

Long term sickness absence: the solution

ICAS is often asked to help HR or OH in supporting an employee to return to work after long-term absence.

THE SITUATION

An employee had been off work for 12 months after claiming sexual discrimination and bullying by her manager. The Company was keen to help her return to work before the end of her sickness entitlement escalated into an Employment Tribunal claim.

An initial meeting with an ICAS Organisational Consultant indicated that mediation could be useful. However the nature of the situation suggested that the employee and manager would need additional on-going support to repair their relationship.

THE SOLUTION

A comprehensive package was agreed with all the parties, consisting of an ICAS Psychological Fitness for Work assessment, (which determined the employee was fit to undertake mediation),



mediation and a coaching programme, including joint coaching sessions between the employee and the manager.

As a result the employee returned to work four weeks after the commencement of the coaching, and the organisation:

- did not have an Employment Tribunal to defend
- substantially improved the people skills of a key manager
- regained a motivated and highly competent employee
- improved the atmosphere in the department from which all parties benefited
- saved the cost of recruitment and ended the cost for covering the absent employee's work

Executive coaching



Following restructuring many clients face the challenge of supporting long term senior employees in accepting a lateral move or in leaving the organisation in a dignified and positive way. While outplacement support can be helpful, there will always be those who would benefit from the additional psychological support of an ICAS Executive Coach.

THE SITUATION

One such client asked ICAS for help when a deputy manager with many years service, had assumed he would be given the senior manager role when it became vacant, and was finding it difficult to report to the new, younger, more qualified manager.

The DM was exhibiting signs of extreme anger, insubordination, lack of co-operation and was also alienating other colleagues.

The client had offered a lateral move and voluntary redundancy, but the DM had been unwilling to accept either. At stalemate the client needed a resolution to prevent the situation escalating.

THE SOLUTION

The ICAS Executive Coach helped the DM to:

- make sense of what had happened
- to accept his own part in that process
- to determine what he really wanted to do next.

He was given access to the ICAS EAP for support with:

- his finances
- starting his own business
- investing the redundancy lump sum when he decided to take voluntary redundancy and to make a complete career change.

Absence - the facts

- 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 days in the private sector
- The direct cost of sickness absence is almost £500 per employee per year

Sources CBI and CIPD

Do you know?

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

Call ICAS for more information.

Take our Stress Test

Stress has become one of the most significant health and safety issues in the workplace. Stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as *“the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”*.

How does your organisation measure up? ICAS has developed a checklist to help you find out using the HSE guidelines:

ICAS Organisational Stress Checklist	Yes	Don't know	No
My organisation has a clear policy on workplace stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Management have endorsed this policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All employees are aware of this policy and understand its contents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All levels of management within the organisation have been trained in stress management and prevention and are aware of the HSE Management standards on stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procedures are in place for managers to assess the risks of stress within the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procedures exist to support employees who may be experiencing stress at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All employees are aware of how to access this support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managers know exactly what they should do in the case of an employee displaying symptoms of stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procedures are in place to prevent unacceptable behaviours at work such as bullying and harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procedures are in place for rehabilitating those employees back into the workplace who have been absent due to stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Scoring Yes = 2 Don't know = 1 No = 0

20 = Your organisation is clearly doing things right and is well on the way to meeting the HSE guidelines

15 = Your organisation has got many things right but there appear to be gaps in your framework. Perhaps ICAS could help you

10 = Your organisation has got some things in place but not enough. You would benefit from talking with us about how to improve things

<10 = You need to put things in place urgently. Call us now for assistance

For further information about workplace stress visit these websites:

- www.hse.gov.uk
- www.isma.org.uk
- www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental_health
- www.channel4.com/health/microsites/0-9/4health/stress

To find out how ICAS may be able to assist your organisation please telephone **01908 285200** or return the attached reply paid card.

If you require any further information on these services, please contact us on 01908 285200

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