



Delivery of priority services and outcomes

Which Council Aim does this case study deliver?

Transform the Council

To help residents of Ryedale to achieve a healthy weight by encouraging an active lifestyle where everyone feels welcome and safe

Background – Why?

- To reduce sickness absence rates within the Council
- To review the reasons for sickness absence (in particular stress/anxiety/depression)
- To improve morale and improve the absence culture within the Council
- To promote well being for all staff of Ryedale District Council
- Evaluate the existing Sickness Absence Policy
- Evaluate the existing Occupational Health to see if it is fit for purpose

What was done?

HR worked together with UNISON to do the following:-

- a) Management looking to reduce sickness absence and review/evaluate reasons for sickness absence
- b) UNISON wished to create a Sickness Management Group to discuss initiatives to monitor sickness absence
- c) UNISON presented a report to O & S regarding how they considered management could reduce/monitor sickness absence
- d) Management then presented a report to O & S on what we could do regarding sickness absence in relation to UNISON's report
- e) HR then reviewed the existing Sickness Absence Policy and revamped it with UNISON involvement

Who was involved and how?

HR & UNISON, new Well Being Group (which consists of management, HR, staff volunteers and UNISON reps) and O & S Committee

After O & S committee during February 2010 – UNISON and HR got together to consider how to monitor, manage and reduce sickness absence levels within Ryedale

What was achieved?

- 1) HR created a Well Being Group (rather than a Sickness Management Group) to have a more positive impression for reducing sickness absence
- 2) HR created new Managing Sickness Absence Policy which aims to support staff through sickness absence and this policy received a lot of UNISON involvement when writing the policy
- 3) The main changes in the Managing Sickness Absence Policy were creation of a Manager's Toolkit, change in culture from disciplinary action to supportive action, promoting further Occupational Health referrals to assist in getting staff back to work with workplace adjustments, introducing an informal procedure and then a formal procedure for dealing with both short term, and long term sickness absence separately.
- 4) HR trained Managers on How to Manage Sickness Absence (with UNISON involvement) and update them on the new Managing Sickness Absence Policy
- 5) Managers trained on ensuring Return to Work interviews being done and how to incorporate Trigger Point interviews into a Return to Work interview
- 6) Managers increased awareness by offering more Occupational Health referrals for staff
- 7) HR produced new credit card for Reporting Sickness Absence and this has been spiralled out to all staff throughout the Council

- 8) Sickness absence reduced to 8.89 days for 2009/2010– which is the lowest that the Council has had since 2005
- 9) Well Being Programme being rolled out from May 2010 to look at things like free eye checks, well woman and well men clinics
- 10) Hosting a Well Being Fair at the Council for all staff during July 2010 which includes Holistic Therapy, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Slimming World, smoking cessation groups and Leisure Groups.
- 11) All initiatives for the Well Being Programme, and Well Being Fair are being hosted FREE for all staff – no charge for the groups coming along to Ryedale District Council

Who benefited and how do we know?

- Staff groups have been consulted on what types of well being initiatives they would like to be held at Ryedale
- UNISON representatives involved in the Well Being Programme and in the new Managing Absence Policy, and the training to all Managers
- All staff benefit from the FREE groups coming along to Ryedale (eye checks are free, discounts being considered from the other groups)
- Sickness absence has reduced from 10.66 days per employee in 2008/2009 to 8.89 days in 2009/2010 – this is the lowest that the Council has recorded since 2005.
- All staff benefit from a culture of well being and managers being supportive of sickness absence and well being

Resources and value for money

- We get the benefits of helping the local community to come along to Ryedale to promote their businesses
- Improving lives of staff by introducing the Well Being Fair
- Improving well being of staff by offering all the different initiatives
- No monetary resource needed – improves our reputation as a good employer
- Resource given in time from employees within Ryedale District Council
- Well Being Programme produced and given out to all staff of Ryedale District Council
- HR time spent networking with local businesses re the Well Being Fair and the Well Being Programme

Next Steps / Further Action

- To evaluate Managing Sickness Absence policy after 12 months
- Monitor the impact of the new Managing Sickness Absence policy on sickness absence
- Further development of the Well Being Group to look at new initiatives for 2011
- Evaluate Occupational Health service and number of referrals
- Monitor and evaluate the reasons for sickness absence and review with UNISON during 2011

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Background documents/Links:

- O & S report from UNISON
- O & S report from Management
- Management information on sickness absence figures for past year
- Covalent information for year on year figures
- Well Being Programme
- Managing Absence Policy
- Credit Card for reporting in sick