

Rapid remedy

With the results of its work making a real difference to the lives of those suffering from a range of conditions, Shire understandably places a great deal of importance on ensuring its own staff are kept happy and healthy. Stephen Tyler discovered how a partnership with Corporate Health has kept the company's Occupational Health provision in tip-top shape...

WHEN it comes to making a tangible difference to those in need, pharmaceutical company Shire can certainly hold its head up high.

Formed in 1986, the company has successfully strived to enable people with life-altering conditions to lead better lives.

By focusing on developing treatments for conditions where the impact of medicine can make an immediate and tangible difference for patients, Shire provides treatments in areas as diverse as Neuroscience,

Rare Diseases, Gastrointestinal and Internal Medicine.

Shire's groundbreaking developments, which continue to help those afflicted with life-threatening conditions such as Hunter syndrome or Fabry disease, are made at global bases in locations including the UK, USA and Switzerland and are only possible thanks to the dedication of the company's forward-thinking, knowledgeable workforce.

And with Shire's staff performing such valuable work, it is no surprise that their health and wellbeing

is a major priority for their employer.

Already ahead of the curve in its deployment of a dedicated Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) team, the business has added a further level of care for its staff by drafting in the expertise of Corporate Health.

HELPING HAND

As a vastly-experienced professional, Greg Newey – Shire's Associate

Director for HSE

International – is well-versed in monitoring and improving health and safety in the workplace.

Since joining the company five years ago, Greg has

been responsible for everything from dealing with illness and accident reports to carrying out proactive assessments into office ergonomics to try and prevent problems such as repetitive strain injuries.

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But as Shire's business has grown, so has its need for health and safety expertise – and that's where Corporate Health came in.

As the country's longest-established provider of Occupational Health services, Corporate Health was a natural choice for Shire.

Greg, who is responsible for the health and safety of UK-based staff, explained: "Shire needed to grow its Occupational Health, so we looked towards Corporate Health. Through them, we employ Caroline Mercer, a part-time nurse who works two-days-a-week.

"She is available for a range of different services and really manages to provide a full-time Occupational Health service on a part-time basis."

Since being parachuted into Shire's operation in Basingstoke three years ago, Caroline has certainly made herself an invaluable part of the team. Her two days a week are filled with a variety of Occupational Health tasks ranging from the advisory to the practical.

When Shire's employees are away from work through illness, Caroline liaises with them to help manage their absence and then completes return-to-work assessments when they recover, including working with the staff member and Shire to suggest and enact any reasonable adjustments to the worker's role.

She is also on hand to administer vaccinations for staff travelling overseas on company business and even helps organise the firm's annual in-house first-aiders meetings.

HEALTHY OUTLOOK

Shire may already be streets ahead of other organisations in looking after its employees – as evidenced by an on-site gym and subsidised restaurant in Basingstoke – but it has taken even greater strides thanks to its relationship with Corporate Health.

Working closely with Caroline, Greg has set up a series of monthly health and wellness campaigns

GREAT SERVICE: HOW CORPORATE HEALTH HELPS SHIRE

- ✓ DSE/workstation assessments;
- ✓ Pregnancy risk assessments & reporting;
- ✓ Sickness absence management, liaising with managers, human resources (and Corporate Health if referral necessary);
- ✓ Return to work adjustments and advice, liaising with employee, human resources and managers as suitable;
- ✓ Business travel advice, malaria prevention plus medication and vaccinations;
- ✓ Health promotion events, including a monthly wellness display;
- ✓ Various other health promotion events such as blood pressure day, men's "MOT" checks and women's health promotion events;
- ✓ Coordinating CHL with Shire at the Shire annual health fair and running a stand or taking part in the health checks;
- ✓ Flu vaccinations;
- ✓ Walk-in clinic open for general advice on the range of illness or health queries;
- ✓ Accident-reporting responsibilities, liaising as appropriate with the Health & Safety Department;
- ✓ Administering the eye care voucher scheme.



covering important areas including cancer awareness and heart disease. Caroline's role includes producing a poster and employee handouts on the given topic.

The pair are also responsible for planning and running Shire's popular annual health fair, where external vendors are invited in to provide advice on topics such as diet, nutrition and lifestyle.

Corporate Health's input to the fairs

includes providing nurses on the day so that staff can access advice and sign up for health screenings.

Whatever the service being provided, Greg said that Caroline's professionalism and approachable nature have helped Shire to make the most from its links with the Slough-based organisation.

He said: "It's imperative that Caroline knows the people as much as the business and we are very fortunate that she has really got to know them.

"Shire is a great place to work and a company that really cares about its people and Caroline really adds to that with her caring attitude.

"People here respect her views. Her manner has helped her to have a great impact in terms of raising the profile of Occupational Health here. People can see and value the service she is providing."

Shire's desire to ensure its workforce is healthy and productive is key to its success.

By teaming up with Corporate Health, the organisation has been able to increase its Occupational Health provision in a cost-effective manner.

For Greg, the partnership has yielded obviously positive results. He explained: "For other companies looking for a similar service, I think the key thing is to spend sufficient time and consideration in finding the right person. That is what we have and Caroline is very much appreciated."

Corporate Health's Service Delivery Manager, Tori Cunningham, who works with Shire said: "The services we offer to Shire are typical of the flexible and dedicated nurse and physician resource that we offer too many other customers to meet their employee's needs.

"This level of flexibility may benefit many other companies nationwide through having a nurse dedicated and focused on the health and wellbeing of their employees as and when the need arises." ■

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