

28th August 2009

Recession is good for the health!

Apparently (although not for everybody)!!!

As we come to the end of the summer holidays, the thoughts turn once more to the hefty run up to Christmas and the near four month spell of work that means for most of us.

Spare a thought for the millions of private sector workers across the UK who in a 2009 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development survey have seen their average annual sick leave fall to 6.4 days from 7.2 days the year before.

The public sector by comparison saw a fall to 9.7 days from 9.8 days the year before.

Apparently the fall is considered due to employee worries over job security and the fact that 40% of private sector businesses said they had focused more closely on reducing absence levels.

Strange that the public sector didn't experience similar falls. This suggests, if I can be so bold, that job security is not as major an issue for public sector employees and that their employer (the UK government) may not be so focused on absenteeism.....

Whilst the current government, along with many other Western governments are far too busy printing cash to focus on efficiency, you can bet that day is coming, and will probably arrive if a change of government occurs (which does seem likely at the moment).

So it's cough syrup all round and self certificated 'Duvet Days' seem on the way out; for the moment at least.

Here's a scary calculation. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) found median weekly pay for full time employees was £479 in the year to April 2008. That equates to £25,000 approximately per annum. Assuming National Insurance and other indirect costs of 25% are added we are left with an annual average median cost of £31,227.

Seven sick days per annum costs an employer £841 per average employee or nearly a million if you have a company with a 1,000 staff. Then you need to add on the extra cost of additional staff to continue absent staff responsibilities. And what about the de-motivational aspect of staff legitimately or illegitimately bunking off work for a 'sickie'.

The amazing thing is, despite us all knowing sick leave is quasi extra holiday for some staff, only 40% of private sector businesses have introduced a closer review of absence related costs and issues.

Definitely worth a look if you haven't already and if you have any questions about how to introduce such a review, call Paul Johnson on 01420 540273.

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