

Kent cuts sick days by a quarter

Kent Police has reduced police officer absenteeism by 25 per cent - equivalent to three working days a year per head - as part of the well-being initiatives it has put in place since 2003.

It equals a saving of 18,600 days in absenteeism and illustrates how targeted, well-being initiatives can have a demonstrable impact on an organisation's productivity.

Using psychologist firm Robertson Cooper's stress diagnostic tool ASSET, Kent Police was able to highlight causes of absenteeism. The 2003 survey found:

- A need to improve health and well-being.
- Stress, poor health and fitness are key contributors to absenteeism.
- Line managers not always identifying stress exhibited by staff.

In 2003 Kent Police established an Attendance Management Programme to train line managers to identify certain trigger points for stress and absenteeism.

A standard process was also put in place within the force with established steps to help identify and address potential issues before they escalate. Another key initiative intro-

duced was the W8wise@work campaign. "A large proportion of our force is with us for their entire working life and therefore it is vital that we have initiatives in place that have a positive effect on their well-being, and make sure that they have the best possible support and working environment," explained Paul Smith, head of Health Services, Kent Police.

The force regularly runs health initiatives, a health MOT, clinics and master classes to advise on diet and fitness as well as raising awareness of associated men's and women's health risks.

The force carried out a second audit across all employees with impressive results. "As a result of the well-being initiatives put in place since 2003, the force has reduced absenteeism by 25 per cent, which is equivalent to three working days per year per head from a 6,200 strong staff. The force has seen increased levels of commitment both to and from the organisation and is now collectively "fitter and healthier than the average population" in the UK," stated Mr Smith. "Kent Police has plans to continue these well-being initiatives and also share best-prac-

tice with other police forces around the country."

Kent Police is the second force in the UK to complete a second round of ASSET with Robertson Cooper following the implementation of well-being initiatives. Over a two-year period, City of London Police was also able to report significant improvements from staff on work-life balance and job satisfaction. Gordon Tinline, Director, Robertson Cooper Ltd, said: "Together with Kent Police, these results are proof that well-being initiatives are really working and with best practice sharing across forces in the UK, real improvements to the productivity of the UK police service can be made from bite-sized initiatives. These results add further proof that well-being issues affect productivity."

The Confederation of British (CBI) industry has recently published a survey showing an increase in workplace absence at an estimated cost to the economy of £13.4 billion. The CBI also said its findings showed that despite Government efforts to cut down the number of days taken off sick, public sector absence was 44 per cent higher than in private companies.

Awards honour women in policing

In 2007 the British Association for Women in Policing will again be recognising the contributions and achievements of women within the police service.

This is the second year of the BAWP Annual Awards in policing specifically aimed at women. The awards ceremony will take place on the evening of Tuesday April 17 2007 at the BAWP's Spring Professional Development Day, at Forest of Arden Hotel, Warwickshire.

Each year the International Association of Women Police (IAWP) gives a number of awards to individual female officers and police staff in recognition of their achievements.

As an affiliate of the IAWP, the BAWP launched its own Annual Awards in 2006 to recognise the achievement of women in the police service. There is also a special recognition award for outstanding service to women in policing, this award is particularly aimed at men within the service who have made a significant contribution and commitment to the advancement of women in policing. All categories are open to female police officers, special constables, PCSO's and police staff. This year's winners will be nominated by the BAWP for the IAWP awards which are due to be presented in Denver USA later in the year.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary's Chief Constable Julie Spence, president of BAWP, said: "I am delighted that we have had, yet again, a large number of nominations for our awards which mark the contributions and achievements of women within the police service. Last year five of our BAWP award winners went on to be recognised by the IAWP and I am sure that this year we will see similar international praise."

New appointment for City & Guilds

Chief Executive of Skills for Justice Dick Winterton has been appointed as the new managing director of the City & Guilds Awards, its awarding body.

Mr Winterton will be leaving his current position at the end of July. He said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed building Skills for Justice, and working closely with partners in the justice sector. I will be leaving many friends, but not going too far. I very much hope to be able to help the justice sector, and Skills for Justice, from my new position."

He set up the Police Skills and Standards Organisation (PSSO) in 2001, one of the predecessor National Training Organisations (NTOs) to Skills

for Justice, which formed in 2004. Over the last six years Dick has been instrumental in driving forward the skills agenda in policing and latterly the wider justice sector.

Whilst serving in the Royal Air Force, Mr Winterton held various roles including training director at RAF Cosford, the largest Ministry of Defence aerospace training centre. Since leaving the RAF as a Wing Commander, he has held senior management positions in two other NTOs, as the development manager for the Steel Industry NTO and subsequently as director of development for Lantra, looking after the land based sector.

Commenting on the new appointment, John Randall,

chair of Skills for Justice, said: "We are extremely grateful to Dick. He has established Skills for Justice as one of the most highly regarded Sector Skills Councils in the UK. We wish Dick all the best in his new role, and are pleased he will still be able to influence the development of skills from his new position"

Director General of the City and Guilds of London Institute Chris Humphries said: "We are absolutely delighted that Dick has agreed to accept this position, which will provide a tremendous opportunity for him to direct his energy and passionate commitment to skills to building on almost 130 years of success for City & Guilds qualifications."