

## Managing Absence

### University of York Brief to City of York Council

Friday 23 November 2012

#### Background

- Primary area of absence management is sickness absence management.
- University sickness absence provision is generous! Up to 8 months full pay and 4 months half pay – which can encourage absence if not managed properly.
- Important to manage early, appropriately and consistently

#### Process

- We encourage use of the informal intervention mechanism:
  - Ownership by lowest possible level of manager as early as possible
  - Encourage discussion between line managers and employees at 1:1 meetings to address any particular difficulties that may lead to absence.
  - Creating a good working relationship between line managers and employees so trust and openness occurs
  - Where absence happens using the Return to Work mechanism properly to discuss the absence and identify any potential solutions
- Where absences intermittent we use various trigger points to step up our management of individuals absence – see flowchart:
  - At 8 day point higher level of management gets involved (Team Leaders rather than Supervisors).
  - At 10 day point move to First Formal - Team Leader level
  - At 20 day point move to Final Formal – Facility Manager level
  - At 30 day point move to Dismissal – Head of Section.
- Also have sanctions less than dismissal and Dismissal due to Ill Health

#### Alex to speak on how it works practically

#### Management

- Provision of management training to enhance managerial skills.

- Induction training sets expectations.
- On the job training team sessions and away days
- Management in Action programme that covers range of capabilities required by first line managers
- Provision of focussed training on specific issues; sickness absence management to line managers at relatively regular intervals/by request

### Support

- Use of our Employee Assistance scheme particularly where there are issues outside of work.
- Dedicated HR support which covers operational day to day issues at informal and formal levels – HR Officer.
- Longer term absence support includes Occupational Health service.
- Organisational approach to Stress Management is through line managers and use of Individual Stressor Questionnaire resulting in a Well Being Action Plan (if appropriate).

### Other Absence Provisions

- To minimise time taken off as sickness absence where other reason may be more appropriate
- Discretionary Leave – discretion vested in line managers with HR guidance
  - Covers a range of circumstances that may be supported by the University; e.g. public/community leave.
  - However, some are unpaid – e.g. Care for Dependents.
- Use of annual leave and flexitime encourages to support leave that is not sickness based.
  - Note – need to record sickness accurately to identify potential trends/issues (catch 22 !)
- Flexitime system useful to enable where possible for managers and staff to manage time in conjunction with work and home pressures.
  - Defined boundaries of flexitime; e.g. can only save up to 3 days in any accounting quarter, time above that is lost.
  - May only use up to one day as flexileave in any month
  - But can use portions of flexi to start later/finish earlier in agreement with manager.