

accas

CBI/AXA Absence Survey



- **175 million lost working days in 2006**
- **Direct cost to UK plc £13.4bn**
- **Direct Cost to Employers - £537 per employee**

CBI/AXA Absence Survey



- **Worst performing organisations average 12 days**
- **Best performing organisations average 2.7 days**
- **Average = 7 days**

CBI/AXA Absence Survey



Organisation Size

0-49	4 days
50-199	6.5 days
200-499	7.6 days
500-4999	7.7 days
5000+	8 days

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Average absence by Sector

Public Sector	9 days
Transport & distribution	8.1 days
Manufacturing	6.8 days
Professional Services	5 days
IT/Hi-tech services	5.1 days

Main causes of long-term absence

- **Non work related stress, anxiety or depression 70%**
- **Back pain 60%**
- **Other M/S disorders 58%**
- **Work related stress, anxiety or depression 42%**
- **Cancer 40%**
- **Cardiac problems 30%**
- **Respiratory problems 20%**

Main causes of short term absence

- **Minor illness 98%**
- **Back pain 70%**
- **Non work related stress 58%**
- **M/S Disorders 55%**
- **Non work related injuries 55%**
- **Work related stress 35%**
- **Respiratory problems 25%**

CBI/AXA Absence Survey



- **Employers believe that 12% of absence is non-genuine**
- **That is 21 million working days lost**
- **Cost £1.6bn**
- **Paid sickness is often seen as entitlement.**

CBI/AXA Absence Survey



- **39% of employers believe that there is a link between absence and special events (eg world cup)**
- **68% believe absence is an extension to holidays**
- **70% believe it is most prevalent on Mondays and Fridays !**

- **6.6 days lost in organisations that do not recognise Trade Unions**
- **8.9 days lost in organisations that do recognise Trade Unions**

BMA View

- GPs are not the agents of employers
- Certification is for SS purposes not for employers
- GPs cannot be at war with those with whom they have a therapeutic relationship
- Adversarial medicine
- NHS is not a free occupational health service !

Barriers to Managing Absence



Managers believe that

- **Employees with a sick note are untouchable**
- **Contacting employees could be harassment**
- **Insurance policy could be invalidated**
- **Intervention is risky**
- **Adjustments could become permanent**
- **Action could create a binding precedent**

Managing Absence



- **Line managers are pivotal**
- **Training**
- **Policies & procedures**
 - Data
 - Grey areas
 - IVF / Cosmetic Surgery

Keep in Touch with sick employees

- **No contact looks like no care**
- **Explode the myths**
 - Unfair to make contact
 - Stress
 - TUs disapprove
 - Perception of bullying

Having Difficult Conversations

- Fear – where might this lead ?
- Ostrich behaviour
- Tea boat syndrome

Managing Absence



- **Return to Work interviews**
- **Reasonable adjustments**
- **Continuity, transparency, equity**

Phased return to work

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Timebounded

Managing Absence



- **Final Absence Thought for the Day**
- **Dog owners took 2.7 million days off over 2 years to care for sick animals**
 - 10% took more than 5 days
 - 5% took more than 10 days

- **A complete rethink of managing Discipline and Grievance**
- **Michael Gibbons asked to undertake a review**
- **Report now out for consultation**

History:

- **Before 2003 Burchell & Acas Code of Discipline**
- **Rising number and cost of ET claims forced a rethink**

- **Employment Act 2002**
- **3 Step Procedures**
 - Alternative dispute resolution
 - Must complete internal processes before ET
 - Fixed period conciliation
- **What are the problems ?**

- **ET Claims continue to rise**
- **DTI commission Michael Gibbons to look at the whole process**

Recommendations:

Repeal Employment Act 2002

Simplify ET processes

Mediation

accas

inform

advise

train

work
with you