

Public sector workforce health:

smart, safe, scaleable
and sustainable systems
for employee health,
absence and risk
management

The pandemic has highlighted not just the vital importance of public sector workforce health, but the essential role of employers in protecting staff from health risk.

Managing through the first wave of the pandemic has exposed weaknesses in both formal and ad hoc systems used to manage absence, risks and reporting.

These must be addressed and appropriate systems put in place as departments, services and local authorities focus on restoration of services and as staff return.

Amplified challenges for HR & workforce teams already under pressure

Many HR and workforce teams in the public sector faced extreme workloads during the first peak. They dealt with higher levels of absence than ever while striving to sustain key worker staffing levels. There were many new challenges such as testing, furloughs and working from home which have complicated how managers engage effectively with staff and each other.

Many hastily-constructed and ad hoc approaches to managing these challenges have emerged through necessity. Now these must be replaced with sustainable and fit for purpose solutions to manage, engage and report on workforce health and absence.

The economic environment has been squeezed by austerity and is likely to toughen further. HR teams face the prospect of ongoing pressure on resources and budgets at a time when their role is more critical, complex and demanding than ever.

As workforces return to fuller operation they will need to rebalance the workload, integrate new challenges such as the co-ordination of testing into standard routines, and remain vigilant in volatile conditions.

Can your employee health, absence, risk and case management systems fully support HR and workforce teams to face the demands ahead?

Key challenges

- **Absences are driven by an array of new reasons.** Absences of all types need careful tracking and management with close attention to timelines. Comprehensive real-time data is needed to inform wider decisions and enable accurate reporting. It may reveal absence trends such as infection clusters, while the future may bring new needs, such as tracking immunity status or vaccination.
- **Lockdown easing brings staff return challenges.** HR teams must help managers return recovered staff at the right time and bring all staff back safely. Faultless risk assessment management is vital, especially in organisations such as the NHS and children's social work which have a higher than average proportion of BAME workers. Older workers and those with vulnerabilities form part of every workforce. Their risks must be carefully assessed before returns from any absence, furlough or home working, then tracked and maintained.
- **Employers will play an ongoing role in Covid-19 testing.** Public sector employers were among the first to embark on testing for key workers, but the widening of Test and Trace and return of workers will increase volumes and stress spreadsheet-based processes and ad hoc integrations. Testing will only become more complex as new types come onstream. You will need to track and manage test registrations at scale and through different testing cycles.
- **Impacts of the pandemic will extend in many directions.** Every workforce includes staff with support needs ranging from direct health impacts from the virus, to those displaying PTSD and stress, the bereaved and the aggrieved. Managing individual engagement around all such sensitive issues will require close and connected tracking and management by HR, employee relations, OH specialists and service providers, and legal or other advisors.
- **Home-working and furlough resource gaps will continue.** HR and workforce teams are often among the home workers, along with many of managers on whom staff depend. It has never been so important that managers across the organisation can collaborate around shared employee information that is appropriately secured and managed, and support employee engagement and people management workflows in close compliance with policies.



Essential system attributes

The challenges you face requires the support of systems that are properly designed for your organisation, the tasks you face today and the needs you may have in the future. These must have several attributes, including:

- **To manage employee health and associated workflows effectively, systems must align closely around the people management hierarchy.** Every public sector organisation is uniquely shaped around the needs of the citizens and communities it serves – flexible systems will adapt around that, not expect organisations to change processes.
- **Systems must safely hold, manage, protect, and connect sensitive employee health and related data.** This was not the purpose for which HR management and payroll systems were built, and it is not a strength of any generic database. Employee information is particularly unsafe in spreadsheets; it is at risk from the perspectives of data security and GDPR.
- **In an environment where sudden and surging absence is part of the management challenge, automation comes into its own.** A level of automation to help receive and record absence reports from staff and alert managers rapidly can enable real-time insights and ensure prompt action. Relying on call centres which themselves may be vulnerable to absence spikes is unwise. Leaving it to managers alone risks absences being recorded in varying ways and essential risk reduction activities being missed. Neither route enables seamless transfer of information about new Covid-19 infections and exposure for test processing, leaving HR to pick up the slack.
- **To meet the needs of the current and changing environment any new system implementation must be rapid and efficient.** It cannot depend on overstretched internal IT resources. Solutions must be agile to support the evolving reporting and compliance requirements of a changing public health landscape.



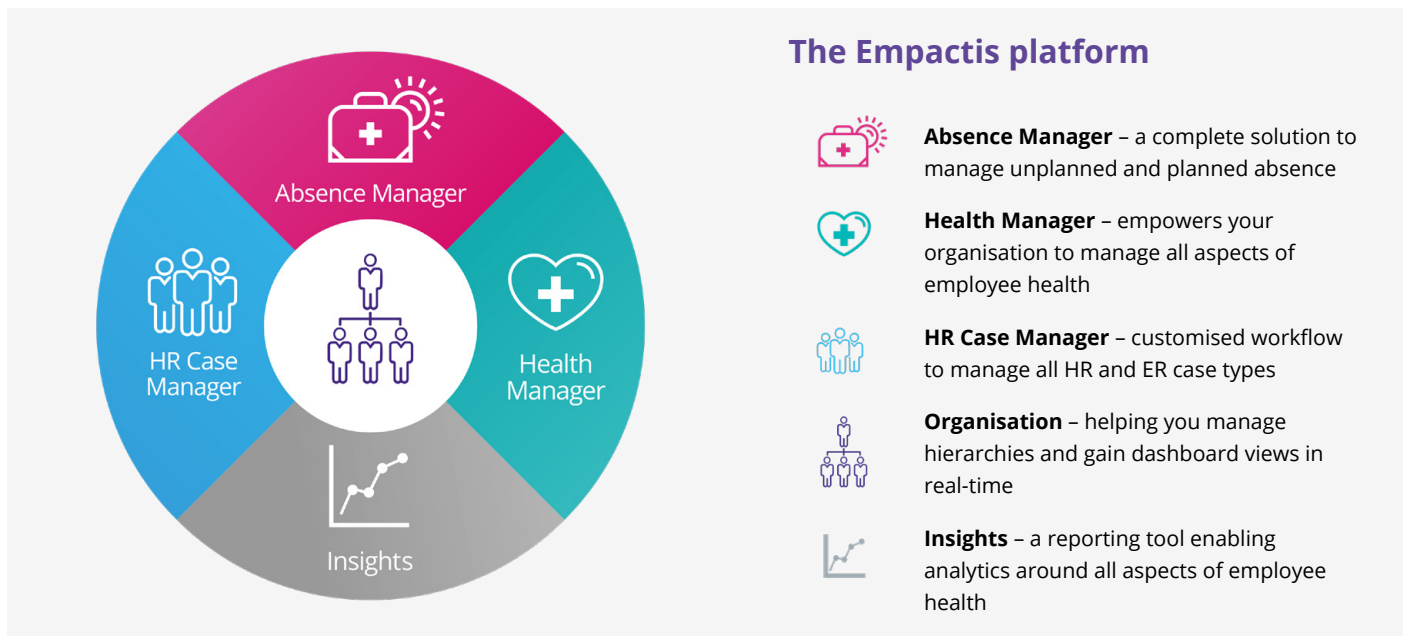
Meeting challenges today and establishing a foundation for tomorrow

The Impactis platform is the only solution designed from the ground up to deliver a scalable, flexible and secure cloud solution for employee health, absence, and case management. It has been adapted to enable rapid deployment to support practical management of Covid-19 related challenge. These include:

- **Absence management** has become more complicated due to Covid-19 infections, isolation and dependent care. Enabling staff to be tested helps you bring healthy staff back to work faster, but you need accurate data about who is off and why to manage returns and tests efficiently and effectively.
- **Individual health risk assessments** to help managers appropriately and individually support staff returning after any absence and ensure their individual health risks from Covid-19 are checked, recorded, and connected to the appropriate action process including redeployments, health interventions or work adjustments.
- **Employee relations case management** work arising from Covid-19. In addition to health interventions, additional ER outcomes will require input from HR and specialist advisors – connecting occupational health or legal counsel to clear, complete absence, risk and case data will be essential.
- **Health management** requiring an accurate and real-time view of absence, testing, and associated employee relations activity, connected effectively in a system to monitor and protect workforce health. Employers bear the burden of proof that they have minimised the risk to workers. Regulators, unions and media will watch how they manage Covid-19 infection risk.

Impactis is already supporting more than 250,000 people including tens of thousands NHS and other key workers.

It works seamlessly with systems such as the NHS ESR, other workforce rostering and management systems and enterprise HRM solutions. Our team can further customise to exchange and integrate data with other incumbent platforms as needed.



Rapid deployment and immediate benefits

Impactis can be implemented rapidly to support current priorities, and be extended to support wider needs. Immediate benefits include:

- Reduced demand on HR and workforce teams by empowering managers to share workload and engage staff consistently
- Automated absence recording alerts managers directly and helps them engage quickly and in compliance with policies
- Clear, complete, connected information and audit trails around all aspects of employee health, absence, and test engagement
- Real-time and accurate visibility and faster, easier standard reporting with custom queries for special reports or FOI requests
- HR teams enabled to collaborate and share information securely and appropriately with each other, with line managers, and with internal or outsourced occupational health, employee relations, legal and other specialists
- Secure data management and access in line with organisational hierarchies and policies