

Chapter 3: Reintegration



The section on reintegration has proved to be the most challenging, and warrants more exploration in the future. Absence management is strongly regulated in many member states, limiting employee involvement.

With increased awareness on the importance of productivity, companies will have to consider innovative strategies regarding the reintegration of employees back into the workplace. This is an area that requires

a multi-disciplinary approach and always needs to be developed taking legal requirements into consideration.

The best practices in this section include:

1. **BT Group Plc:** Reintegration into the Workplace
2. **Pfizer:** Occupational Rehabilitation
3. **Janssen Pharmaceutica Belgium:** When prevention fails: Reintegration into the Workplace After an Extended Period of Absence due to Ill Health



BT Group plc

One of the world's leading providers of communications solutions and services including networked IT services. BT Group offers local, national and international telecommunications services; higher-value broadband and internet products and services; and converged fixed/mobile products and services. BT Group plc consists of six principal lines of business with over 100,000 employees in 170 countries.

Business Issue/Problem

People with mental health problems are twice as likely to lose their jobs compared with those who do not have a mental health problem.



The combined costs of sickness-related absence due to mental ill health and non-employment, as well as the effects on unpaid work and output losses from premature mortality reached 23.1 billion GBP in the UK in 2002-2003. State benefits to adults with mental health problems were estimated at 9.5 billion GBP. It was estimated in a recent policy paper that quantifiable costs falling on employers because of mental health problems in the UK workforce in 2006 totaled 1,035 GBP a year for every employee in the workforce equivalent to 3.6% of the national pay bill.

Absenteeism accounted for 8.4 billion GBP a year and 2.4 billion GBP a year was the cost for replacing staff that leave their jobs because of mental ill health.

Wellbeing Solution Applied

As part of this long-term structured approach to mental wellbeing, BT Group plc ensures **that line managers regularly keep in touch with individuals on sick leave**. A rehabilitation plan aims to help people back to work, initially on a reduced-hours basis. It looks at aspects of jobs that are particularly pressured and rearranges responsibilities. **Jobs may be adjusted to reduce workload and there may be time off allocated to attend therapeutic sessions**. Shift patterns also may be changed, allowing a later or earlier start to avoid rush-hour travel. The company also provides a quiet place to rest to if individuals feel anxious or stressed.

In the first five years of this comprehensive, integrated approach, mental health related sickness absence and premature retirement decreased by 30% and 80% respectively. Almost 80% of people off work for more than six months with mental ill health get back to their own jobs, compared with 20% nationally.

Benefits for the Company

- **Reduced costs of absenteeism**, recruitment and retraining
- Increased employee engagement
- Positioning the organisation in terms of positive effects on image and brand
- Enhanced CSR credentials
- Applying Governmental strategy

Benefits for the Employee

- **Improved their mental health**
- Returning people to work, which is generally considered to be good for their wellbeing

Solution Champion

- **Catherine Kilfedder**, catherine.kilfedder@bt.com

Implementation Challenges: Supporting managers to do the appropriate thing at the right time

Tips: Need to work in conjunction with the Occupational Health provider, the Employee Assistance programme and the General Practitioner

Departments Involved: All Lines of Business, OH and EAP, Human Resources

Place of Implementation: BT Group

Occupational Rehabilitation



Pfizer

Pfizer is a research-based global pharmaceutical company manufacturing and marketing leading prescription medicines and consumer products.

Business Issue/Problem

Sickness absence: optimizing colleagues' recovery and return to productive employment following illness or injury.

Wellbeing Solution Applied

Occupational rehabilitation: a formal bespoke multidisciplinary process designed to overcome the barriers to an individual's continued or return to work, following illness or injury.

Benefits for the Company

- **Cost effective**
- Improved recruitment and retention
- Increased productivity
- Compliance with statutory obligation
- **Reduced sickness absence and health related losses**
- Enhances corporate perception
- **Demonstrates ethical positive corporate values**
- Skills retention

Benefits for the Employee

- **Improved recovery**
- **Crucial step in return to full health**
- Sustained employment
- Enhanced psychosocial wellbeing

Solution Champion

- **Leslie Page**, Leslie.Page@Pfizer.com

Implementation Challenges: Acceptance that a 'bespoke' process is necessary, must consider the specific individual and business needs in that specific circumstance, consistency; reasonable and appropriate to the circumstances, management buy in, demonstrating Return on Investment (ROI) in respect of necessary increase in management input/resource

Acceptance of rehab' rationale: genuine aim to enhance recovery and appropriate return to work not earliest return to work

Tips: Ensure management 'buy in'.

Demonstrate value: to the business-costs reduction, increased productivity, reduction in sickness absence-to the individual-personal support for recovery and continued employment

Early communication to all stakeholders

Ensure sufficient & appropriate support for managers

Formalize a rehabilitation program, establish a timeframe, regular progress review, early intervention should problems arise and keep records

Departments Involved: Occupational Health, Human Resources, Line Management

Place of Implementation: Pfizer U.K. Ltd

When Prevention Fails: Reintegration into the Workplace After an Extended Period of Absence due to Ill Health



Janssen Pharmaceutica Belgium

Janssen Pharmaceutica Belgium is a Johnson & Johnson Company. Johnson & Johnson, through its operating companies, is the world's most comprehensive and broadly based manufacturer of healthcare products, as well as a provider of related services, for the consumer, pharmaceutical, and medical devices and diagnostics markets. The more than 250 Johnson & Johnson operating companies employ approximately 119,000 men and women in 57 countries and sell products throughout the world.

Business Issue/Problem

Business is functioning in an ever-changing environment. There is an increased need to offer **support to those employees who resume work after an extended period of absence** (four weeks or more) for ill health reasons. This best practice focuses on the benefits of reintegration and shares a number of tips that are in place in the company.

Wellbeing Solution Applied

The organization supports an informal, yet very professional approach regarding physical and psychological issues. **A site located network of "social workers" (company doctors, company nurses, psychologist, and others) operates in a direct, systematic, business integrated and (as much as possible) preventive way around physical and mental issues.** This network is well known on site, but above all, also easy accessible to employees. Employees going into an extended period of sick leave will therefore be identified early in the process, and can be supported as appropriate. Respect for employee confidentiality is of paramount importance, and all interactions with other groups such as line management and human resources, as well as consultation with external practitioners will be managed within this framework.

In addition to this rather expert-oriented-process, a process of line management involvement is being developed, this is already in place at some levels. **Tailor-made training and coaching has been developed allowing this group to function as a first line assistant to their direct reports.** Line management needs to be able to recognize, acknowledge and address non-verbal signals of discomfort of their employees. The better they can do this, the sooner adequate intervention and support can be provided to employees. It allows for an increased quality to the reintegration process when line management can remain in contact with an employee during his/her sickness period.

Employees are empowered through this process to take ownership of their personal wellbeing through the support of specific tools, such as a toolkit for resilience and specific trainings, such as communication and stress training

Benefits for the Company

- **Reduced sickness absence and health related costs**
- **Skills retention**
- There is a **reduction in the stigma associated with feelings of non-wellbeing** or the status of discomfort or ill health due to these all becoming part of an integral part of functioning within the organization
- Social / health experts and functional managers serve the same goal, instead of being in rivals
- Employees are supported to take ownership (of their process) even in times of suffering
- Demonstrates ethical positive corporate values: makes it a better place to be

Benefits for the Employee

- **Enhanced social wellbeing**
- **Prevention of re-collapsing**
- Enhances positive connection with their line manager
- Diminished anxiety that sickness or non-wellbeing equals a bad functional score or even dismissal

Solution Champion

- **Ann Van Acker**, avacker@its.jnj.com

Implementation Challenges:

- Misperceptions or fantasies about the 'real' intentions of line management
- To influence unions to partner positively in this project (their support is crucial!)
- Possible role confusion of line managers (e.g. difficulty to remain a functional leader in case an employee needs and asks for caring)
- Big variety in personal insight (in causes of sickness,) of the employee her-/himself

Tips: Ensure management buy in

Partner with all stakeholders to ensure proper understanding of goals, roles and responsibilities and fair behaviour, especially towards line managers and employees involved

Ensure continuous appropriate support for managers, arouse 'appetite' (via open communication, respectful behavior, wellbeing projects, etc) within all employees to take ownership about their state of health, deploy a stepwise and systematic approach

Departments Involved: Human Resources, site management, Environment, Health and Safety and Security Department; all employees, unions

Date and Place of Implementation:

Janssen Pharmaceutica Belgium (Beerse I & II, Geel and Olen sites)