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From: s 22
Sent: Tuesday, 26 October 2021 10:48 AM
To: Strategic Policy and Research Group
Subject: Study using 2014 APS Employee Census data [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Fear-of-missing-out - Wynen et al 2021.pdf

OFFICIAL
Hi Everyone
I thought I would share this recently released study about working during illness, or presenteeism which utilises 2014 APS Employee Census data.
Findings included:
1. Employees who experience workplace changes are more likely to go to work sick.
2. Decreased staffing (cutback-related change) is the main driver of presenteeism behaviour.
3. Presenteeism is higher among employees working harder and longer hours – that is performing overtime, likely for the purpose of meeting high job demands.
4. Fairness of pay reduces the likelihood of presenteeism.
5. The findings suggest that although change itself is unavoidable and even necessary for organisations adapting to external demands, the potentially negative effects of change may be mitigated by appropriate change management and structures.

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Australian Government
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Attendance Management

Manager Factsheet

Why do we talk about 'attendance' rather than 'absence

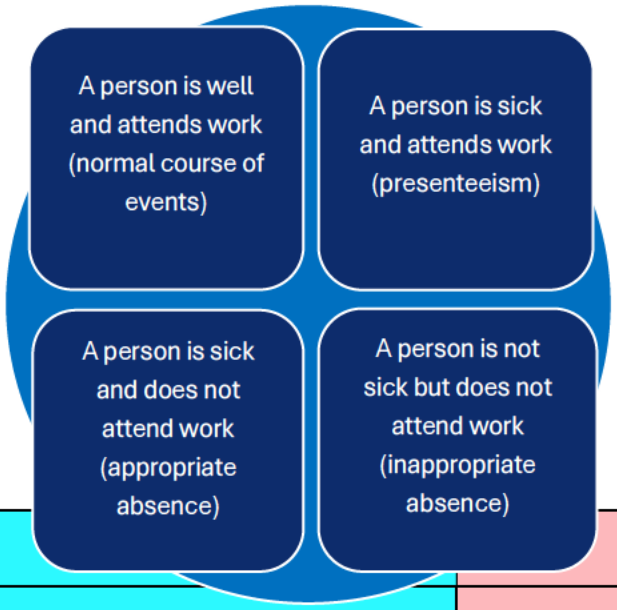
Managing Attendance: A Balanced Approach

We focus on managing *attendance* rather than simply tracking absences, because taking leave is sometimes necessary and beneficial. Encouraging appropriate use of leave supports both individual wellbeing and long-term departmental performance.

Conversely, *presenteeism* - being at work but not fully functioning, often due to illness - can negatively impact productivity and team dynamics. Supporting staff to take leave when unwell helps maintain a healthier, more effective workplace. Both presenteeism and absenteeism can have negative consequences including:

$	Direct salary costs
	Disruption and lost productivity
	Poor morale, misperceptions and assumptions

Attendance includes all of the following



	DON'Ts

You can suggest a person takes leave – sometimes this is good attendance management.	Treat attendance management as being all about 'sickies'.
Have regular conversations about all aspects of attendance.	Only discuss attendance when there is a problem.
Test your assumptions – have a conversation and try to let the other person do most of the talking.	Assume people will react to events in a certain way.
Ask employees about their prognosis rather than their diagnosis – they can let you know what the impact on the work area will be without divulging sensitive details.	Use 'privacy' as a reason for not managing attendance.
Seek advice from People Branch.	Ask your colleagues if they know what is going on, or if they had similar issues with the person concerned when they worked in your colleague's team.
Ask the employee what information, if any, they are comfortable for you to share with colleagues.	Hope problems will resolve themselves, given enough time.
Before drawing conclusions, check the evidence.	Be suspicious (our leave records often reflect the APS trend; most unscheduled absences occur mid-week).

Facts About Attendance

Research highlights several important insights:

- Even the most dedicated employees may face unavoidable disruptions to attendance - such as illness, accidents, transport issues, household emergencies, or caring responsibilities.
- When employers offer support during these times, employees are more likely to feel valued and remain loyal. A lack of support in genuine situations can have the opposite effect.
- Absences that are not actively and supportively managed tend to result in more frequent or prolonged time away from work.
- The longer someone is away from the workplace, the more difficult it can become for them to return - emotionally, socially, and professionally.

Triggers and Early Indicators of Attendance Issues

Managing attendance proactively is essential. Absence can sometimes be a form of *withdrawal* or an *escape response* to stress. The underlying causes are often complex, involving a mix of personal, workplace, and external factors.

Managers play a key role in identifying and responding to potential triggers, including:

- An employee leaving the department or APS
- Intermittent peak business periods
- Role changes or shifts in workload
- Organisational or leadership changes
- High staff turnover or onboarding of new employees
- Personal crises affecting an employee
- Workplace conflict or inappropriate behaviour
- Performance management processes
- Involvement in investigations

Early Indicators signal the need for closer attention and a proportionate, evidence-based response. These may include:

- Accumulation of flex credits or debits
- Increasing or patterned absences
- Noticeable changes in behaviour, work style, or engagement (e.g. indifference or lack of enthusiasm)
- Missed deadlines or declining performance
- Signs of an 'entitlement' mindset
- Employee survey results showing low job satisfaction or dissatisfaction with management

A timely and supportive approach to these triggers and indicators can help prevent long-term absence and support employee wellbeing.

Identifying There's a Problem

Recognising patterns in unscheduled leave is the first step toward effective attendance management. Managers have access to a range of tools and processes to help identify when leave levels may be high or unsustainable.

Importantly, identifying a pattern should be followed by a thoughtful and evidence-based inquiry. This includes considering the reasons behind absences and being mindful of any assumptions or biases that may affect understanding.

Sources of Evidence Include:

- Direct conversations with the employee
- Manager observations

- Leave and flex records (available via HUB)
- The Manager Dashboard
- Case-specific advice from People Branch

A balanced approach that combines data with empathy and context helps ensure fair and effective attendance management.

Unexplained Work Absence

When an employee is absent without prior notice or approved leave, it's important to act promptly and with care. The priority is to ensure the employee's wellbeing while following a consistent process.

Immediate Steps for Supervisors:

1. **Attempt contact** via phone within one hour of the employee's expected arrival time.
2. **Express concern** for their welfare during the call.
3. If there's no response:
    - Leave a voicemail requesting a return call within 30 minutes.
    - If still no response, make a second call.
4. If contact is made:
    - Check on the employee's wellbeing.
    - Offer support and guidance on accessing relevant services.
    - Discuss next steps, including expected return to work and follow-up contact.

If Voicemail Is Unavailable:

- Still make two call attempts.
- If unanswered, proceed to the next step.

Escalation Process:

If the employee does not respond to phone contact:

- Notify People Branch (during EST business hours).
- Inform your **Manager** of the actions taken.
- People Branch will consider next steps, which may include:
    - Contact the employee's next of kin.
    - Arrange a **Welfare Check** via police if necessary.

- Follow up with the employee to assess support needs and discuss return-to-work planning.
- Provide an update to the supervisor on the outcome.

Taking Action

Once a potential attendance issue is identified, it's important to respond in a way that is timely, fair, and constructive. The goal is to understand the underlying causes and support the employee while maintaining workplace standards.

Effective Action Includes:

- **Timely follow-up**: Don't delay. Early conversations can prevent long-term issues.
- **Evidence-based decisions**: Use available data and observations to guide your approach.
- **Proportionate response**: Match the level of concern with the appropriate level of action.
- **Supportive engagement**: Approach conversations with empathy and a genuine interest in understanding the employee's situation.
- **Clear expectations**: Reinforce attendance expectations and workplace responsibilities.
- **Collaboration with support teams**: Seek advice from People Branch, or other relevant areas when needed.

Taking action is not about blame - it's about creating the conditions for employees to thrive and contribute meaningfully.

Contact

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