

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON HEALTH AND WELL BEING

DATE: 18 NOVEMBER 2008

1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED

- 1.1 To update members on health and well being matters across the TfL Group. The Committee is asked to NOTE the content of the report.

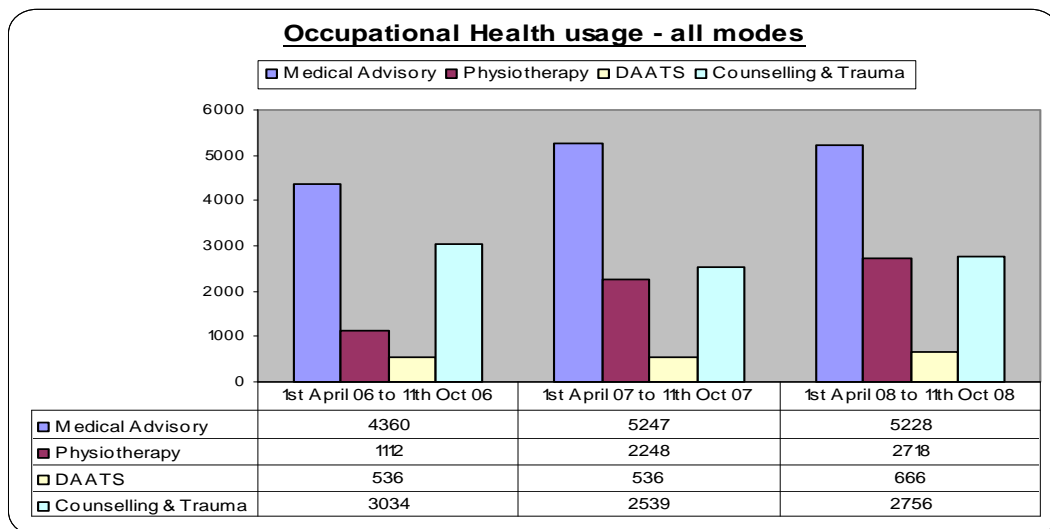
2 BACKGROUND

Occupational health services

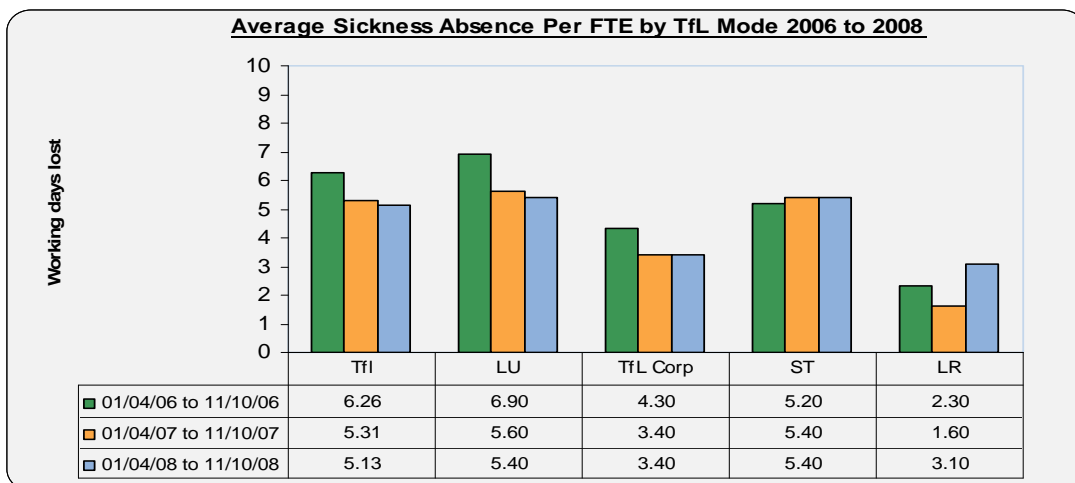
- 2.1 Transport for London's occupational health (OH) team consists of qualified, specialist professional staff, who have a good understanding of occupational health issues, and highly committed support staff. They all work from the knowledge that, in general, work contributes to improved health and well being.
- 2.2 The aim of the service is to help people with health issues get into work, stay in work, and return to work quickly and safely after illness and injury.
- 2.3 In addition to this, the team aims to help people enhance the quality of their life through empowering them to identify and use any opportunities to improve their mental and physical health, in the belief that this will contribute to their motivation and work performance. They do this by:
- a) Delivering services
 - b) Influencing policy
 - c) Setting standards
 - d) Providing input into training
 - e) Enabling compliance with legislation
- 2.4 Occupational Health provides the following services:
- a) Medical advisory services
 - b) Counselling and trauma service
 - c) Physiotherapy service for low back pain
 - d) Drug and alcohol assessment and treatment service
 - e) Health promotion campaigns

3 PERFORMANCE YEAR TO DATE

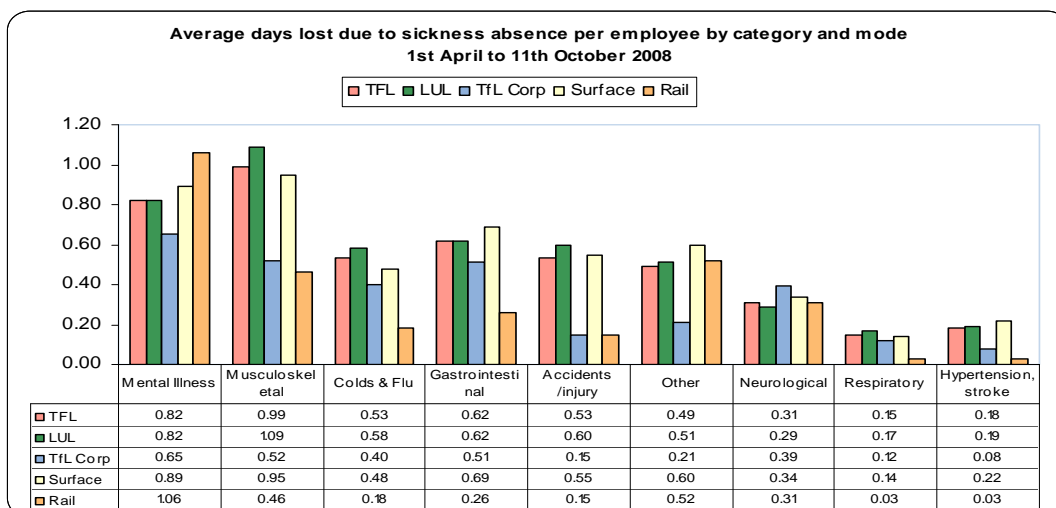
3.1 All occupational health services have been well used by all modes during the half year April to September 2008 as shown in the graph below.



3.2 Attendance has continued to improve in London Underground and has stabilised in TfL Corporate and Surface Transport but has increased in the first part of the year 2008/9 in London Rail.



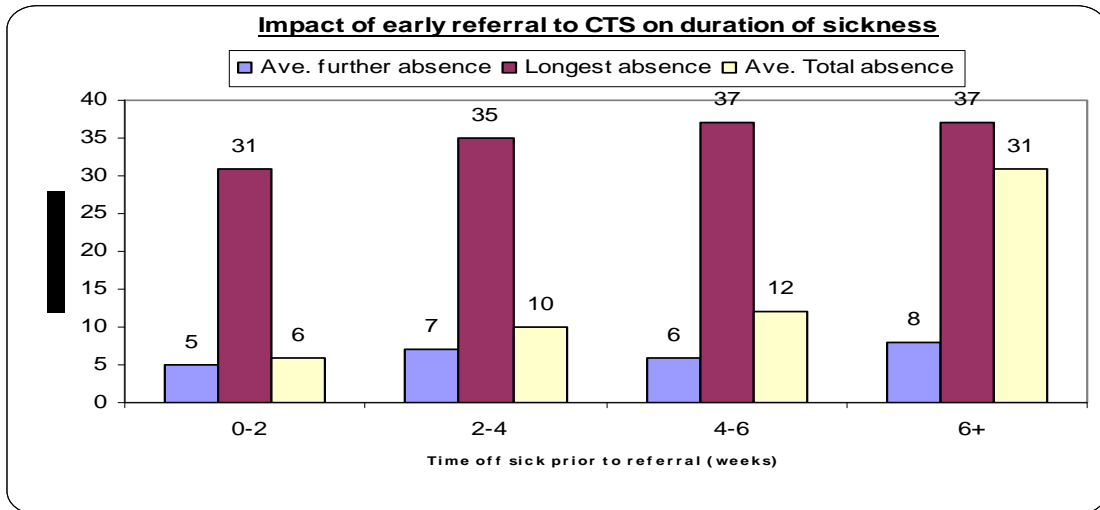
3.3 Mental illness and musculoskeletal problems remain the largest contributors to sickness absence for the modes with large numbers of operational staff. Gastrointestinal problems, colds and flu and accidents (at work and home) are also significant contributors to sickness absence.



3.4 There continues to be a key focus on managing attendance across all modes of TfL. The occupational health team contribute to this through advising on workplace adjustments and return to work programmes, providing counselling and physiotherapy services (for back pain) to speed up recovery and prevent recurrence and through the co-ordination of a programme of fast access to private medical investigations and treatment for performance critical operational staff in London Underground.

3.5 The GLA has decided to use TfL OH services instead of their former provider. This is being done as a delegation of functions for these activities to TfL under the new power conferred by the Greater London Authority Act 2007 so that providing OH support to the GLA becomes a function of TfL. This is the first time that this mechanism, which came into force this year, has been used. Arrangements to implement this are in the final stages.

3.6 The evaluation of counselling and trauma service (CTS) has shown that early use of these services in employees who are off sick results in earlier return to work than later use of the services. The graph below shows that on average, those employees who are referred to CTS in the first two weeks of being off sick for stress, anxiety and depression are off sick in total for an average of six weeks; those referred between two and four weeks after going off sick have a total average spell length of ten weeks; those referred between four and six weeks after going off sick have a total average spell length of twelve weeks and those referred more than six weeks after going off sick have a total average spell of sickness lasting 31 weeks.



3.7 Health fairs have been delivered and well received in London Underground, London Rail and for human resource staff at Empress State Building. Plans are in hand to provide these to all of TfL. The theme for the London Underground health fairs this year is “Keeping the balance”, to consolidate the previous years messages about nutrition, exercise and mental health. Feedback remains very positive with one operational manager claiming that a health fair saved his life and other operational staff making such comments as:

“It was worthwhile as I found out my blood pressure was a bit high as well as my cholesterol.” Hainault

“Interesting good ideas for eating, exercising and general healthy living, keep up the good work.” Upminster

“I found the check-up very helpful it prompted me to regulate some of the health issues that have come up since I last visited the GP. A chance to chat about stress and mental health and ways of coping was very helpful. I look forward to making use of further sessions.” West Ruislip

“Lovely, welcoming and approachable staff really helpful and I feel that it’s so important for the company and its workers.” Earls Court

“Very helpful. Made me realise where I am going wrong.” Liverpool Street

3.8 A health and wellbeing website was launched as part of the LU intranet in September 2008. All employees in TfL have access to this. It contains lots of information about general health and includes access to all the materials that have been developed as part of the LU Health Improvement Plan. It also includes all the health manuals developed by the Mens Health Forum and information about womens’ health issues. So far the feedback has been very positive. For example:

This intranet site is simply brilliant. I consider myself to be a healthy young woman but there are so many little bits of information on here that are helpful - particularly food and mood - and the simplicity of the information will, I’m sure, make it accessible to everyone. I also found the osteoporosis section very helpful as my mum has just been diagnosed. Brilliantly constructed, thank you!

This is so Good....I haven't stopped reading it, Thank You. Can I pass it around? Let me know when it is public and I will put in the Train Operator training for people to see. THANK YOU (I have found it useful for me personally already).

- 3.9 TfL entered six teams of seven employees into the Global Corporate Challenge for the first time. This is an Australian based programme. It is designed to encourage company employees to walk more than they normally do in a way that leads to long term increased physical activity. Each team member agrees to try and walk at least 10,000 steps every day for four months. In all, 914 companies took part, entering more than 7000 teams. TfL was one of the 142 companies who entered between five and nine teams, and within this group TfL was the second most active company in the world. On average all 42 TfL employees who took part walked 14,602 steps (approximately 5.5 miles) every day for the four months of the programme. The London Rail team was the most active of the six TfL teams, beating one of the two London Underground teams by an average of 4.5 steps per team member per day.
- 3.10 The Occupational Health team suspended the lower limb class delivered by the physiotherapy team in September 2008 because the demand was much higher than had been anticipated and the resources were not available to meet it. The class was developed using London Underground Health Improvement Plan funding and introduced in April 2007. The principles of using such funding are that any new service developed using this funding can be delivered through current resources, once the development and evaluation have been paid for. On this occasion this principle of sustainability proved to have been insufficiently tested.

4 SIGNIFICANT PLANS FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2008/9 AND 2009/2010

- 4.1 There will be a review of internal occupational health processes and procedures to continue to align the department with customer requirements and to position the department to manage increasing demands on services offered.
- 4.2 The five year London Underground Health Plan to 2008/2009 will be evaluated.
- 4.3 The Health Fair initiative will be rolled-out pan-TfL throughout 2009/2010, ensuring maximum exposure for all groups, facilitating educational learning and self-awareness of health promotion.
- 4.4 A programme of SAP improvements will be implemented to furnish the department with appropriate tools to continue to support and meet customer needs.
- 4.5 The benefits of the London Underground Health Plan will be used to inform the training initiatives as detailed above.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to NOTE the contents of the report.

6 CONTACTS

- 6.1 Contact: Olivia Carlton, Head of Occupational Health

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