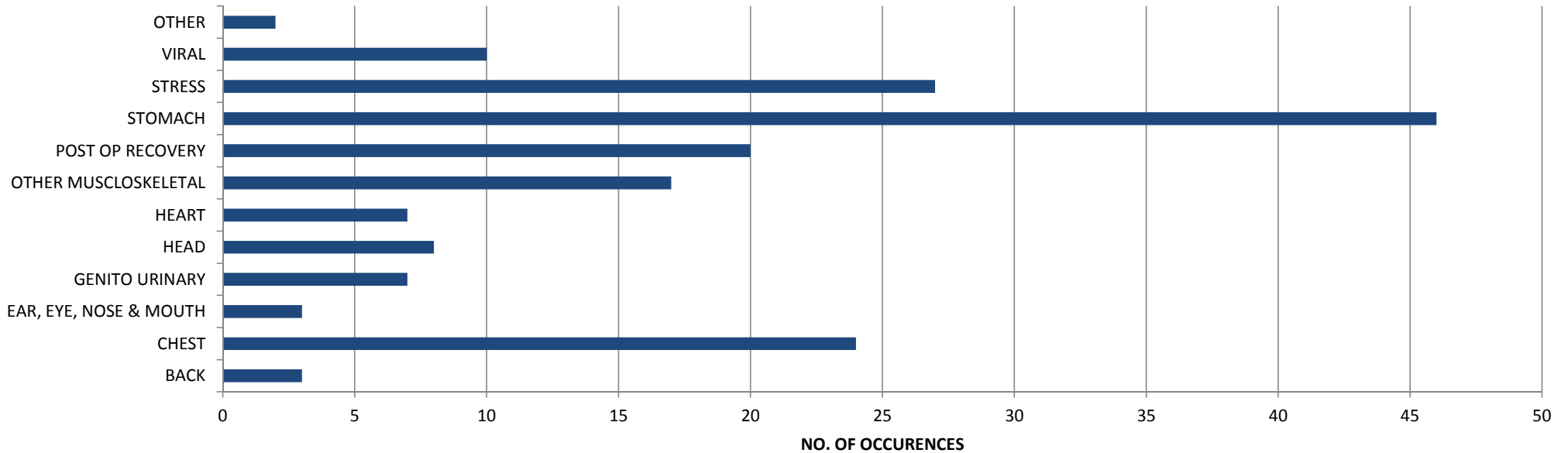
SICKNESS: DAYS LOST BY REASON OVERALL (APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2015)



SICKNESS ABSENCE: APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2015

NO. OF SICKNESS OCCURENCES BY TYPE	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MARCH	TOTAL
BACK	1	1	1	0	0	0							3
CHEST	10	4	1	0	4	5							24
EAR, EYE, NOSE & MOUTH	1	1	0	0	1	0							3
GENITO URINARY	0	3	2	1	1	0							7
HEAD	2	1	1	1	2	1							8
HEART	1	1	1	2	2	0							7
OTHER MUSCLOSKELETAL	0	4	2	3	3	5							17
POST OP RECOVERY	2	3	3	2	5	5							20
STOMACH	11	6	6	10	6	7							46
STRESS	7	4	4	3	4	5							27
VIRAL	2	0	1	0	5	2							10
OTHER	0	0	0	1	1	0							2

SICKNESS BY TYPE



SICKNESS ABSENCE: APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2015

NO. OF SICKNESS OCCURENCES BY TYPE	Q1	Q2
BACK	3	0
CHEST	15	9
EAR, EYE, NOSE & MOUTH	2	1
GENITO URINARY	5	2
HEAD	4	4
HEART	3	4
OTHER MUSCLOSKELETAL	6	11
POST OP RECOVERY	8	12
STOMACH	23	23
STRESS	15	12
VIRAL	3	7
OTHER	0	2

SICKNESS BY TYPE: Q1 & Q2 COMPARISON

