

Evaluating the Well-Being Related Performance of Frontline Staff at London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL)

LOROL has over 1000 frontline workers (including drivers, conductors and station staff). Sickness absence levels were stubborn within the conductor and station staff populations attributing to a total of over £1m a year in salary costs alone. Over 800 days were lost to sickness each month (approximately 4% absence).

To understand the root causes of absence, LOROL appointed Work and Well-Being Ltd to carry out a study to establish what were the indicators that impacted well being at work that LOROL could make informed, evidence-based decisions on how best to tackle the issue.

Aims

The aim of the project was to rank the issues that impact on employee's wellbeing at work and identify the key ones which would ultimately impact on attendance.

Results

Using the impact analysis process, seven distinct components for rail work were established. Examples of these included the impact of the uniform, work-based facilities, training and line managers. Physical and psychological health concerns were also recorded. Analyses showed workers that were positive about their well being at work were seven times less likely to take days sick compared to their colleagues who were negative.

Specific recommendations flowing from the analysis were:

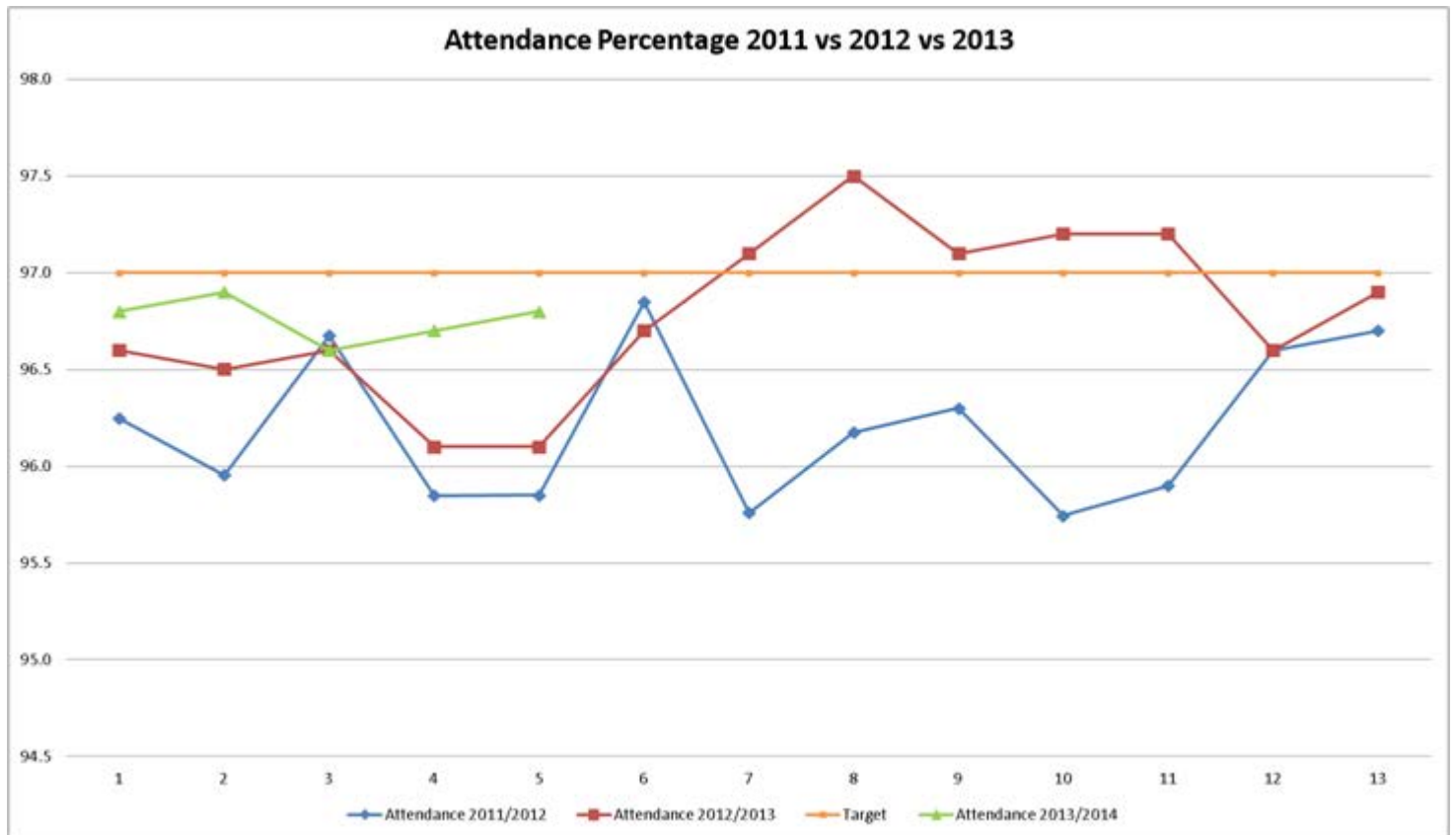
- Mental Resilience - To build the resilience of staff to cope with passengers during service disruptions;
- Musculoskeletal – To deliver specific support and guidance for front line staff required to spend long periods on their feet;
- Uniform Provision - To provide waterproof trousers for those working outside;
- Managing For Absence - Review Managing for Absence policy; and
- Facilities – Upgrade cabin/mess provision, including free tea and coffee provision.

Commercial Benefits

This evidence provided LOROL with a clear list of priorities to enhance employee wellbeing and related attendance. As a consequence, attendance improved from 96.1% to 96.7% in 2012 and is now consistently at or above 97%. Days lost to absence were reduced by 1600 days in 2011/12 which represents an estimated saving to LOROL of £100k in direct costs (to cover absence) for the period. This has significantly impacted the total absence cost burden for the company (including direct and indirect costs) which was calculated to be in the region of £2.14m (or

equating to £213 per day's absence).

The table below sets out the attendance differences between 2011/12 and 2012/13.



Darren Hockaday, LOROL's HR Director said: 'This study gave us real insights into the drivers of absence. Because we had credible data, the executive approved all the recommendations without hesitation. We knew that the well-being of our staff is critical to the day to day performance of our staff. Now we can take more direct actions to impact it.'

Future work

LOROL is planning to expand the study to their train drivers later this year and also look at repeating the study for its station staff team.