

Tackling absence effectively involves identifying the causes of non-attendance and not simply dealing with the symptoms. Employers feel that up to 30% of reported sickness absence could be non-genuine, according to the 2003 CBI absence survey.

Using the 80/20 rule

- 10% of employees have a poor attendance record
- 10% of employees have an excellent attendance record
- 80% of employees are somewhere in between

and yet.....

- the majority of employers concentrate their efforts on the 10% who have a poor record, and
- rarely recognise those with an exemplary attendance record

whereas

- improving the attendance of the 80% would typically provide a greater payback

Focusing on the causes of non-attendance and tackling these effectively facilitates a greater improvement in attendance and better payback than concentrating on the absence of the 10%.

An integrated approach to attendance management

Most absence is signed off as “sickness” of one type or another. However poor attendance and sickness absence can be caused by a wide range of organisational and personal factors, in addition to genuine ill-health (see “Causes” overleaf).

Once identified the organisational factors can be reviewed and managed effectively, and the personal factors can be tackled through supportive HR policies and good management practices.

The results of an integrated approach to attendance management are reduced stress, accidents and staff turnover and improved employee wellbeing and attendance.

Why take an integrated approach?

- Absence costs the UK economy £11.8 billion per annum - direct costs only
- There is an average of 10.1 days absence per employee per year in the public sector and 6.7 in the private sector
- The direct cost of sickness absence is almost £500 per employee per year

Sources: CBI, CIPD

**What is the average absence per employee in your organisation?
How much is absence costing your organisation?**



Poor attendance is a symptom . . .

Causes	Results	H E A L T H I S S U E S	P O O R A T T E N D A N C E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bullying, harassment, victimisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress Poor performance Low motivation 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor work environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Musculo-skeletal problems Stress 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor work design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress/boredom Lack of job satisfaction Low motivation Poor work/life balance 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor management of substance misuse issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accidents Poor performance 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An organisational culture where employees do not receive adequate recognition and appreciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A negative psychological contract High labour turnover Poor performance Low motivation 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor people management (including ineffective communication) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor employee relationships Reduced co-operation and flexibility Poor work/life balance 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate HR policies and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor employee relations A negative psychological contract 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence culturally accepted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A relaxed attitude to "skiving" 		



Key responses to absence

- post return interviews (they really do work!)
- early HR/OH/Line Manager contact with absentee
- regular "keep in touch" initiatives
- flexible solutions to support "back to work early" initiatives
- use of OH/company doctor/GP for early assessment/rehabilitation
- set and communicate performance standards
- the introduction of flexible working practices
- information and counselling helplines

How ICAS can help

ICAS can help you to understand why absence is an issue for your organisation and work with you to develop a strategy for managing attendance more effectively which:

- Aligns attendance management goals to Human Resources strategies
- Evaluates current attendance performance
- Assesses and improves current attendance management and associated policies and processes
- Educates and trains line managers (including soft skills)
- Communicates changes and expectations clearly to all staff
- Implements new processes where necessary
- Monitors attendance performance

Whether you wish to improve attendance in response to concerns about the costs of high absence, or as part of a wellbeing package, we have a range of services to create an effective approach to attendance management. For example:

Consultancy: ICAS can provide the knowledge and experience to support your organisation in improving attendance, from ensuring attendance management goals align with Human Resource strategies, through providing an Attendance Diagnostic Survey, policy reviews and developing appropriate communications and training, to reviewing the effectiveness of new attendance management processes.

Training: New attendance processes are also a useful opportunity to provide line managers with training that demonstrates the benefits to themselves of using the new processes, and provides the soft skills to manage employee relations sensitively and with equity.

Fitness for Work Assessments: Our Fitness for Work Assessment comprises two meetings with a clinical psychologist, and a full report detailing the employee's past and current situation in terms of their general well being and attitude to work. The Assessment offers a professional opinion as to whether the employee is fit to return to work, and provides recommendations as to how best to facilitate that return.

Employee Assistance Programmes: ICAS is widely recognised as the market leader in EAP provision. EAPs are proven to reduce sickness absence, increase productivity and improve concentration within the workplace. Our comprehensive service enables the organisation to benefit from the wide range of support offered by keeping employees free to concentrate on their work. Confidential independent and professional personal support and our unique problem solving resources are designed to help people cope better with life's challenges. Delivered by our own people to the highest clinical standards in a closely managed environment, an ICAS EAP is for organisations that care for and value their employees.



Stress Management: Our stress audits quantify stress as a corporate risk. We benchmark results against national norms and develop detailed recommendations for tackling the issues that emerge from the audit. Our training programmes cover the nature and symptoms of stress, its effects, and strategies for preventing it. We also work with managers to help them identify stress symptoms in their team members, understand their duty of care, and realise how their own management style can affect stress levels in others.

Attendance Policies: Our Policy Development and Review service provides a safety check for policies to make sure nothing substantial has been forgotten, and that policies are in line with 'best practice'. In addition training for managers and employees can be developed in line with the Company's objectives for the policy.

HEALTHYliving Days: Informative roadshow exhibitions that cover key health and lifestyle issues, and offer a variety of health screening activities. They can cater for up to 150 participants in any one day and provide employees with a unique opportunity to meet with specialists and discuss factors affecting their health.

Why use ICAS?

As the UK's leading Behavioural Risk Management consultancy, ICAS is well placed to help organisations improve attendance. Its broad portfolio of services meets the needs of a wide range of organisations in tackling both short and longer term absence. Our consultants, who have all held management positions within organisations, are experienced in the field of behavioural risk, combining psychology, counselling or human resource expertise with a practical approach to identifying causes and developing solutions.

Please call the ICAS Consultancy and Training team for more information on 01908 285200, or e-mail us at C&T@icasgroup.com

Other Services

As a leading consultancy in Behavioural Risk Management, ICAS offers advice and assistance in a range of other areas including:

- Managing Change at Work
- Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace
- Managing Pressure and Stress
- Mediation and Conflict Resolution*
- International Assignment Support
- Handling Traumatic Incidents
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Enhancing Team Performance
- Dignity and Diversity at Work
- HEALTHYliving Seminars

*Mediation services are provided through Conflict Management Plus under the banner of Mediation Direct.

