

Costing businesses

[Business](#)



My current position is that of a Human Resources Advisor for the Supermarket chain J Sainsbury's Ltd. I work within the supply chain network and am based at the Haydock depot, which is situated in St Helens.

Sainsbury's has been established since 1869 when John James and Mary Ann Sainsbury's opened a small dairy shop at 173 Drury Lane, London. From these humble beginnings Sainsbury's grew to become the longest standing supermarket chain operating 583 stores nationwide. The business currently has a product line of 34, 000 different goods.

The Haydock depot measures 500, 000 Sq ft, employees 720 warehouse Colleagues and 200 HGV drivers. The hours of business are 24 hours 7 days per week; Christmas day is the only time operations come to a halt. The main holding stock includes all fresh and ambient goods to be found within a Sainsbury's store. 170 Stores are serviced from this depot, which stretch the width of the country and from Glasgow to Stoke. Electrical goods are transhipped via this depot from Stoke to stores.

Deliveries from English based suppliers are transported to Langlands in Glasgow, which are distributed to Scottish based stores. Colleagues employed within the warehouse are assigned to one of three shifts, earlies, afternoons or nights and are expected to work 40 hours per week over any 5 days from 7. Stores receive up to 3 deliveries per day dependent on how busy they are and because of the nature it is vital that products arrive as fresh as they were when they left the depot.

This is amongst one of the main reasons that it is vital that all employees attend work on a regular basis. Earlier this year the Haydock site saw

industrial action with two 24-hour strikes by employees. As part of the settlement to resolve this matter all Colleagues were obliged to commit to a new, strict absence procedure. Absence management has become very much a part of modern day industrial relations. There are very few occasions when the media, in one for or another, are not reporting on how much absence is costing businesses.

As the new absence management procedure was implemented on 1st February 2004 an Absence Manager was appointed to monitor the issues caused by absence and where possible educate people as to the long term effects this may have on their own position and that of the company.

Procedure As part of my role as a Human Resources Advisor it is my responsibility to complete an absence record card for each of the warehouse Colleagues on the afternoon shift. If a Colleague is absent from work they are expected to telephone a designated absence line and leave a message, or to submit a medical certificate from their Doctor.

This information is then transferred onto their Absence Record card (Appendix A). When they return to work their Supervisor will conduct a brief interview with them to ascertain why they were absent from work. An example of the form used at this Return To Work interview can be seen at the back of this report (Appendix B). This form is a primary source of data as it is captured initially from the individual, the warehouse Colleague and recorded by a supervisor. The first page of the Return to Work form commences with the Colleagues detail and employee number.

This is requested to avoid the information being recorded on the wrong Absence record card. The employee number is unique to that individual, this is very helpful in cases where there are two people with the same or similar name employed. The first and last date of absence is record so that days can be verified with Human Resources. It is also essential that Human Resources have this information so that they can verify that these dates correspond with any medical certification received from the Colleagues doctor.

Such information is also essential for insurance purposes because, if a Colleague is still covered by a current medical certificate signed by their doctor they are not fit for work. If they were allowed to remain in work the business would be liable for any undue consequences or accident incurred by them. The next section of the form details the symptoms and whether a visit to the doctors was felt necessary, for this information we can gather if the Colleague is in fact fit for work and, more importantly, if they are on any medication which may affect or restrict the duties they can complete.

The Supervisor in the presence of the Colleague completes the second page of the Return to Work document. Its purpose is to clarify information provided and verify its accuracy. This interview may also be the initial step towards a disciplinary investigation, which may ultimately transpire, into a disciplinary hearing, which will consequently result in potential disciplinary action. For this reason it is vital that the Supervisor explains to the Colleague the consequences of providing inaccurate or insufficient data.

As with any form of data or information it is only as accurate as the source or method of collection allows it to be, however, in this case because of

potential outcome it is hoped that the Colleague has been completely truthful. Once this form has been completed it is passed to Human Resources where the information on it is crossed checked with the Absence Record of that individual.