



Sickness Absence Policy

2025 - 2026

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Statement of Policy

It is recognised by the Charity that staff may require to be absent from their place of work due to illness from time-to-time. The length of time lost by employees through illness must however be monitored to ensure that each member of staff is able to do their job effectively and without putting themselves or others at risk. It is not the intention of the Charity to penalise staff for genuine sickness absence, but it must be recognised that an employee who is medically unfit to carry out their contractual duties may not be able to continue in their current employment.

Managers will take steps to understand and reduce absence. They will consider cases of sickness absence on an individual basis and ensure the provision of appropriate support. However, it is recognised that in some cases, patterns/levels of absence will be unacceptable and formal management action will be required.

Employees who become aware that they have a problem with illness are encouraged to inform their manager at the earliest opportunity. All such sickness absence requests will be managed as swiftly and compassionately as possible.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to:

- Provide a standard process and consistent approach for managing sickness absence.
- Treat everyone in a way that is sensitive and fair, balancing the needs of the member of staff with those of the organisation.
- Provide support for the absent member of staff so that they can return to work as soon as their condition allows, whilst sustaining a required level of attendance.
- Identify and eliminate any potential workplace risks to staff members' health and wellbeing
- Promote a positive culture of attendance.

Signed:



Date: 05.01.25

Reviewed: 01.12.25 – no amendments

Employee Sickness Absence Procedure

'Sickness absence' is defined as an incapacity to carry out the duties and responsibilities which a member of staff is contractually obliged to do because of their own illness or injury. This policy does not apply to the need to take time off work because of the illness or injury of others, for example, dependents, or to agreed compassionate leave.

Notification of Absence

Employees must notify their line manager themselves by phone or through a relative or friend, as soon as possible and by **7.30a.m.** to ensure appropriate cover. If a relative or friend makes contact because you are unable to do so, you should contact your line manager yourself as soon as you are able.

It is your responsibility to keep your manager informed of the reason for absence, possible length of absence and likely return date. Please update your line manager by **3.00p.m.** for the following day.

If you are unsure of the possible length of absence, then it is your responsibility to contact your line manager at agreed intervals and submit the relevant medical certificates as soon as possible.

Failure to notify the Charity of absence and date of a likely return may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised, which may result in disciplinary action and pay being withheld for the period of illness.

If you have unexplained diarrhoea and vomiting, you are considered very infectious and should stay off work until you are symptom free for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.

Medical Certificates

If you are absent for eight or more calendar days, then you must obtain a medical certificate from your GP (fit note), covering the eighth day of absence onwards and send it to your line manager. Subsequent medical certificates are required as soon as the current certificate has expired.

You must keep your line manager informed of your progress, with an indication, where possible, of a likely return to work date. You are responsible for ensuring that medical certificates are submitted on time and that they cover all periods of absence.

Taking Holidays during Sickness Absence

In some cases, it may be appropriate for an employee to take a holiday/period of leave away from home during a period of sickness absence e.g., for convalescence purposes. Before taking such leave, you must inform your line manager of the proposed dates and reason for the request. The period of leave will still be counted

as sickness for the purpose of recording sickness absence and calculating pay for this period.

Conduct During Sickness Absence

In all cases of sickness absence, it is expected that any employee will act in a way that will help to ensure a timely return to work. For example, it would not be expected for employees to:

- Take part in sports, hobbies or other avoidable activities that could aggravate any injury or condition or delay a timely recovery. This excludes specific activities recommended by a GP or other medical adviser to improve your health, as part of a therapeutic/convalescent programme.
- Undertake any other employment, whether paid or unpaid, unless this has been approved by a line manager. Employees should also note that it can be a criminal offence to claim Statutory Sick Pay from an employer, whilst undertaking paid employment elsewhere. These matters would be pursued as a disciplinary matter.

Return to Work Interviews

Your line manager will meet with you following a period of sickness absence of more than 5 working days, to discuss the reason for absence and any relevant issues arising from it. The return-to-work interview gives the opportunity to:

- Check that you are fit to return to work and agree any actions, such as short-term changes to working arrangements.
- Review your attendance record.
- Ensure the appropriate certificates have been submitted, which cover your absence.
- Discuss any medical, work or domestic problems that have prevented you from attending work.

If there is no acceptable reason for absence, then the matter will be treated as a conduct issue and dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

Short-term Absence

First Review

Short-term absence can be disruptive to the smooth running of the Charity and therefore, it is important that it is managed consistently with all employees.

Frequent and persistent short-term absences will be investigated promptly. The trigger for a first absence review is three or more episodes of sickness in a 26 week rolling period or five days total sickness absence in a rolling 26 week period.

We will inform you, in writing, of the date of any meetings under this section. Advance warning will be given of meetings, which will be conducted during normal working times.

Information will include the following:

- The reason for the meeting.
- A reminder of your right to be represented by a colleague not acting in a legal capacity.
- Details of your sickness record over the previous 6- and 12-month period.

During the meeting, you will be informed about:

- Expectations for an improvement in attendance and the likely consequences if this does not happen.
- Next steps if there is no improvement in attendance - your length of service, performance, the likelihood of a change in attendance, the availability of suitable alternative work, and the effect of past and future absences on the Charity, will all be considered in deciding appropriate action.

At the conclusion of the meeting, you will receive a written account of the discussions and at what stage further action would be taken.

Short Term Absence Final Review

If you have not been able to meet the expected improvement in attendance outlined in the first review, and recorded in a letter, you will be invited to a final review meeting.

We will inform you, in writing, of the date of any meetings under this section. Advance warning will be given of meetings, which will be conducted during normal working times. Information will include the following:

- The reason for the meeting.
- A reminder of your right to be represented by a colleague not acting in a legal capacity.
- Details of your sickness record over the previous 12 months.

Your length of service, performance, the likelihood of a change in attendance, the availability of suitable alternative work, and the effect of past and future absences on the company, will all be considered in deciding appropriate action. Excessive absence may result in termination of employment on grounds of capability.

At the end of the meeting, a letter will be written informing you of the discussions and any further action to be taken.

Long Term Absence

Long-term sickness absence can be defined as any period of sickness lasting over four weeks. Each employee who is absent due to long-term sickness will have individual needs and so consideration should be given to the following:

- Agreeing the intervals for contact between both parties to be made

- Consideration for obtaining a medical report/referral to occupational health (with employee's consent) for advice on a return to work or potential adaptations/modifications to enable a return to work.

Action cannot be generalised in these cases, as a range of actions may be appropriate. These may include:

- No further action.
- Further investigation/action at a later date.
- Change in working conditions/rehabilitation
- Redeployment.
- Enforced medical leave.
- Early retirement.
- Formal warning, followed by termination of employment on health grounds.

Long Term Absence Interviews

When we need to have a formal long-term absence interview about ill health problems, these guidelines will be followed:

- You'll be given notice of the meeting in writing, together with the reason for the meeting and your rights to be accompanied to allow you sufficient time to seek adequate representation should you want this.
- The meeting should be held at a location convenient to you and, if necessary, away from your normal place of work and with consideration to your physical condition.
- Home visits should only take place with your express consent and where it is not possible for you to attend a meeting at work.

At the interview, the following will be covered:

- A review of the situation to date.
- A discussion of existing medical advice and whether there is a need to obtain further information.
- The effect on pay and benefits of your situation.
- A discussion of future outcomes, including possible effect on employment and formal warnings about possible future termination of employment (if a return to work is not possible within a reasonable period).
- A further meeting arranged as necessary.

The outcome of the meeting, including any formal warnings, will be confirmed in writing.

Appointments for doctors, dentists and other medical reasons

Appointments to see a dentist, doctor or other medical professional, should be taken in your own time where possible. Such appointments should be made at the start or end of the normal working day. Urgent appointments may be made if this is not possible during work time.

ANNEX A**Return to Work Interview Form**

Name
First Day of Absence
Last Day of Absence
Total number of days absent
Total number of days off work
Is absence due to an injury at work? YES/ NO
Have you seen a doctor? YES/ NO
Reason for absence (Please give a brief description of the illness or other reason for absence)
Action Taken (please give a brief description of any action taken to date)
Proposed Course of Action
I understand that if I knowingly provide inaccurate or false information regarding my absence it may result in disciplinary action
Employee's Signature
Manager's Signature