THE INSTITUTE OF LEADERSHIP

Understanding HR: Absence Management

This worksheet, based on the Spotlight 'Absence Management,' will help you focus on absence management policies, using absence management data, and approaches to managing absence in the workplace.

You should take approximately **two hours** to complete this worksheet and read the accompanying Spotlight

Absence Management Policies

There are many different reasons for absence from work, and an effective absence management policy should recognise that absence may be genuine as a result of, for example, short-term sickness or longer-term health issues. Most organisations will therefore recognise that some level of absence is unavoidable and use a combination of methods to manage absence and promote attendance.

Describe in detail how each of the following are addressed by your organisation's absence management policy:

Employees are informed of the organisation's standards for absence and the organisation's expectations	
A fair and consistent process to help management deal with absence and let employees know how it will be measured	
Provisions to support employees and methods for reducing absence	
A procedure to be followed when an employee is unable to work	
Statement covering pay arrangements when absent	
A procedure to be followed when absence becomes a problem and disciplinary action might need to be invoked	

Absence Management Data

According to CIPD (2018), effective absence management seeks to support the needs of employees to provide clear and consistent guidance and to avoid unauthorised absence or inappropriate sick pay schemes. However, you cannot manage sickness absence if you do not record it. Collecting data about employee's sickness-related absence can reveal much about the health of a company's workforce, e.g. a surge in sick days may reflect a rise in flu rates, or it may be an indication that employees are overloaded.

How are each of the following features of absence management data collection addressed in your organisation?

What absence data is currently provided to managers to review?	
How is the data collected?	
How is the data analysed and presented to understand the causes of absence and identify underlying trends?	
How does the organisation ensure absence management data is General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant?	
Is absence management data used against external benchmarks to see how your organisation's absence levels compare to others in the same sector or of a similar size? If not, should it be?	

Managing Absence in the Workplace

There are a number of approaches available for managing absence in the workplace, some depending on the particular circumstances. **Describe the advantages and disadvantages of each of the following:**

ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES
	Return-to-Work Interviews	
	Absence trigger-points, e.g. Bradford Factor, periods of absence	
	Communication with an employee on long-term absence	
	Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	
	Disciplinary Procedure	

Review How would you start a return-to-work interview?