

Policy statement

Our Supporting Staff Attendance Policy sets out our procedures to support employees at work with underlying health-related issues and/or during periods of absence from work that may or may not be related to a health condition.

This includes recording and reporting details of absence, including sickness absence, plus modifications or support required to continue in the job, role or redeployment.

Our aim is to:

- ensure management of any absence and the provision of ongoing support required is carried out in a fair and consistent manner
- maintain employees' health and to prevent any ill health being made worse by work
- understand the causes of absence in each case.

This will enable us to ensure appropriate measures can be taken to support employees through illness or injury to remain at work or return to work.

Sickness absence reporting procedure

Sickness absence can vary from planned, short intermittent periods to a continuous period of long-term absence.

Employee responsibilities

If you are unable to attend work you must inform your manager of the absence with a brief explanation within _____ of the time at which you should have started work.

If you become unwell or sustain an injury while at work, you should inform your manager and seek authorisation to leave work.

Failure to attend work without good cause or without authorisation may disqualify you from entitlement to sick pay and you may be subject to disciplinary action.

Communication when absent

During your absence from work regular contact should be maintained with your manager, and you are required to contact your manager _____ or less frequently, by mutual agreement.

Our organisation wishes to ensure there is a consistent approach to managing attendance.

Remember that keeping in touch and having both informal and formal conversations is key to a successful return to work.

Your manager may also keep in touch in order to receive an update on your absence. Your manager will provide reassurance and offer management support where applicable, and where appropriate will confirm an anticipated return-to-work date.

This regular communication will enable your manager to plan and implement a return-to-work plan that may include recommended work adaptations, amendments to your working pattern and/or offer resolution of any barriers that may be preventing a return to work. You should feel free to contact your manager at any time during any periods of absence.

Short-term absence

For absences of up to seven calendar days you must complete a self-certification form which is available from your manager. Self-certification forms will be retained confidentially in the employee's personnel file.

Frequent short-term absence

In instances where you have incurred regular separate absences, for whatever reason, your manager will discuss your absences and the reasons with you during your return-to-work meeting. This may include getting some more background information relating to these absences to enable your manager to provide support if appropriate.

At this point you will be given a reasonable opportunity to improve your attendance.

As an employee of our organisation you should be aware that you are expected to attend work on a regular and effective basis. You are advised to inform your manager of any issues that may affect your ability to attend work and/or may affect your ability to effectively carry out your work activities.

Long-term absence

If you are absent from work due to sickness or injury which continues for more than seven days (including weekends) you must provide the organisation with a Fit Note issued by your GP by the eighth day of sickness or injury.

Fit Notes must thereafter be provided to the organisation on an ongoing basis to cover any continued absence.

If your GP provides a certificate stating that you 'may be fit for work' you should inform your manager immediately. In those circumstances, we will discuss with you any additional measures that may be needed to support your return to work, taking account of your GP's advice. Please note that, in these scenarios, your own GP's advice will be considered carefully but is not binding upon the organisation.

Disability

We are aware that absence from work may result from a disability. Where ill health or disability has been confirmed as the cause of absence, reasonable and practicable adjustments will be discussed in relation to the requirements of your job or other aspects of your working arrangements that should provide appropriate support at work and/or assist a return to work.

If you consider that you are affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects your ability to do your job, you should inform your manager with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

Medical and other appointments

Routine visits to the doctor, dentist, hospital and so on should not be recorded as sickness absence and should be recorded separately on the employee's personal file. Employees and managers are expected to adopt a sensible approach to limit any impact on service provision to a minimum. For example, as an employee you are requested, where possible, not to book any off-site appointments in the middle of the working day, but instead to schedule these at the beginning or end of the working day.

Unauthorised absence

If you do not report for work and have not telephoned your manager to explain the reason for your absence, your manager will try to contact you, by telephone and in writing if necessary. Cases of unauthorised absence will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Support available

- You may be invited to attend a meeting with your manager to discuss any perceived barriers that may be preventing a return to work and to discuss reasonable adjustments to support your return to work.
- Consent may be requested for you to undertake a Return to Work assessment through the Fit for Work Scotland service to provide a structured return to work plan to help support your return to work. If such measures are not possible, you will remain on sick leave and we will set a date to review the situation. During your absence you may wish to contact the Fit for Work Scotland Adviceline on 0800 019 22 11 (option 2) for support.
- You may be referred by your manager to an independent Occupational Health Service for a medical assessment to assist your manager to support you within the workplace.
- A report may be requested from your GP with your informed written consent.

Returning to work

On return from any absence you will be welcomed back and invited to attend a return-to-work interview with your manager. This should happen on your first day back, or at the earliest opportunity. This will enable us to confirm the details of your absence, and provide you with appropriate help and support. It will also give you the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions you may have.

Sick pay

Entitlement to pay during any period of sick leave is in accordance with minimum statutory requirements, subject to terms set out in your contract of employment.

Planned /unplanned absence

As an employee you may need to be absent from work due to other reasons rather than illness alone. These absences can be planned or unplanned, and may include specialist hospital appointments, public duties and domestic crises. You are required to notify your manager of any planned absences as soon as you possibly can. All planned and unplanned absence should be recorded. The nature of the absence will determine the appropriate course of management action to be taken.

Self-certification

If absent from work for seven days or less, there is no requirement to provide a fit note if unwell or injured. However, evidence to support your absence may be requested and may include completion of a self-certification form when you return to work.

To complete a self-certification form, you should provide as much detail as you can about the:

- reason you were absent – including information about your illness or injury
- causes of your illness or injury
- dates your sickness started and ended.

Further information on Statutory Sick Pay, how to claim, and an employee's statement of sickness (SC2) form can be found at: www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay

Fit Note: 'Statement of Fitness for Work'

The Fit Note is intended to provide additional advice that can support both employers and employees by helping people back to work as soon as possible. Many people with health conditions can work during recovery with reasonable support from their employer.

Doctors can advise that an employee is 'unfit for work' or 'may be fit for work', taking into account the following options:

- a phased return to work
- altered hours
- amended duties
- workplace adaptations.

Further guidance is available at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/fit-note

Planning a return to work

Before you're ready to return to work, you should start to consider how and when you're going to return and what changes need to be made to make it safe for you to do so. Your employer, GP, Fit for Work Scotland service or occupational health provider can offer you advice and work with you to develop a return to work plan. This will take into account how long you've been off work and what reasonable adjustments can be implemented within the workplace to support your return.

Further advice is available to help you understand your return to work plan:

www.fitforworkscotland.scot/employees/returning-to-work/return-to-work-process/understanding-your-return-to-work-plan/

Signature:

Designation:

Date:

Review date: