

Workplace Health

Introduction

Employment is a major determinant of health, it impacts both directly and indirectly on the health of not only the individual, but their family and wider community.

Unemployment increases the risk of conditions such as cardiovascular disease, and has been shown to adversely affect mental health. Health-related worklessness where an individual is not in employment for health reasons, is a major contributor to lost revenue and productivity for the economy.

Workplace health is not only managing the health of staff, but also promoting their wellbeing as well. Managing sickness absence and presenteeism (where a person physically turns up to work, but remains unproductive) are two important elements of workplace health, but equally important are the measures and initiatives put in place to encourage healthy and active employees.

A bad working environment, low levels of control, unfair organisational practices, and an imbalance of effort and reward, can contribute as much to poor health as good health can contribute to successful working.

Main Issues

Hartlepool's rate of sickness in the previous week saw an absence rate 1.7% of workers with at least one day off in 2019/21. This is the 7th highest rate in north east, but is statistically similar to the national average. However Hartlepool's rate has gradually declined from 3.5% in 2015/17 to 1.7% in 2019/21.

Sickness absence: the percentage of employees who had at least one day off in the previous week 2019 - 21

Proportion - %

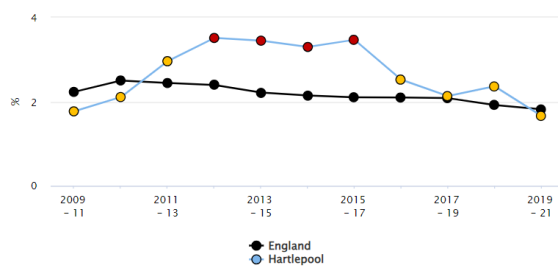
Area	Recent Trend	Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	-	-	1.8	1.7	1.9
North East region	-	-	2.1	1.8	2.4
Darlington	-	-	4.0	2.8	5.5
Sunderland	-	-	2.7	1.8	4.2
Stockton-on-Tees	-	-	2.7	1.8	4.0
County Durham	-	-	2.6	1.7	3.8
Redcar and Cleveland	-	-	2.3	1.4	3.8
Northumberland	-	-	2.0	1.3	3.0
Hartlepool	-	-	1.7	1.0	2.9
Gateshead	-	-	1.6	0.9	2.9
South Tyneside	-	-	1.5	0.8	2.6
North Tyneside	-	-	1.2	0.7	2.1
Newcastle upon Tyne	-	-	1.1	0.6	2.2
Middlesbrough	-	-	1.1	0.6	2.1

Source: Labour Force Survey - Data provided by Office for National Statistics

Hartlepool's rate has more than halved, a decline of 51.4% on its 2015/17 level, at the same time that the England average has decreased by 14.3%, and the north east has declined by 4.5%. In 2015/17 Hartlepool was at the end of what was a four year period of a rate statistically worse than England. Since then Hartlepool has been statistically similar to England for four years, and is currently at its lowest rate in the 11 year reporting period.

Sickness absence: the percentage of employees who had at least one day off in the previous week

Proportion - %



Recent trend: Could not be calculated

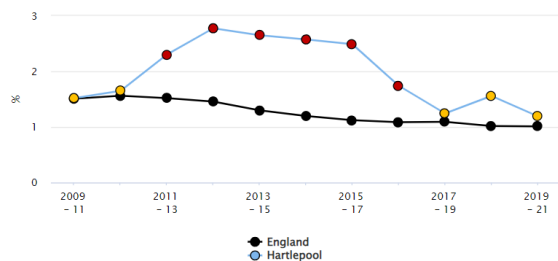
Period	Count	Value	Hartlepool		North East	England
			95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI		
2009 - 11	-	1.8%	1.1%	2.7%	2.2%	2.2%
2010 - 12	-	2.1%	1.4%	3.2%	2.6%	2.5%
2011 - 13	-	3.0%	2.1%	4.2%	2.5%	2.4%
2012 - 14	-	3.5%	2.5%	4.8%	2.6%	2.4%
2013 - 15	-	3.4%	2.5%	4.7%	2.5%	2.2%
2014 - 16	-	3.3%	2.4%	4.5%	2.3%	2.1%
2015 - 17	-	3.5%	2.5%	4.8%	2.2%	2.1%
2016 - 18	-	2.5%	1.7%	3.8%	2.2%	2.1%
2017 - 19	-	2.1%	1.3%	3.4%	2.1%	2.1%
2018 - 20	-	2.4%	1.4%	3.9%	2.0%	1.9%
2019 - 21	-	1.7%	1.0%	2.9%	2.1%	1.8%

Source: Labour Force Survey - Data provided by Office for National Statistics

A similar pattern emerges when looking at the percentage of working days lost to sickness. Here Hartlepool's rate of 1.2% in 2019/21 was the 8th highest in the north east and has been preceded by a period of steep decline.

Sickness absence: the percentage of working days lost due to sickness absence

Proportion - %



Recent trend: Could not be calculated

Period	Count	Value	Hartlepool		North East	England
			95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI		
2009 - 11	-	1.5%	1.0%	2.4%	1.8%	1.5%
2010 - 12	-	1.6%	1.1%	2.5%	1.9%	1.6%
2011 - 13	-	2.3%	1.6%	3.3%	1.8%	1.5%
2012 - 14	-	2.8%	2.0%	3.8%	1.8%	1.5%
2013 - 15	-	2.6%	1.9%	3.6%	1.7%	1.3%
2014 - 16	-	2.6%	1.9%	3.5%	1.5%	1.2%
2015 - 17	-	2.5%	1.8%	3.5%	1.5%	1.1%
2016 - 18	-	1.7%	1.1%	2.7%	1.4%	1.1%
2017 - 19	-	1.2%	0.8%	2.0%	1.4%	1.1%
2018 - 20	-	1.6%	0.9%	2.6%	1.4%	1.0%
2019 - 21	-	1.2%	0.7%	2.1%	1.4%	1.0%

Source: Labour Force Survey - Data provided by Office for National Statistics

Hartlepool's rate has again more than halved since peak 2015/17, though here the rate peaked in 2012/14 at 2.8%. Hartlepool's rapid decline in rate is not mirrored by either England or the north east who have had falls of 9.1% and 6.7% respectively.

Current Services

To help combat the highlighted high long term sickness rates, Hartlepool workplaces are invited to participate in a unique partnership project in the North East known as the Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA). This partnership approach was established in 2009 with local authorities, organisations and the BHAWA programme itself coordinated by the Northern TUC to take health and well-being into the workplace. Individuals benefit from a healthier environment and culture, increased access to health information and interventions where they wouldn't normally. Workplace activity as part of the BHAWA has potentially saved lives on many occasions- identifying dangerously high cholesterol levels and early stage cancers. At the same time employers benefit from improved staff engagement, lower levels of absenteeism and increased productivity.

Future Intentions

Workplace Health continues to be an integral part of Hartlepool's Public Health Strategy. For Hartlepool it is even more relevant to continue this work due the current trends in Hartlepool of high sickness rates amongst its working age population in the current challenging economic times, when companies need to use every tool available to ensure productivity and competitiveness. The Better Health at Work Awards (BHAWA) will continue to recognise the efforts of local employers in addressing health issues within the workplace and help them move forward in a structured and supported way. Every employer / organisation who signs up to participate in the Award scheme will be supported by a dedicated Health Improvement Specialist.

Last year support to companies to participate in undertaking the award resulted in 15 participants,

<u>2019 BHAWA Current Active Participants</u>							
	Total	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Continuing Excellence	Continuing Excellence Plus	Maintaining Excellence
Hartlepool	15	3	5	3	0	2	2

This work will continue, with the ambition to encourage more new companies in Hartlepool to join the scheme and support existing ones to work towards the next level of addressing health issues in the work place.