



Safest People, Safest Places

Human Resources Committee

23 May 2024

Additional Health Care Benefit

Report of Director of People and Organisational Development

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Human Resources Committee (HRC) on the implementation of the trial of an additional workforce healthcare benefit, through Benenden Health.

Background

2. A paper was presented to the HRC on the 5 September 2023 outlining the Service's intention to trial the use of Benenden Health care to offer both a cost-effective solution to reduce sickness absence and to support the wellbeing of the workforce.
3. Sickness figures across the Service over recent years have been steadily increasing and are above the target for the number of shifts lost, per person, in a year. The target set by the service is currently 7 shifts per person, and the average over the last three years is 9.5 shifts lost per person.
4. Benenden Services is a not-for-profit healthcare provider which is complementary to the NHS, where NHS waiting times are longer than 5 weeks. It allows for pre-existing conditions (which is contra to private healthcare providers), with services being immediately accessible upon joining where the Service opt for a fully funded provision. The scheme provides for diagnostic treatment up to £2,500 per condition.
5. The Service went live with the Service on 1 January 2024. Of the workforce, 531 have signed up as well as 120 family members.

Services used to date

6. Quarterly reporting is provided to outline which services have been accessed and total corporate usage per period. However, at a recent meeting we were provided with the following data showing usage over the first month (January):

Table 1

Service used	Number of cases
24-hour GP Advice	35
Care Advice	1
Diagnostics and Tests	17
Mental Health Services	11
Physiotherapy	15

Treatment and Surgery	2
Total	81

7. In terms of diagnostics and tests, the data shows the following types are being explored for current staff members:

Table 2

Service used	Number of cases
Orthopaedic Surgery	7
ENT	2
Gastroenterology	1
Gynaecology	1
Rheumatology	1
Urology	1
Total	13

8. Whilst it is too early to see any impact on sickness absence numbers, there has been a reduction in sickness days lost in Q4 in comparison with Q3 data.

Table 3

PI	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
WT & Control	751.5	621.5	910	651.5	2934.5
WT, Control and NU	895.5	715.5	1072.72	819.68	3503.4
All Staff	1332.94	1120.49	1341.59	1266.98	5062

Conclusion

9. A key theme of the People Strategy is Wellbeing and we have committed to ensuring that we create an environment where our People are physically and emotionally sustained to enable them to give their best and to be able to be at work more of the time to better serve our communities. The Benenden Health initiative is one of many which appears to be making a positive difference and a further supportive intervention which will hopefully positively impact on wellbeing indicators in the next staff survey.

Recommendations

10. Members are requested to:

- a) Note the contents of the report and receive further updates in due course.

Katherine Metcalfe, Director of People and Organisational Development, Ext.566