

Had an interesting couple of months looking at the ways in which long-term sickness absenteeism can negatively affect a business. As a company who works with both employers and employees, we can see both sides of the picture.

When looking at long-term absenteeism, there is often a diagnosis of stress, fatigue or depression/mental health related problems. These can take the form of personal things impacting on work, or perhaps difficulties in the workplace itself.

Our role is to facilitate an individual's return to work in consultation with the employer and to advise them on best practice and effective reintegration strategies.

Using a cognitive behavioural approach - which essentially helps individuals to 'reframe' their thinking leading to a reduction in stress and alleviating symptoms of depression – we have been able to help people to move on and towards a return to work.

Nothing helps an individual back to work like an understanding and supportive employer. Strong support structures in place for line managers are of vital importance. Robust awareness raising guidance across the business, promoting understanding of any kind of mental health issue, will pay dividends in the long term. An open dialogue between the employee and their manager is easy to achieve where good return to work policy and support measures are an integral part of the organisation.

It is a win - win situation. An employee is much more likely to return to work and stay at work with a supportive employer. And for the employer – as well as the economic implications attached to low long-term absenteeism, the real payback down the line comes in the form of discretionary effort and loyalty. Not to be sniffed at.

Please feel free to contact us if this is an issue for you – either as an employer or an employee. We would like to hear your story.

Elaine Douglas