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By signing below, I confirm that the work/evidence presented is my own, unaided work. I understand the regulations pertaining to candidate malpractice and the action that may be taken as a result.

Signed: *N.Williams*

Date: 11th February 2019



colegsirgâr

Using Research in Human Resources

Issue: The Rise in Sickness Absence

Nia Wyn Williams

The Rise in Sickness Absence

Executive Summary

This research report aimed to ‘**critically analyse sickness absence strategies to reduce short term sickness**’ within Coleg Sir Gar (CSG). The identified stakeholders were the Corporate Board and the Principal, Faculty Directors, Line Managers and Employees. A literature review was undertaken to search for common themes in reducing short-term sickness in the college. The themes identified were “promote wellbeing, effective return to work, training for line managers and a clear policy”. The literature review highlights both the strengths and the weaknesses of existing research and it also highlights the gap in the research, this being that no research has been done specifically into a further education college. It was also identified that no literature included statistics of sickness absence rates before and after the identified themes were either introduced or improved in an organisation. It was also identified that there is no one theme that is the most important, but having a bundle of them present in an organisation will help towards reducing short-term sickness. This justifies the reason for the next section in the report (methodology and findings) as these looked specifically into CSG.

To achieve objective one “to research current absence management policies and procedures and find out how it is being implemented”, research was made into the sickness policy. When comparing CSG policy and procedures to the literature review, the policy includes everything mentioned by Simpson (2017), CIPD (2018), Parkin (2018) and Landau Law (2019) suggesting that CSG have an effective policy in place. To understand more into how the procedures are being implemented into the organisation a questionnaire was distributed to 1000 employees, and a focus group was conducted with 6 line managers.

To achieve objective two “to identify the current absence levels and trends against previous years”, research was made to identify the current absence levels of CSG against previous years. The result outlined that sickness absence rates within CSG are above the national average of 4.1 days per employee per annum. Results also showed an increase in absence from academic year 2016/2017 from 4.5 days per employee to 5.1 days per employee in 2017/2018. With 1000 employees and an average of 5.1 days per employee in academic year 2017/2018, that totals £357,000 per annum.

To achieve objective three “to investigate how to improve the current procedures”, a comparison of the results from the questionnaire and the focus group were conducted. Results showed that there were some similarities in opinions on how to improve the current procedures to reduce sickness absence rates. The 6 ways identified to improve the procedures were:

1. Line managers need to have regular contact with employees regardless if they are off for a short period of time. This will allow for a flow of communication and for the line manager to know what the problem is, how they can help the employee to get better and put in place measures/cover if needed.
2. Training needs to be organised by HR for line managers to attend on a regular basis. This will address the average score given by employees with how effective the RTW was.

3. Return to work needs to be conducted on the first day an employee returns to work to discuss everything that was highlighted by the literature review. This links back to training, as the importance of this can be reminded on a regular basis.
4. Employee wellbeing also needs to be improved. Possible ideas could be to have more than one well being day a year for employees to team build and have fun together.
5. Improvement to sickness system. This needs to be addressed as this may be one of the leading causes why line managers leave it to the last minute to complete or not do it at all. This will need to be addressed by the IT department.
6. It is clear that the sickness policy needs to be made more aware of and encouraged to read by both employees and line managers. This will make it clear of the importance of regular contact with employees and the importance of an effective RTW on the first day back to work. Possible ideas could be to include it in the induction process for them to read in the first 21 days of employment.

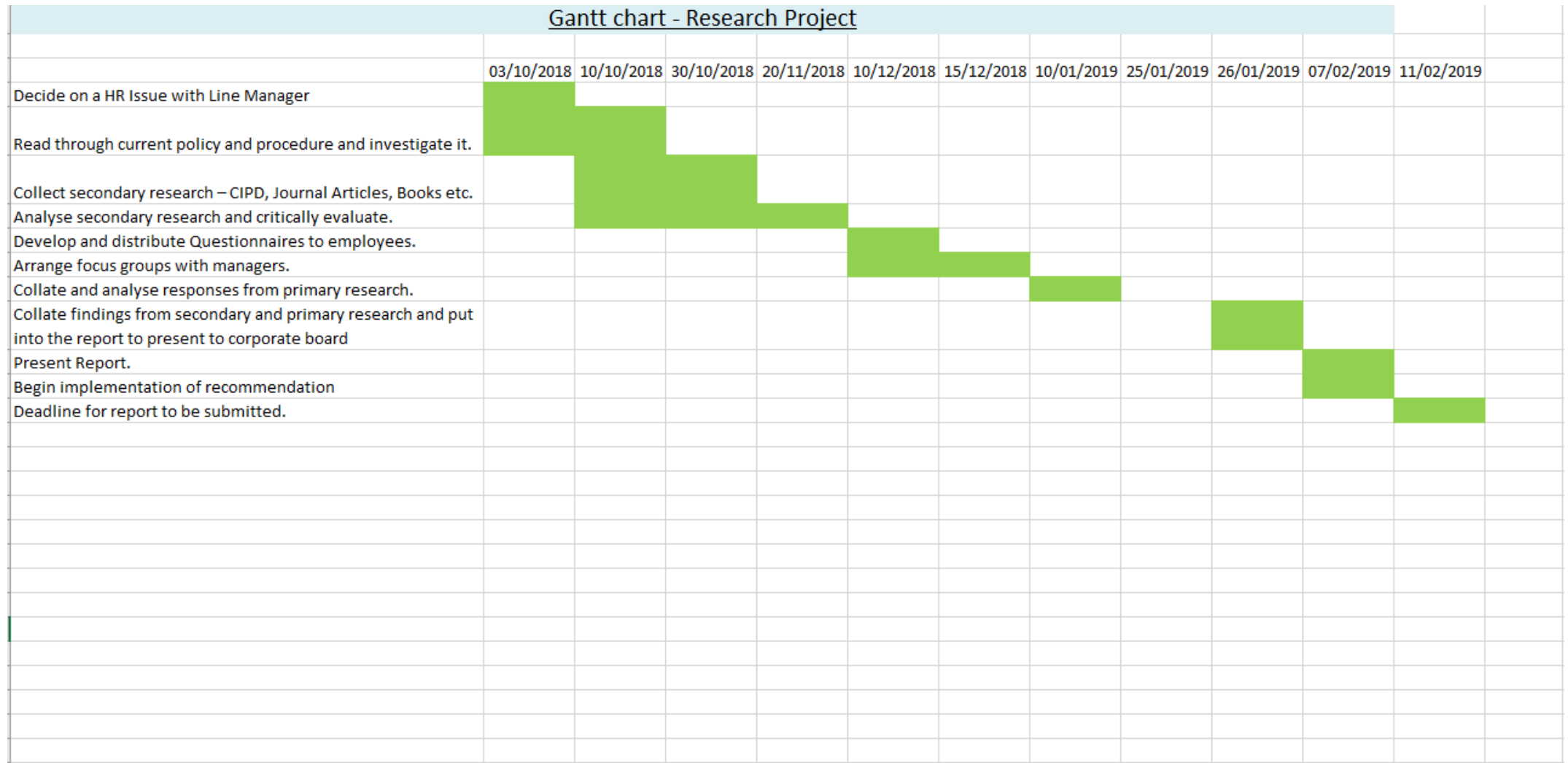
These were presented to the corporate board to achieve objective 4 “to present findings to the corporate board”.

Recommendations included, to give more time for participants to take part in primary research as only 156 out of 1000 responded which is not representative of the organisation as a whole. Further attention is needed to take this forward. Statistics can then be used to prove that improving the current procedures can reduce sickness rates, as no literature was found that confirmed this.

The limitations to the study was that only 156 questionnaires were completed out of a possible 1000 and only 6 line managers were interviewed meaning that it is not representative of all employees/line managers in the organisation. After conducting the primary research nothing was done from the corporate board to tackle the short-term absence levels in the organisation after it was presented to them. Doing nothing means that the issue will not be addressed and short-term sickness levels will increase in the future which is costly for the organisation.

Gantt Chart – Research Project

The below Gantt Chart is a plan of how long it will take to complete each part of the research project. It also helps to track and monitor progress.



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1. Introduction

This report will look at the rise of short-term sickness absence within Coleg Sir Gar. It will include a brief background of the organisation, the HR issue in more detail, identified stakeholders and the aims and objectives of the report. A literature review will be undertaken to find ways of reducing sickness within the organisation. This report will also access a range of primary data sources. How data was collected and analysed will be explained along with a justification of the methodology adopted. Conclusions and recommendations will be made based on this data.

Organisation Name:	Coleg Sir Gar (CSG)
Organisation background:	CSG is a further and higher education college based in Carmarthenshire. There are five campuses including Graig, Ammanford, Pibwrlwyd, Gelli Aur and Jobswell.
Number of employees:	There are approximately 1000 employees, which are made up of lecturing, academic and support staff.
Title:	Assistant HR Officer.
Main HR functions of CSG:	❖ Recruitment ❖ Absence management ❖ Employee relations ❖ Payroll ❖ Pensions ❖ Policies ❖ Contracts
HR department:	Includes seven employees: ❖ Executive Director of HR and Wellbeing ❖ Two HR Advisors ❖ HR Officer ❖ Assistant HR Officer ❖ Staff Development Officer ❖ Pensions Officer
HR Issue:	Rise in short-term sickness absence figures.

Identifying the HR Issue:

The area of research that has been chosen is the convenient access strategy where an area of research has been selected based on access to specific data such as sickness absence figures (Horn, 2009, p. 90). This topic was also agreed by the Executive Director of HR and Wellbeing as well as the Principal.

This research project will look at the issue of short-term sickness absence within the college. When comparing data from previous years, the level of sickness absence has increased. According to CIPD (2016), “short-term sickness is seen as the most costly in form of wages to any organisation”.

Identifying stakeholders

According to Freeman (2009) it is important to understand who the readers are going to be and what they are going to be looking for. The most important stakeholders are the *corporate board and the principal*. They have the most interest in tackling the issue and saving on costs. *Faculty Directors* are important in implementing the decision down the organisation and convincing line managers to implement procedures.

Line Managers are important in implementing the policies with their staff. They need to be well trained in order to implement change successfully.

Employees are the ones who will be affected by the implementation of the policies. They need to understand the policies and processes and be communicated if there are any changes.

Aim and objectives

The aim of this report is to **'to critically analyse sickness absence strategies to reduce short term sickness'**.

This aim will be achieved through four objectives. These objectives will be (Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) (Mind Tools , 2019). Objectives are the steps you take to achieve your overall aim (CIPD, 2018c).

Objectives:

1. To research current absence management policies and procedures and find out how it is being implemented.
2. To identify the current absence levels and trends against previous years.
3. To investigate how to improve the current procedures.
4. To present findings to the corporate board and make recommendations.

2. Literature Review

A literature review is a critical analysis of existing research. It highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of existing research and it is also an opportunity to see a gap in the research (Perkins & Woodhams, 2016).

Sickness absence according to NHS (2010) is defined as “when your employee is considered by themselves or their GP to be unfit to attend work due to illness”.

There are common themes that have been identified to reduce short-term sickness.

2.1 Promote Wellbeing

The following literature helps to understand the importance of promoting wellbeing in the organisation to reduce short-term sickness. According to CIPD (2018b), The Telegraph (2011) and Office for National Statistics (2017) the most common short-term sickness are minor illnesses such as colds and headaches. The research has found that as the workforce ages, people are more likely to develop health conditions/disabilities so it is important employers develop supportive workplaces that help people to manage their health and work. They suggest that promoting well-being for instance mind/body classes can prevent problems from escalating and help create positive working environments. Research carried out by CIPD (2018b) in an organisation that had health and well being activities in place in 2017 found that 44% of respondents saw better employee morale and engagement and 31% saw lower sickness absence.

All sources used are recognised as credible by the university guide. Research outlined is fairly up to date apart from the Telegraph which was written in 2011. Although this was written eight years ago, the CIPD (2018b) and the Office for National Statistics (2017) still backs up the information outlined in the paper meaning it is still correct. Statistics mentioned can't be completely relied upon as it is uncertain how many respondents took part and in what company. It also doesn't mention any absence figures in order to make comparison to what it was like before and after wellbeing programmes were introduced.

2.2 Effective Return to Work (RTW)

According to ACAS (2019), Simpson (2017), CIPD (2018a), Watt, (2018) and UNISON (2017) it is important to have an effective RTW in place to check if the employee is well enough to return to their every day duties. RTW meetings can also provide managers with an opportunity to talk about any underlying issues which might be causing the illness. This is important to find out whether the absence is work related, and finding ways of reducing it. All sources mention that an effective RTW will reduce sickness absence. Personnel today (2007) go one step further and surveyed 182 organisations, which employ 705,000 people, to see how effective they are. 64% saw that the introduction of return-to-work interviews reduced staff absences. 29% however didn't see a difference in the organisation while 7% of HR practitioners saw an increase in absences.

All literature used are also credible according to the university guide. Apart from Personnel today (2007), all sources are also fairly up to date. The statistics used is over 12 years old, meaning a lot can change in that time. The data also doesn't provide us with statistics of how much sickness absence rates decreased from when RTW were introduced.

2.3 Clear policy

According to Simpson (2017), CIPD (2018a), Parkin (2018) and Landau Law (2019) an effective policy must support business objectives and the culture and explain the rights and obligations of employees when absent due to sickness. All 4 sources explain what needs to be included in a policy in order to be effective and help reduce sickness rates. Some examples include, information such as provision for sick pay, information on who employees should notify, information regarding a self certificate form/fit note and information regarding return to work interviews. All sources used are credible according to the university guide, and are all up to date. The literature is useful in understanding what an effective policy should include, however no literature included statistics of how an effective policy can decrease sickness absence levels.

2.4 Training for line managers

According to CIPD (2018a), Paton (2016), Taylor & Wilkinson (2016 p. 25-26) and Personnel Today (2011) line managers have an important role to play in managing absence. The literature helps to understand the importance of training for line managers in the organisations absence policies and procedures. Line managers should be trained in the legal and disciplinary aspect of absence, maintaining absence record keeping and have return to work interview skills and the capabilities and confidence to raise and discuss potential issues. Research found 20% of 178 people that took part in the survey saw a reduction in absence figures whilst 68% saw some reduction. The rest thought that absence management training was unsuccessful.

All sources used are credible sources according to the university guide. They are all relevantly up to date apart from Personnel Today (2011) which is eight years old. These sources are useful in understanding the impact training can have on absence however, it would have been more useful if absence level statistics were used before and after training was conducted to see whether training does reduce sickness absence. It is also uncertain how many people took part in the study.

From undertaking a literature review it is clear that no research has been done specifically into a further education college. It is also noticeable that no literature includes statistics of sickness absence rates before and after the above were either introduced or improved in an organisation. It is also clear that there is no one theme that is the most important, but having a bundle of them present in an organisation will help towards reducing short-term sickness. The next section will focus specifically on CSG and ways employees think sickness absences can be reduced.

3. Methodology

There are two different types of data that can be used. These are, primary which is data collected first hand (questionnaires/interviews) or secondary which is data that is already published (journals/online databases). Data can also be qualitative where it is based around words/feelings, or it can be quantitative where data contains statistics (Perkins & Woodhams, 2016, p.92). The philosophical approach that will be taken is the interpretive approach. The point of this research is to gain an in depth insight into the lives of respondents to understand why they act the way they do (Black, 2006).

Objective one and two is to identify what the current policy and procedure is and what the current levels and trends of absences are. Whilst the policies will inform me of what the policy and procedure are, it is important to know how employees are using the procedures and how managers are enforcing them.

In order to gather data from employees of their experience of the absence management process a questionnaire will be used. According to Perkins & Woodhams, (2016, p.99) a questionnaire can be used to obtain quantitative data from a wide number of people. It is relatively cheap, fast to administer and respondents can complete it when they have time. The disadvantage to this is that questionnaires must be properly designed, they do not allow for the researcher to prompt individuals for more information and response rates may be low.

In order to obtain information from the line managers on how they perceive/implement the policy and the issues associated with it, a focus group will be used. According to Kilcullen, (2011) focus groups are good for allowing the respondents to develop and elaborate on themes. The disadvantage is that researchers need to be able to control discussions so that they get the information they need.

To address objective three, information gathered from the findings above and from the literature review will be used to improve the current procedures.

Data collection methods will be reliable (repeatable/consistent), replicable (another researcher will be able to replicate it in the same/new setting) and valid (conclusions drawn will be consistent with the data that has been collected) (Perkins & Woodhams, 2016 p. 96).

The questionnaire will be sent out via email to 1000 employees (appendices 1) and the focus group (appendices 2) will consist of six line managers.

In order for research to minimise risk of harm an ethical form has been approved prior to the research being conducted (appendices 3). All data collected will be confidential as employees can send the questionnaires back through internal mail to remain anonymous. All employees are also over 18. Before any primary data was collected, permission was given by the Executive Director of HR and the Principal.

Graphs will be created through excel in order to discuss the findings and data will be analysed through pulling out common themes.

4. Findings and Analysis

Objective 1

The main purpose of CSG policy is to provide support to staff when they are unable to work through ill health. When comparing the policy and procedure to the literature review, the policy includes everything mentioned by Simpson (2017), CIPD (2018), Parkin (2018) and Landau Law (2019) suggesting CSG have an effective policy and procedure in place.

From analysing results from the 156 questionnaires that were completed there are some results that stand out in terms of how the policy is actually being implemented (Appendices 4).

The results confirmed that the most common sickness absence (37%) was colds, headaches and sickness bugs. Only 47% of employees admitted that they had contact with their line manager when they were off work. The importance of this is outlined in the sickness policy, however only 56% of people admitted they have read this and 53% of these people thought it was useful. The majority of people (28%) also scored their return to work as being below “average” by giving them a score of 4. This may be down to employees wanting line managers to be trained more effectively in this area as 56% of people would like their line manager to have more training in delivering return to work. It may also be down to the fact that 77% of people admitted that they weren’t given a return to work on the same day they returned to work with 37% of people saying that their return to work were conducted 3+ weeks after. 52% of people ranked employee wellbeing as average with a score of 5.

From analysing the results from six line managers in a focus group, there were also some results that stood out. Some problems were highlighted with regards to the sickness absence system, with all six experiencing technical problems when conducting a return to work. Some problems consisted of difficulty saving the information, and return to work disappearing after it has been finalised. All line managers agreed that more training was needed around managing sickness with 4 admitting they were last trained 6+ years back. All 6 also admitted that conducting a return to work with employees on the same day they return to work is difficult as work commitments get in the way however, they do try and conduct it within the first 3 weeks they return. All line managers admitted they felt they were hassling their employees when they were off for a short period of time, causing them not to phone them and relying on the employee to keep in touch with them.

Objective 2

Sickness Absence rates within CSG are above the national average rate of 4.1 days per employee per annum (Office for National Statistics 2018). Academic year 2016/2017 saw an

average absence rate of 4.5 days per employee, which increased to 5.1 days per employee in academic year 2017/2018. The average daily cost is approximately £70 per employee. With 1000 employees and an average of 5.1 days per employee that totals £357,000 per annum. This is without taking into account the cost of absence cover.

Objective 3

When comparing the results from the questionnaire and focus group there are some similarities in opinions on how to improve the current procedures to address sickness absence levels. These will be presented to the corporate board on February 4th 2019 to achieve the fourth objective “to present findings to the corporate board”.

1.	Line managers need to have regular contact with employees regardless if they are off for a short period of time. This will allow for a flow of communication and for the line manager to know what the problem is, how they can help the employee to get better and put in place measures/cover if needed.
2.	Training needs to be organised by HR for line managers to attend on a regular basis. This will address the average score given by employees with how effective the RTW was.
3.	Return to work needs to be conducted on the first day an employee returns to work to discuss everything that was highlighted by the literature review. This links back to training, as the importance of this can be reminded on a regular basis.
4.	Employee wellbeing also needs to be improved. Possible ideas could be to have more than one well being day a year for employees to team build.
5.	Improvement to sickness system. This needs to be addressed as this may be one of the leading causes why line managers leave it to the last minute to complete or not do it at all. This will need to be addressed by the IT department.
6.	It is clear that the Sickness policy needs to be made more aware of and encouraged to read by both employees and line managers. This will make it clear of the importance of regular contact with employees and the importance of an effective RTW on the first day back to work. Possible ideas could be to include it in the induction process for them to read in the first 21 days of employment.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, the literature review helped to identify the common themes organisations should have in place in order to reduce sickness absence. These themes were to have wellbeing activities in place, training for line managers, an effective policy and RTW. The primary research undertaken helped to identify issues in the organisation that need improving. The 6 issues identified above, were taken to the corporate board for them to implement changes throughout the organisation and help achieve the aim of this report.

6. Recommendations for change

Recommendations for change would be to give more time for participants to take part in the primary research as 156 results is not representative of the organisation as a whole. Further attention is needed to take this forward. Statistics can then be used to prove that improving

the procedures as identified can reduce sickness rates, as no literature was found that confirmed this.

7. Limitations

The disadvantage to the study was that only 156 questionnaires were completed out of a possible 1000 and only 6 line managers were interviewed meaning that it is not representative of all employees/line managers in the organisation. After conducting the primary research nothing was done from the corporate board to tackle the short-term absence levels in the organisation after it was presented to them. Doing nothing will mean that the issue will not be addressed and short-term sickness levels will continue to increase in the future which is costly for the organisation.

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9. Appendices

Questionnaire Questions (Appendices 1)



Short Term Sickness Absence Questionnaire

As part of my CIPD level 5 qualification I have decided to focus on short term sickness absence levels within Coleg Sir Gar. The purpose of the questionnaire is to find ways of reducing short term sickness absence rates within the college. I would be grateful if you complete this questionnaire anonymously by December 21st 2018. Thank you ☺

1. How many times have you been absent from work in the last year? (please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+

2. What symptoms were you off work with? (Please tick)

Colds/headaches/stomach	Time off for dependents
Stress	Mental ill health
Musculoskeletal injuries	Asthma
Back Pain	Other

3. Did you have regular contact with your line manager when you were off work?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Did you complete a SA128 the day you returned to work?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Wasn't aware we had to ☐

5. If you were absent for more than 7 days, did you provide work with a doctors paper?

Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐

6. Did you have an effective return to work? (please rank from 0 being ineffective to 10 being very effective by circling)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. Were you given a return to work programme the same day as you returned?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. If no, how late was your return to work? (please tick)

2-3 days after ☐ 1 week after ☐

4-5 days after ☐ 2 weeks after ☐

3+ weeks after ☐

9. Would you like to see line managers having more training in delivering return to work interviews?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10. How would you rank employee wellbeing in the organisation? (please rank from 0 being poor to 10 being very excellent by circling)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. Have you read the sickness absence policy before?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12. If so, how useful did you find it?

Very useful ☐ Useful ☐ Not Useful ☐ NA ☐

Thank you for your time. Please return to Nia Williams, Assistant HR Officer, HR Department, Graig Campus. ☺

Focus Group Questions (Appendices 2)



Focus Group Questions

As part of my CIPD level 5 qualification I have decided to focus on short term sickness absence levels within Coleg Sir Gar. The purpose of this focus group is to find ways of reducing short term sickness absence rates within the college.

1. How effective do you think the absence policy is?
2. Have you read it before?
3. If so, do you think it is easy to read?
4. How user friendly is the absence system when doing a return to work with an employee?
5. Are there any issues surrounding the system?
6. When were you last trained in managing absence?
7. How soon do you do a return to work with an employee?
8. Do you keep regular contact with an employee when they are absent from work?
9. Would you like more training in managing absence?
10. Do you remind employees to complete a SA128 when they return to work?
11. Do you chase up for an outstanding doctors paper with the employee when they are absent from work for more than 7 days?
12. Would you say that you are supportive to employees when they return to work?
Please give examples.

Ethical Form (Appendices 3)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of research activity: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

Full Name:	Nia Williams		
Tick all boxes which apply:			
Member of staff:	☐	Student:	☒
Honorary research fellow:	☐		
Faculty/School/Centre:	University of Wales Trinity Saint Davids		
Campus:	Pibentlwyd		
E-mail address:	nia.williams@cdsgrgw.ac.uk		
Contact Telephone Number:	01269 851032		
For students:			
Student Number:	1806503	Undergraduate:	☒
Programme of Study:	CIPD Diploma in applied HR	Taught Postgraduate:	☐
Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Juana Thomas	Research:	☐

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known):	Date			
Research Degrees Committee	☐			
Faculty Research Committee	☐			
Other (write in):	RECTOR AND PRINCIPAL & TRINITY RECTOR & HR	☒	10/10/18	

Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval.

July 2017

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Ethical Approval Form v5

SECTION C: External Ethical Guidance Materials

Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.

	☐
	☐
	☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

Does the research activity involve collaborations outside of the University?

YES	☒	NO	☐
If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person:			
Institution:	CSG		
Contact person name:	Charlotte Seaton		
Contact person e-mail address:	charlotte.seaton@cdsgrgw.ac.uk		

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?

If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

Indicative title:	ISSUE: The rise in sickness absence.		
Proposed start date:	Sept 2019	Proposed end date:	February 11th 2020
Purpose of research activity (including aims and objectives) Outline the purpose, aims and objectives of the research activity, including key research questions. Show briefly how existing research has informed the proposed activity and explain what the research activity will add and how it addresses an area of importance. (Maximum 300 words)			
Aim "To critically analyse sickness absence strategies to reduce short term sickness?" Objectives - To research current absence management policies & procedures - To research current absence management policies & procedures - To research current absence management policies & procedures - To research current absence management policies & procedures (This box should expand as you type)			
Proposed methods Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. (Maximum 500 words)			
- Questionnaire for employees (1000) - Focus Group for line managers (6)			
(This box should expand as you type)			

Location of research activity

Identify all locations where research activity will take place.

(this box should expand as you type)

COLEGISIR GAR.

Research activity outside of the UK

If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licences or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants.

(this box should expand as you type)

N/A

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
Use of interviews?	☒	☐
Use of diaries?	☐	☐
Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☐
Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☐
Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☐
Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☐
Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☐
Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☐
Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☐
Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☐
Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☐
Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☐
Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box	☐	☐

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and may be exempt from some of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

SECTION G: Intended Participants

Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
Students or staff at the University?	☐	☐
Adults (over the age of 16 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
Vulnerable adults?	☐	☐
Children under 18?	☐	☐
Prisoners?	☐	☐
Young offenders?	☐	☐
Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☐
People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☐
Others (please identify):	☐	☐

Participant numbers and source

Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?

1000 participants, 6 line managers for focus group.
Participants = employees/line managers.

(this box should expand as you type)

Information for participants:

	YES	NO	N/A
Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☒	☐
Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☒	☐
Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☒	☐
If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☒	☐
With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☒	☐
Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☐	☒	☐

If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation

(this box should expand as you type)

Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
If YES to any question, please provide full details			
(this box should expand as you type)			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form. Full risk assessment completed and appended? Yes ☐ No ☐
Risks to participants For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information (this box should expand as you type) If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities (this box should expand as you type)
Risks to investigator For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest (this box should expand as you type)
University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection (this box should expand as you type)
Adverse outcomes List measures put in place to limit any adverse effects or outcomes of research activity where appropriate. Include any emergency protocols. (this box should expand as you type)

Disclosure and Barring Service			
If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.			
YES	NO	N/A	
☐	☐	☒	

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

Feedback What feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
N/A.
(this box should expand as you type)
Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded.
They don't have to take part. Everything is mentioned on questionnaire & purpose of questionnaire
(this box should expand as you type)
Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
They can send questionnaire back via internet mail (explained on questionnaire for them)
(this box should expand as you type)

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University's Research Data Management web pages (<http://www.rdm.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/>).

Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act)? "personal data" means data which relates to a living individual who can be identified— (a) from those data, or (b) from those data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of, the data controller, and includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the data controller or any other person in respect of the individual.	YES ☐	NO ☒
If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected: (this box should expand as you type)		
Does it involve sensitive personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act)? "Sensitive personal data" means personal data consisting of information as to— (a) the race or ethnic origin of the data subject, (b) his political opinions, (c) his religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) whether he is a member of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) his physical or mental health or condition, (f) his sexual life, (g) the commission or alleged commission by him of any offence, or (h) any proceedings for any offence committed or alleged to have been committed by him, the disposal of such proceedings or the sentence of any court in such proceedings.	YES ☐	NO ☒
If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected: (this box should expand as you type)		
Will the research activity involve storing personal data on one of the following:	YES	NO
Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
University computers?	☐	☒
Private company computers?	☐	☒
Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒
Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☐	☒
"Cloud" storage or websites?	☐	☒
Other – specify:	☐	☒
For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption and anonymisation: (this box should expand as you type)		

Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☐	☒
Sharing of data with others at the University?	☐	☒
Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
Use of data management system?	☐	☒
Data archiving?	☐	☒

If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act (and/or any international equivalent):

(this box should expand as you type)

List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:

Myself, principal and executive Director of HR and wellbeing

(this box should expand as you type)

List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:

Nca Williams

(this box should expand as you type)

Give details of data storage arrangements, including where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not:

(this box should expand as you type)

SECTION K: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice

Signature of applicant: N. Williams Date: 31/01/2019

For students:

Director of Studies/Supervisor:	
Signature:	
Date:	

For staff:

Head of School/Assistant Dean:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☒	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☒	I have attached a full risk assessment (and have NOT completed Section H of this form) (where appropriate)
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Head of School.

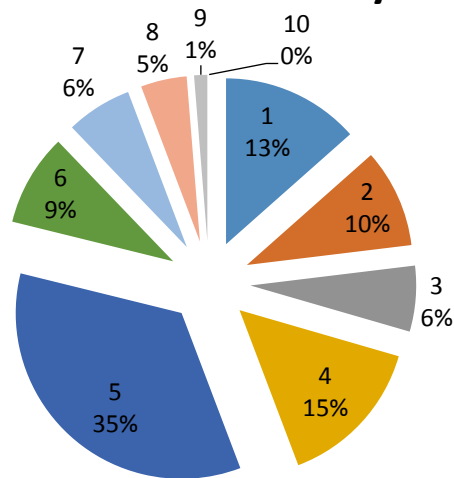
RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name. You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.

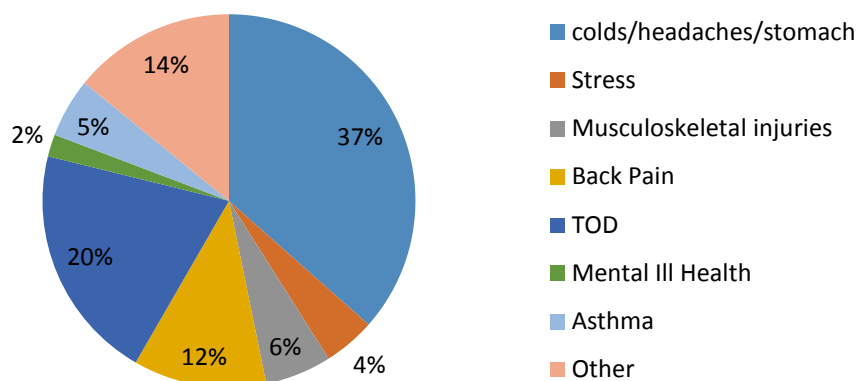
STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

Results from Questionnaire (Appendices 4)

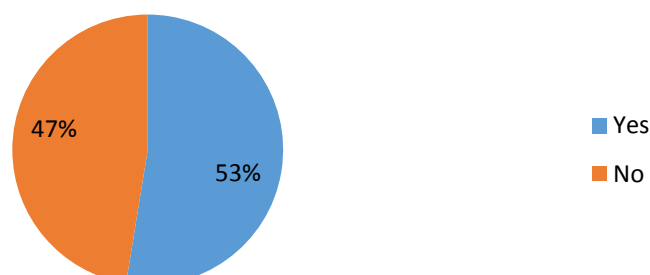
How many times have you been absent from work in the last year?



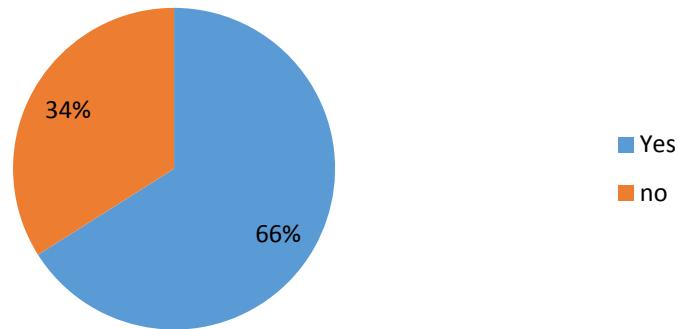
What symptoms were you off with?



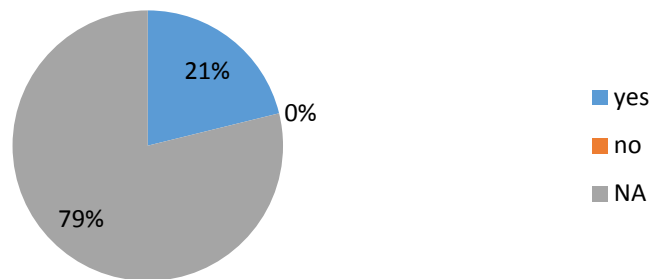
Did you have regular contact with your line manager when you were off work?



Did you complete a SA128 the day you returned to work?

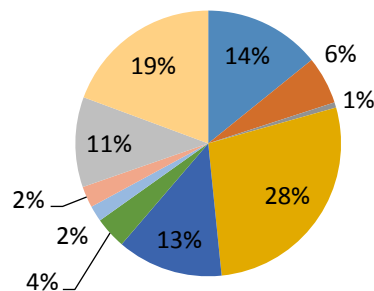


If you were absent for more than 7 days did you provide work with a doctors paper?

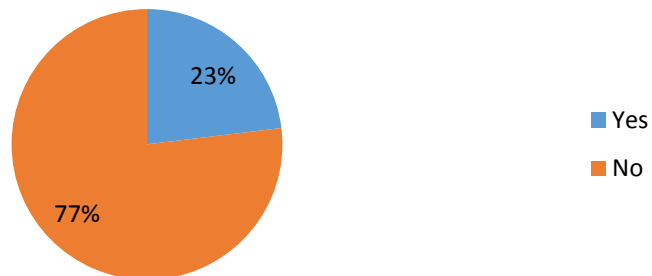


Did you have an effective return to work? (0 being not effective)

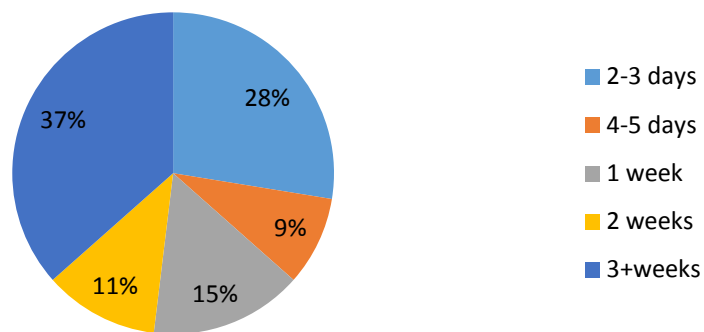
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



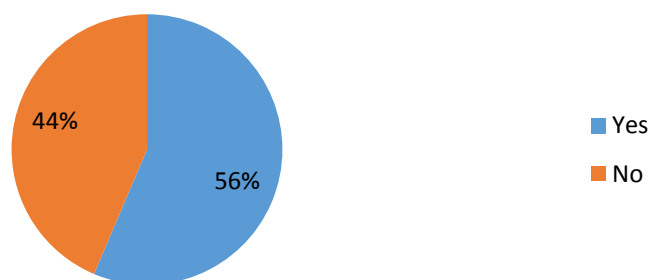
Were you given a return to work programme the same day as you returned?



If no, how late was your return to work?

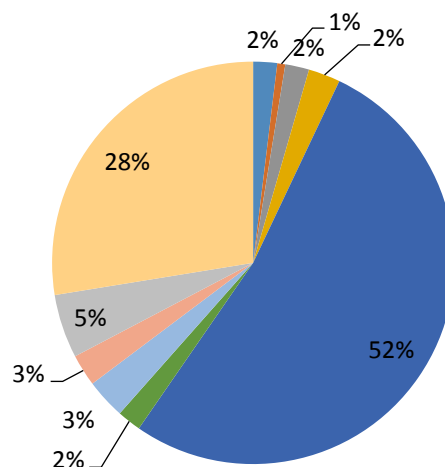


Would you like to see line managers having more training in delivering return to work interviews

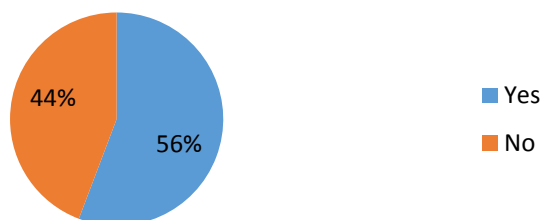


How would you rank employee wellbeing in the organisation? (0 being poor)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Have you read the sickness absent policy before?



If so, how useful did you find it?

