



## CC\_HR15 Sickness Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

Sickness absence is defined as absence from work reported by the employee to be the result of sickness (certified or uncertified).

Notification of absence owing to sickness must be made to your line manager as early as possible on the first day of sickness. This can be by text message before 7.30 a.m. (to your line manager) which must be followed-up with a telephone call during the morning. Sick pay may be withheld in the event of late notification.

A self-certification form SC2 must be completed for all periods of sickness and submitted to the Line Manager upon return to work. After one week's absence a doctor's certificate must be submitted. If while on holiday you are ill for more than seven days and a doctor's certificate is obtained, you may be eligible for further paid leave.

## **2. General Principles**

- To support the Company's duty under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated legislation to take such steps as are reasonable to preserve the health of staff.
- To identify and where possible, eliminate work-related factors that may increase sickness absence, including stress at work.
- To provide a fair mechanism for terminating employment contracts where sickness absence reaches a level that cannot be contained by the Company.
- To recognise and apply the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure that all staff have access to and are aware of the Sickness Absence Reporting Procedure.
- All new staff will receive a copy during induction.
- The Line Manager is responsible for monitoring sickness levels within the Company.
- It is the Line Manager's responsibility to ensure return to work interviews are carried out and recorded (See Appendix A)

## **3. Procedure for dealing with Sickness Absence**

The Company has a procedure for reporting sickness absence, the following section aims to deal with recurrent sickness absence.

The Company should consider the following in any case of recurring sickness absence:

- A pattern of part day absence
- A pattern of absences around periods of other leave or days off
- Absence for a whole day or more on three occasions in a three-month period
- Ten days intermittent absence in a rolling year
- Blocks of longer-term absence on more than one occasion over a six month period.

Where sickness absence occurs as outlined above, the Line Manager should assemble all the facts and meet the employee. The meeting should cover:

- Clarifying the reasons for the absence, addressing any variations from those documented
- Establish any underlying causes of patterns (e.g. common illness, stress, work-load, job satisfaction, etc)
- Establish a joint problem solving approach
- Possible referral to an Occupational Health Service.

At the end of the initial meeting the Line Manager should summarise the agreed action points and put notes of the meeting on the employees' personal file. The actions points should cover:

- Further monitoring for an agreed period (not usually longer than 12 weeks).
- Any steps by either the manager or employee which may facilitate an improvement identifying strategies to remove or reduce any underlying cause which is work related (e.g. stress, work-load, etc)
- A statement of the necessary level of attendance and the basis for determining that level.
- The date of the follow up meeting.
- Advice that failure to meet the necessary level of attendance may result in a formal caution.
- Consideration of a referral to the Occupational Health (if applicable), or Counselling, if available.

The follow up meeting should take place even if the necessary level of attendance has been achieved. Even if this is the case, it is recommended that a further period of review is established, particularly when absence has been stress related.

#### **4. First and Final Cautions**

If the informal process has not seen an improvement or resolution to the sickness absence then a formal process needs to be followed:

- The employee will be contacted to attend a formal meeting; they must be advised of their right to be accompanied by a friend, colleague or trade union representative, they must be given 5 days notice of the meeting, in writing.
- At the meeting the Line Manager or equivalent, will outline the background and most recent developments
- The employee and/or their representative must have the opportunity to make their case
- The Line Manager will chair the meeting and decide on the action to be taken.
- The Line Manager will write to the employee confirming the first or final caution, and will include the following:

- Confirmation that the formal caution will remain in force for either 1 or 2 years
- Details of the employees sickness absence
- Confirmation that failure to meet the necessary level of attendance will result in a further caution or dismissal
- A statement of the necessary level of attendance and the basis for determining that level
- Further monitoring arrangements and timescales
- Details of any further medical follow up (if applicable).

## ***5. Dismissal due to incapacity***

The authority to dismiss staff due to incapacity rests with the Line Manager.

In reaching a decision to dismiss the employee, the Line Manager must take extreme care in concluding that:

- It is reasonable to conclude that the level of absence will not improve for the foreseeable future.
- The level of absence has serious adverse effects on the business.
- All reasonable steps to reduce the level of absence have been exhausted, including an Occupational Health Assessment.
- Other alternatives, such as redeployment and those described in the Equality Act 2010 are not appropriate or available.

The decision to dismiss the employee due to incapacity will be confirmed in a letter by the Line Manager, and will include the following:

- The effective date of dismissal and period of notice (The period of notice need not be worked).
- The reasons for the dismissal, including details of level of sickness absence and the reasons it cannot be contained by the Company.
- Details of the employee's right to appeal.
- Details of medical evidence supporting the decision to dismiss.
- Details of managerial action take to avoid dismissal.

## ***6. Long-term sickness absence***

Long-term sickness is defined as absence of one month or more.

When a member of staff has been absent for one month or more, the Line Manager should make a formal request for an occupational health referral (if applicable) or an assessment from the employees GP regarding their ability to return to work.

In all cases termination of employment will not occur until the employee has exhausted his/her occupational sick pay entitlement (if applicable).

The following must be considered prior to reaching the decision to terminate on the grounds of sickness/incapacity:

- The likelihood assessed by Occupational Health or the employees GP, that they will be able to return to work in the foreseeable future.
- Transfer to an alternative post where the medical condition is less likely to result in continuing absence.
- A phased return to work, utilising annual leave if on a part time basis.
- Temporary transfer to alternative duties for a prescribed period.
- Ill health retirement

## **7. Ill Health Retirement**

When termination of employment is likely to result, the option of ill-health retirement should be put to the employee, provided they meet the eligibility criteria set out under the company pension scheme. A decision to pursue ill-health retirement must be made three months before termination of employment would otherwise take place.

## **8. Terminal Illness**

8.1 When an employee has been informed by a registered medical practitioner, that they are suffering from a terminal illness, the Practice Manager or Partner will meet with them (with a representative if requested) to discuss:

- Referral to occupational health
- Review of medical report and information
- The employee continuing to work as per contracted hours or on reduced capacity (with consistent review)
- Counselling
- Pension/death in service information (if applicable)

Note other staff/colleagues may require support and counselling as part of this process.

<http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/0/m/Managing-bereavement-in-the-workplace-a-good-practice-guide.pdf>

## **9. VERSION HISTORY TABLE**

<b>VERSION</b>	<b>DATE UPDATED</b>	<b>UPDATED BY</b>	<b>REASONS</b>
8. Human Resources Policy	09/03/2015	AB	Separated from HR archived HR policy. Policy template updated.

			Issued at V1.0.
V1.0	12.12.2017	JH	Added Terminal Illness section – 8, page 6 – issued a V1.1

## 9. Appendix A – Return to work form



### RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW FORM

RTW1

The Return to Work Interview Form (RTW) is designed as a guide for line managers when meeting with employees on return from sickness absence. The RTW interview is designed to support staff and help to build and maintain a good manager-employee relationship. Two-way communication should therefore be open and honest during the interview. Employees should bring a completed a Self-Certification or Doctors note to this interview.

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **POST:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DEPARTMENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### SECTION ONE: Absence Details

1. Date of return to work:			
2. Dates of absence:	From:	To:	Hours lost:
3. Did the employee follow correct absence reporting procedures: Yes/No			
4. Self-Certification /Doctor's note received: Yes/No (If No, Why)?			
<i>Completed self certification forms and Doctor's notes should be forwarded to payroll</i>			

5. Reason for absence:

6. Is the employee fit to resume normal duties: YES/NO

**SECTION TWO: RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW**

**Date of interview:**

**TOTAL ABSENCE OVER LAST 12 MONTHS: (*including this period of absence*)**

No. of occasions: \_\_\_\_\_ Total days (or hours for part time staff) lost: \_\_\_\_\_

Currently under absence monitoring? Yes / no

**Issues to address and employee response:**

- How are you now and are you able to carry out normal hours and duties?
  
- What was the possible cause of your sickness absence and what action have you taken to avoid any future occurrence (work/accident or personal)?
  
- Did you consult a Doctor or other medical practitioner?
  
- Are you on any medication which may affect your performance?
  
- Do you feel that there is any thing we can do to support you?
  
- Do you consider your illness to be work-related? If the answer is yes in what way is it work related?  
*If so an accident, incident or hazard report form should be completed.*
  
- If you feel it is work related did you complete an accident, incident or hazardous report form?
  
- Update on work during period of absence, e.g. announcements, etc:

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**SECTION THREE: NEXT STEPS**

Summary of action points (if applicable) agreed and any other comments:

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Review date for agreed actions

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Employee signature:

Date:

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Manager signature:

Date:

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Next Steps, Managers:

- 1) Please file this form with your other absence records in a secure, confidential location
- 2) Forward either the doctors certificate or self certification covering this period of absence to Payroll