



## Report to Resources Committee

23 February 2016

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**Title:** Sickness Absence and Human Resources Update

**Report of:** Support Services Manager

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To provide the committee with an update on general HR initiatives and developments from 1 April to 31 December 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.
4. Appendix 3 provides, in a graphical format, the reasons for absence within each directorate of the company for the period.
5. In comparing absence between 1 April and 31 December 2015 with the same period in the previous year, the following trends have occurred:
6. The total sickness absence for the period equates to 6.62 days per person, compared to 6.26 days for the same period last year, which is an increase of 5.5%.
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 2.69 days per person. This compares with 2.67 days for the same period last year. This represents an increase of 0.74%

9. Long term absence for the period was 3.94 days per person this compares with 3.59 days for the same period last year. This represents an increase of 9%
10. The biggest cause of absence for the period was post operation with 543 days lost compared to 461 for the same period last year. This represents an increase of 15%
11. Stress related absence decreased by 6% compared to the same period last year.
12. Of the 462 days lost due to stress for the period, 343 days was reported as non-work related stress. This equated to 74% non-work related absence and 26% work-related absence.
13. Seventeen employees reported non-work related stress and four employees reported work related stress.
14. We are working with Gateshead Council's Occupational Health team to review the management of stress related absence, particularly around early intervention.
15. During December, two manager briefing sessions were delivered by that provided managers with tips and techniques to manage stress positively.
16. The briefing sessions were offered to all managers in The Gateshead Housing Company and Gateshead Council.
17. 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**

18. The company has held fifteen sickness absence review meetings (short term) in the period. 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.
19. Eleven first written cautions were issued following absence review meetings during the period.
20. 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.
21. Seventeen absence review meetings were held in line with procedure two in the period.
22. In the period, thirteen occupational health physician appointments have been attended as a result of an absence review meeting.

23. In the period, thirteen employees were referred to occupational health to receive cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) counselling support.
24. Of the thirteen employees ten were referred during quarter three, October to December 2015
25. Of the thirteen employees referred to (CBT) counselling support eleven reported non-work related issues and two reported work related issues.
26. Eight employees returned to work on phased hours and duties in the period.
27. Management information and guidance on managing sickness absence is provided to managers on a monthly basis.
28. Four weekly meetings are established with an Occupational Health Physician and an Occupational Health Nurse to review complex cases.

### **Sickness Absence Benchmarking**

29. We share absence data with Gateshead Council. In the month of December 10.25 days were lost due to sickness absence in Gateshead Council compared to 9.17 in TGHC. It is to be noted that occupational work groups differ between our organisations.

### **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 the following work life balance applications have been approved:

<b>No of Applications</b>	<b>Type of Work Life Balance Request</b>
7	Applications to reduce working hours
3	Applications to change working patterns
2	Applications to job share
1	Application for compressed hours

To date, 31 December 2015, we are pleased to report that 56 of 328 employees have a work life balance. This equates to 17.07% 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 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 the company has advertised twenty three jobs.

#### **Child Care Scheme**

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

#### **Cycle to Work Scheme**

37. The company continues to offer a salary sacrifice scheme. In the period thirteen employees were in the scheme.

#### **Learning and Development Activity**

38. We are aware that many of our employees face increasing emotional challenges in their role to support tenants to manage the impact of Housing reforms, Universal Credit and to sustain their tenancies.
39. The OD Advisor shadowed the Advice and Support Advisors in the Rent and Income team to better understand the challenges facing employees in their roles. This has led to the development of a bespoke training session with tips and techniques that help build employee resilience and the ability to bounce back.
40. In the period 1 October to 31 December 2015 the following courses have been delivered:-

- Conflict Resolution and Personal Safety
- Asbestos Awareness
- Ipad Training
- First Aid
- Stress Awareness
- Managers managing stress positively

- Water Hygiene
- Fire Safety
- Legionella Awareness

### **Qualifications**

41. 4 employees have been supported to study for a professional qualification.

### **Investors in People (IiP)**

42. As part of the three year supported accreditation we met with our assessor in November to discuss the changes in the standard which was launched in September 2015. TGHC three year assessment will take place in June 2017.

### **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 December 2015 was £230,565.45 compared to £212,649.55 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 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.

2014/2015	Customers & Communities - Customer Services	Customers & Communities Neighbourhood Services	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	0.00	0.91	0.91	0.54	270.20	0.25	24.00	0.66	10.00
May	0.65	1.05	0.00	0.74	1.65	1.02	220.20	0.29	19.00	0.45	7.00
June	0.49	0.30	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	0.62	2.62	2.32	184.10	0.29	19.00	0.33	5.00
August	1.00	0.57	0.12	0.68	3.30	2.94	200.00	0.27	22.00	0.41	6.00
September	1.06	0.78	0.00	0.83	4.13	3.52	242.40	0.42	29.00	0.41	6.00
October	0.77	0.36	0.18	0.55	4.68	4.23	160.80	0.33	29.00	0.22	3.00
November	1.10	0.53	0.06	0.78	5.45	4.88	227.30	0.44	38.00	0.34	5.00
December	1.29	0.51	0.27	0.80	6.25	5.52	235.00	0.16	15.00	0.64	10.00
January	0.95	0.70	0.00	0.74	6.99	6.46	216.90	0.35	33.00	0.39	6.00
February	1.48	0.91	0.00	1.02	8.01	7.59	300.20	0.50	37.00	0.52	8.00
March	1.10	0.97	0.18	0.89	8.91	8.58	262.70	0.39	43.00	0.50	7.00
Cumulative by service area	11.37	8.88	0.81	8.91			2621.40	3.91	333.00	5.00	75.00

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

2015/2016	Customers & Communities - Customer Services	Customers & Communities Neighbourhood Services	Corporate Services Support Services	All employees TGHC	TGHC cumulative	2014/15 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	0.82	0.47	0.06	0.64	0.64	0.91	187.40	0.39	33.00	0.25	4.00
May	0.71	0.24	0.13	0.50	1.14	1.65	144.70	0.25	24.00	0.25	4.00
June	0.45	0.40	0.00	0.48	1.62	2.00	140.60	0.18	18.00	0.30	4.00
July	0.87	0.69	0.00	0.74	2.36	2.62	214.50	0.30	16.00	0.44	7.00
August	0.91	0.85	0	0.84	3.20	3.30	245.19	0.23	22.00	0.61	12.00
September	1.06	0.44	0.00	0.66	3.86	4.13	191.10	0.29	23.00	0.37	8.00
October	1.72	0.87	0.12	1.08	4.94	4.68	316.00	0.38	24.00	0.70	11.00
November	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.02	5.96	5.45	295.95	0.27	30.00	0.75	14.00
December	0.76	0.78	0.18	0.66	6.62	6.25	189.95	0.40	27.00	0.27	4.00
January											
February											
March											
Cumulative by service area	7.34	5.84	0.49	6.62			1925.39	2.69	217.00	3.94	68.00

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

BV12

excludes temp employees with <12 months service

Benchmarking



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### Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2015/16

Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
<b>Number of people employed by TGHC carried forward</b>	335	332	330	328
Male	140	143	141	
Female	192	187	187	
Permanent Employees	313	307	303	
Temporary Employees	19	23	25	
Full Time	258	255	254	
Part Time	74	75	74	
Number of starters	3	9	4	
Number of leavers	6	11	6	
Ill health retirements	0	0	0	
Number of employees seeking redeployment	0	0	0	
<b>Diversity Monitoring</b>				
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	140	143	141	
Female	192	187	187	
<b>Age</b>				
Under 18	0	0	0	
18 – 25	17	15	13	
26 – 35	94	95	93	
36 – 45	87	89	88	
46 – 55	84	83	86	
56 – 65	47	44	44	
66 +	3	4	4	
<b>Disability</b>				
Perceived themselves as disabled	34	34	33	
Do not perceive themselves as disabled	298	296	295	





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## Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2015/16

Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White British	321	319	317	
White Irish	1	1	1	
White Other	1	1	1	
White and Black Caribbean	1	1	1	
White and Black African	1	0	0	
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	2	2	2	
Black or Black British Other	1	1	1	
Chinese	1	1	1	
Other	0	0	0	
<b>Recruitment Monitoring</b>				
Number of BME applicants for posts				
Application for employment	23	15	10	
Short listed for interview	2	1	2	
Offered post	0	0	0	
Number of disabled applicants for posts				
Application for Employment	23	3	4	
Short listed for interview	1	1	2	
Offered post	0	0	0	
<b>HR advisory issues</b>				
Investigations	0	1	0	
Disciplinary	0	0	1	
Suspensions	0	1	0	
No Further Action	0	0	0	
Oral Warning	0	0	0	
First Written Warning	0	0	0	
Final Written Warning	0	0	1	
Dismissals	0	0	0	
Appeals Submitted	0	0	0	
Stage 1 Grievance	0	0	0	
Stage 2 Grievance	0	0	0	

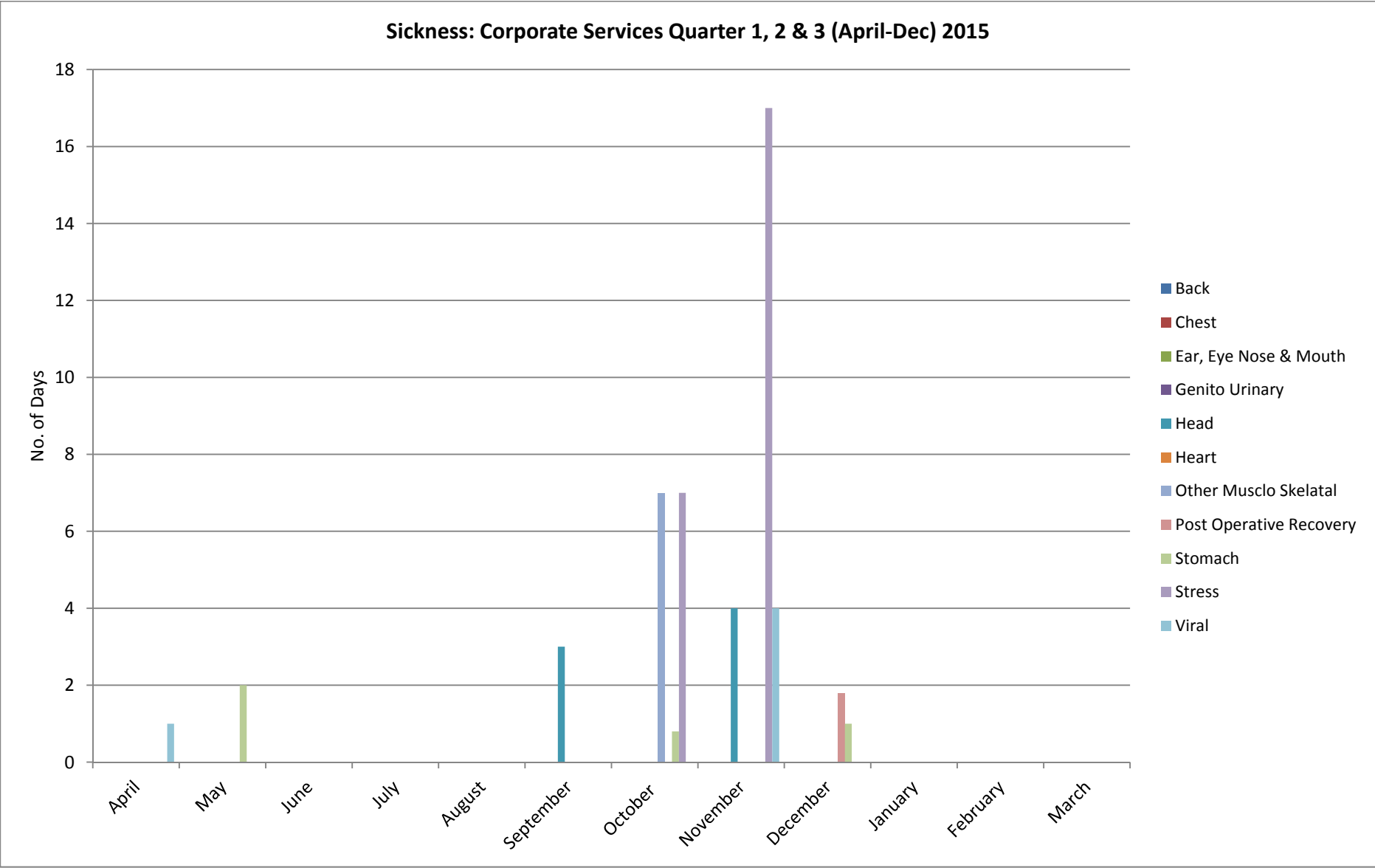


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## Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2015/16

Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Capability	0	0	0	
Bullying and Harassment	1	0	0	
Whistleblowing	0	0	0	
Employment Tribunals	0	0	0	
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>				
Total number of working days lost per employee (target 7.50 April 2015 to March 2016)	1.62	2.24	2.76	
Total number of working days lost to sickness	472.7	650.79	801.90	
Number of Occupational Health appointments	4	4	5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New referrals</li> <li>• Review appointments</li> </ul>	4 0	4 0	5 0	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surgery appointments</li> <li>• Home appointments</li> </ul>	0 0	0 0	0 0	
Number of employee counselling/CBT sessions	1	2	10	
Number of Absence Management Reviews	11	9	12	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short Term</li> <li>• Long Term</li> </ul>	5 6	5 4	5 7	
Number of employees who have had a phased return	1	1	6	
<b>Learning and Development</b>				
Number of new staff receiving induction	3	9	4	
Number of staff undertaking professional Qualifications	4	5	4	



Sickness: Customers & Communities Quarter 1,2 & 3 (April-Dec) 2015

