

REDUCING LONG-TERM SICKNESS

Long-term sickness is an area often seen as something outside an employer's control, but it can be influenced. There will be instances that can't be prevented by workplace policy, however, with effective planning, management and staff support this can help highlight and avoid issues arising.

Guidelines and recommended steps to follow and to get a better understanding of how best to manage employees to reduce long term sickness.

- 1. Share your policy:** It's important that your employees know exactly what your sickness policy is, that your team is up-to-speed with it and that it can be accessed by all employees at all times.
- 2. Train your managers:** Ensure your managers understand how to speak to someone who has an illness, especially mental health related, and when they may or may not contact that person. The HR Suite can assist with all communications to employees. Remember that a paper trail is necessary.
- 3. Know the law:** Keeping up-to-date with legal requirements about absenteeism (and all aspects of employment law) is essential. Ensure this information is shared within the business too with Management.
- 4. Monitor absence rates and set triggers:** It is important to record long term absence accurately and from that analysing and addressing underlying issues. Keeping thorough records of employee absence and communications allows you to identify and spot issues and ensure you have a paper trail and evidence to draw upon. Triggers will also allow you to be more proactive, intervene early and offer support before the issue grows. In this respect a HR system might be beneficial – contact your account manager to avail of a demo of 'The Toolkit' which allows for the inputting of data to create reports and tracking of absence in the workplace.
- 5. Phased returns and adjustments:** A phased return might benefit the employee when returning to full hours or full duties. Providing phased options may enable them to get back to work and ensure they don't have sick leave again. Small changes within the workplace and how an employee delivers their work may also make a big difference. Remember to ensure that any decisions on phased return or lighter duties are discussed with the employee before implementation and dependent on the severity of the absence/injury sanctioned by an Occupational Doctor.
- 6. Wellbeing strategies:** Can play a fundamental role in reducing causes and cutting long-term absence and evidence-based understanding of wellbeing in the workplace. Do you have an Employee Assistance Programme in place? It is cost efficient, easy to implement and offers a value service to all employees. Contact your Account Manager for more information.

CONTACT THE HR SUITE:

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact our office on 066 7102887 and we would be happy to deal with your query.