



# ABSENCE POLICY

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## A) INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to support and help employees who are absent from work to achieve and maintain full attendance and to support and assist employees who are on long term sickness absence to return to work as quickly as is appropriate in their circumstances.

In taking steps to monitor and control absence we aim to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Company and its employees.

This policy is designed to ensure all employees are aware of their obligations in the event of absence.

## B) NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

- 1) On your first day of absence from work you should notify your manager.
- 2) Notification should be made at least one hour before your shift is due to start but try to give as much notice as possible to enable us to cover your duties.
- 3) You should notify us personally and by telephone. E-mails and text messages are not an acceptable form of notification.
- 4) You should provide us with the reason for your absence and brief details of the symptoms.
- 5) You should try to give us some indication of your expected date of return. The notification procedures should be followed on each day of absence unless you are covered by a medical certificate.
- 6) If you are unable to contact your manager when you telephone, you should leave a contact number and they will call you back within 30 minutes.
- 7) It is not acceptable to leave a message with any other member of staff.
- 8) If your absence extends to more than seven calendar days, you must provide us with a medical certificate. Subsequent medical certificates must be provided to cover the whole of your absence.
- 9) If your absence is to attend an appointment at the hospital, doctors or dentist then an appointment card must be produced.

## C) RETURNING TO WORK

- 1) You must telephone the day before you are due to return to work to enable us to reschedule any staffing arrangements. Failure to provide such notification (even if your medical certificate expires) may result in you being sent home from work for the day without pay.
- 2) Upon your return to work, you must obtain a Self-Certification Form before commencing work, complete this form and hand it to your manager.

- 3) Following any absence, whether self-certified or supported by a medical certificate, you will also be required to attend a Return to Work Interview with your manager to discuss the reasons for your absence and your current fitness for work.

#### **D) FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE PROCEDURES**

If you fail to follow any of the above reporting procedures, you may be exempt from receiving Company sick pay, irrelevant of your reason for absence. Consistent failure to follow the procedures may result in disciplinary action being invoked.

#### **E) ABSENCE MONITORING**

We will monitor the attendance records of all our employees. Review meetings will be held with individual employees in line with the following triggers:

- Three separate periods of absence within a 13-week period;
- Absence percentage reaches 70% or above.

#### **F) REVIEW PROCEDURES**

- 1) The intention of the review procedure is to discuss the reason for your absence levels and to discuss ways in which your attendance can be improved. If there is no improvement, then you may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 2) If you are requested to attend a review of your attendance levels, you have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a Trade Union Representative and you should make the necessary arrangements to have someone present at the meeting should you so require.

#### **G) INITIAL MEETING**

- 1) Your manager will write to you to arrange a meeting at a convenient time, date and venue. You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting should you so wish. You will be provided with details of your absence record prior to the meeting.
- 2) At the meeting we will discuss your attendance record, the reasons for your absence/s, any help or support we can offer to improve your attendance if relevant and what improvement is necessary
- 3) If the absence is likely to be continuous over a long period of time, then the procedures for dealing with Long Term Sickness (detailed below) will be followed.
- 4) Should any underlying health conditions be identified, your absence will be dealt with following the guidelines for Underlying Health Conditions (detailed below).
- 5) Should the meeting **not** highlight any underlying health conditions for your absence/s, you will be informed that your attendance levels need to improve. Review meetings will be arranged at 12 weekly intervals, following the Sporadic Absence Procedures (detailed below), until your attendance reaches an acceptable level. Should there be no improvement at the subsequent meetings, then the disciplinary process will be invoked.

#### **H) LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE**

- 1) If you are off work sick for a continuous period of 4 weeks, we will normally contact you with a view to arranging an informal welfare meeting at a convenient time, date and location. We will meet you at your home, at work or at a location suitable to both parties. You have the right to be accompanied at the informal meeting by a friend or relative if you wish.
- 2) The aim of the meeting is to keep you in touch with events at work, to discuss your absence and offer any relevant support.
- 3) We aim to keep in regular contact with you and hold regular meetings over your period of absence.

- 4) Dependent upon the circumstances of your absence, we may, when appropriate, ask your permission to contact a medical professional for a report on your incapacity.
- 5) Upon receipt of this report, we will meet again with you to discuss fully the contents of the report and any implications arising from it. We will determine what support and/or reasonable adjustments we can make to assist you in your return to work in the future.
- 6) If it is evident from the report and our discussions with you, that a return to work is not possible in the foreseeable future we may have to consider dismissal but this would be a last resort. If the decision is made to dismiss, you will be paid in lieu of notice. You will have the right to appeal against the decision if you feel it was unfair and details of how to appeal will be detailed in the dismissal letter.

## **I) UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS**

- 1) If, at any time during the initial meeting or any subsequent review meeting, an underlying health condition is identified we may, dependent upon the condition, continue with the Sporadic Absence Process or we may ask your permission to contact a medical professional (either your GP, anyone else who is treating you or we may consult an Occupational Health Advisor) to determine the extent of your incapacity.
- 2) Upon receipt of this report, we would meet with you further to discuss the report and any implications arising from it. We would consider what support we could offer and any reasonable adjustments that could be made to assist your attendance at work.
- 3) If your level of attendance is still unacceptable and we have exhausted all other viable options we may need to consider dismissal on the grounds of ill-health but this would be a last resort.
- 4) If the decision is made to dismiss, you will be paid in lieu of notice. You will have the right to appeal against the decision if you feel it was unfair and details of how to appeal will be detailed in the dismissal letter.

## **J) SPORADIC ABSENCE**

### **1) First Review (12 weeks after first review)**

Your manager will write to you to arrange a meeting at a convenient time, date and venue. You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting should you so wish. You will be provided with details of your absence record prior to the meeting.

At the meeting we will discuss your attendance record, the reasons for your absence/s, any help we can offer to improve your attendance and what improvement is necessary.

Should any underlying health conditions be identified, your absence will be dealt with following the guidelines for Underlying Health Conditions (detailed later in this document).

If your attendance has not improved to an acceptable level and should no underlying health conditions be highlighted, you will be issued with a Formal Verbal Warning for your level of absence. You will have the right to appeal against this warning, details of which will be given in the letter detailing your warning. You will be informed that you will need to attend a further meeting in 12 weeks' time to review your attendance further.

If attendance has improved to the required level, no disciplinary action will be taken at this time. You will be informed that you will need to attend a further meeting in 12 weeks' time to review your attendance further.

### **2) Second Review (12 weeks after the first review)**

Your manager will write to you to arrange a meeting at a convenient time, date and venue. You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting should you so wish. You will be provided with details of your absence record prior to the meeting.

At the meeting we will discuss your attendance record, the reasons for your absence/s, any help we can offer to improve your attendance and what improvement is necessary.

Should any underlying health conditions be identified, your absence will be dealt with following the guidelines for Underlying Health Conditions (detailed later in this document).

If your attendance has not improved to an acceptable level and should no underlying health conditions be highlighted, you will be issued with a Formal Written Warning for your level of absence. You will have the right to appeal against this warning, details of which will be given in the letter detailing your warning. You will be informed that you will need to attend a further meeting in 12 weeks' time to review your attendance further.

If your attendance has improved to the required level, no further disciplinary action will be taken at this time. You will be informed that you will need to attend a further meeting in 12 weeks' time to review your attendance further.

If your attendance has reached the required level at the second and third reviews, you will no longer be subject to attend further review meetings.

### 3) **Third Review (12 weeks after 2nd review)**

Your manager will write to you to arrange a meeting at a convenient time, date and venue. You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting should you so wish. You will be provided with details of your absence record prior to the meeting.

At the meeting we will discuss your attendance record, the reasons for your absence/s, any help we can offer to improve your attendance and what improvement is necessary.

Should any underlying health conditions be identified, your absence will be dealt with following the guidelines for Underlying Health Conditions (detailed later in this document).

If your attendance has not improved to an acceptable level and should no underlying health conditions be highlighted, you will be issued with a Final Written Warning for your level of absence. (If you received no Formal Written Warning at your last meeting, you will be issued with a Formal Written Warning at this stage).

You will have the right to appeal against this warning, details of which will be given in the letter detailing your warning. You will be informed that you will need to attend a further meeting in 12 weeks' time to review your attendance further.

If your attendance has improved to the required level, no further disciplinary action will be taken at this time. You will be informed that you will need to attend a further meeting in 12 weeks' time to review your attendance further.

If your attendance has reached the required level at the second and third reviews, you will no longer be subject to attend further review meetings.

### 4) **Fourth Review Meeting (12 weeks after 3rd meeting)**

Our manager will write to you to arrange a meeting at a convenient time, date and venue. You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting should you so wish. You will be provided with details of your absence record prior to the meeting.

At the meeting we will discuss your attendance record, the reasons for your absence/s, any help we can offer to improve your attendance and what improvement is necessary.

Should any underlying health conditions be identified, your absence will be dealt with following the guidelines for Underlying Health Conditions (detailed later in this document).

If your attendance has not improved to an acceptable level and should no underlying health conditions be highlighted, you may be dismissed. You will have the right to appeal against your dismissal, details of which will be given in the letter detailing your dismissal.

If you received no Final Written Warning at your last meeting, you will be issued with a Final Written Warning at this stage. You will have the right to appeal against this action, details of which will be given in the letter detailing your Final Written Warning. You will be informed that you will need to attend a further meeting in 12 weeks' time to review your attendance further.

If your attendance has improved to the required level, no further disciplinary action will be taken at this time. You will be informed that you will need to attend a further meeting in 12 weeks' time to review your attendance further.

If your attendance has reached the required level at the second and third reviews, you will no longer be subject to attend further review meetings.

5) **Fifth Review (12 weeks after 4th review)**

Your manager will write to you to arrange a meeting at a convenient time, date and venue. You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting should you so wish. You will be provided with details of your absence record prior to the meeting.

At the meeting we will discuss your attendance record, the reasons for your absence/s, any help we can offer to improve your attendance and what improvement is necessary.

Should any underlying health conditions be identified, your absence will be dealt with following the guidelines for Underlying Health Conditions (detailed later in this document).

If your attendance has not improved to an acceptable level and should no underlying health conditions be highlighted, you may be dismissed. You will have the right to appeal against your dismissal, details of which will be given in the letter detailing your dismissal.

If your attendance has improved to the required level, no further disciplinary action will be taken at this time. You will be informed that you will need to attend a further meeting in 12 weeks' time to review your attendance further.

If your attendance has reached the required level at the third and fourth reviews, you will no longer be subject to attend further review meetings.

6) **Subsequent Review Meetings**

Should there be further cause for concern regarding your attendance levels, the above reviews may be continued or the process started again.

7) **Underlying Health Conditions**

If you have been absent for a continuous period of four weeks or longer, or upon investigation it is determined that you have an underlying health condition which is affecting your ability to attend work regularly, your Manager may request a medical report to determine what help, support or reasonable adjustments may be necessary to aid your attendance at work.

A meeting will be arranged with you and your Manager to discuss the report and ascertain if and when you may be fit to return to work and if so what, if any, reasonable adjustments may be necessary to facilitate this return.

It may be necessary to hold regular meetings over a period of time to consider how your illness or condition is progressing.

Whilst it is the Company's aim to offer support and help to enable you to return to work, if no solution can be found to facilitate a return to work within an acceptable timescale, the Company may have to consider termination of employment on the grounds of incapacity.