

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

1. ABOUT THIS POLICY

- 1.1 This policy sets out our arrangements for sick pay and for reporting and managing sickness absence.
- 1.2 Abuse of sickness absence, including failing to report absence or falsely claiming sick pay will be treated as misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

2. REPORTING WHEN YOU ARE SICK

- 2.1 If you are absent from work due to incapacity, you must personally notify a manager by telephone only (text message or email are not acceptable), of the reason for your absence as soon as possible but no later than 9.00am on the first day of absence. You must ensure that notification is received. Thereafter you must continue to keep us informed of your absence by contacting your Line Manager on a daily basis unless you produce a medical certificate from your Doctor detailing your future length of absence.

3. EVIDENCE OF INCAPACITY

- 3.1 You must complete a self-certification form for sickness absence of up to seven calendar days.
- 3.2 For absence of more than a week you must provide a doctor's certificate stating that you are not fit for work and giving the reason. You must also complete a self-certification form to cover the first seven days. If absence continues beyond the expiry of a certificate, a further certificate must be provided.
- 3.3 If your doctor provides a certificate stating that you "may be fit for work" you must inform your Line Manager immediately. We will hold a discussion with you about how to facilitate your return to work, taking account of your doctor's advice. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, you will remain on sick leave and we will set a date for review.

4. SICK PAY

- 4.1 When you are sick and unable to work, you are eligible, after 6 months service, to one month's full pay and one month's half pay, in any 12-month period. This is based on full time working, with a pro rata amount for part-time working.
- 4.2 Once the maximum amount of enhanced pay has been reached in any 12-month period, you will then receive Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) only, provided you meet the eligibility requirements. SSP is payable for a maximum of 28 weeks and this includes any periods which you have been paid full or half pay. Any time off sick beyond 28 weeks in any period of one year will not be eligible for any pay, and it will be your responsibility to investigate any additional benefits provided by the state.

5. SICK LEAVE AND HOLIDAYS

- 5.1 If you become sick or injured while on annual leave such that you would be unfit for work, you may ask us to treat the period of incapacity as sick leave and reclaim the annual leave.
- 5.2 To be able to claim statutory sick pay you must notify your manager of your incapacity immediately, and the usual requirements for medical evidence in this policy will also apply, even if you are abroad.
- 5.3 If you are on sick leave you may choose to cancel any pre-arranged annual leave that would otherwise coincide with your sick leave. You should notify your manager as soon as possible that you wish to do this.
- 5.4 If your period of sick leave extends into the next holiday year, or if there is not enough time left in the current holiday year to make it practicable to take your remaining holiday entitlement, you can carry any unused holiday entitlement over to the following leave year to be used within three months of your return to work. Any annual leave not taken within 15 months of the end of the holiday year in which it accrues (whether or not you have returned to work) will be lost.

6. KEEPING IN CONTACT DURING SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 6.1 If you are absent on sick leave you should expect to be contacted from time to time by your line manager in order to discuss your wellbeing, expected length of continued absence from work and any of your work that requires attention. Such contact is intended to provide reassurance and will be kept to a reasonable minimum.

- 6.2 If you have any concerns while absent on sick leave, whether about the reason for your absence or your ability to return to work, you should feel free to contact your line manager at any time.

7. RETURN-TO-WORK INTERVIEWS

After a period of sick leave your manager may hold a return-to-work interview with you. The purposes may include:

- (a) ensuring you are fit for work and agreeing any actions necessary to facilitate your return;
- (b) confirming you have submitted the necessary certificates;
- (c) updating you on anything that may have happened during your absence;
- (d) raising any other concerns regarding your absence record or your return to work.

8. MANAGING LONG-TERM OR PERSISTENT ABSENCE

- 8.1 The following paragraphs set out our procedure for dealing with long-term absence or where your level or frequency of short-term absence has given us cause for concern. The purpose of the procedure is to investigate and discuss the reasons for your absence, whether it is likely to continue or recur, and whether there are any measures that could improve your health and/or attendance. We may decide that medical evidence, or further medical evidence, is required before deciding on a course of action.
- 8.2 We will notify you in writing of the time, date and place of any meeting, and why it is being held. We will usually give you a week's notice of the meeting.
- 8.3 Meetings will be conducted by a Manager.
- 8.4 You may bring a companion to any meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. Your companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague, who will be allowed reasonable paid time off from duties to act as your companion.
- 8.5 If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified you should let us know as soon as possible and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

8.6 If you have a disability, we will consider whether reasonable adjustments may need to be made to the sickness absence meetings procedure, or to your role or working arrangements.

9. MEASUREMENT OF SICKNESS

9.1 We use the Bradford Factor scoring method for measuring sickness and absences.

9.2 The Bradford Scale is used as a tool to prompt managers to investigate individual cases and will not be used purely as a disciplinary tool. We acknowledge that each individual case is different and will be investigated in accordance with this policy.

9.3 Individual Bradford Scores are measured over a rolling 52-week period.

9.4 The Bradford Score calculation is as follows:

$$S \times S \times D = \text{Bradford points score}$$

Where: S is the number of occasions of absence in the last 52 weeks and D is the total number of days' absence in the last 52 weeks.

So, for employees with a total of 14 days' absence, for example, in one rolling 52-week period, the Bradford score can vary enormously, depending on the number of occasions involved.

For example:

One absence of 14 days is 14 points (1x1x14)

Seven absences of 2 days each is 686 points (7x7x14)

14 Absences of one day each is 2,744 points (14x14x14)

The trigger points and possible disciplinary action are as follows:

Points Action to Consider

0-49	No action required
50-124	Verbal Warning

125-349	First Written Warning
350-599	Final Written Warning
600 +	Dismissal

9.5 Verbal Warnings will remain on file for 6 months and written warnings will remain on file for 12 months.

10. MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

10.1 We may ask you to consent to a medical examination by a doctor or occupational health professional or other specialist nominated by us (at our expense).

10.2 You will be asked to agree that any medical report produced may be disclosed to us and that we may discuss the contents of the report with the specialist and with our advisers. All medical reports will be kept confidential.

11. INITIAL SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

11.1 The purposes of a sickness absence meeting or meetings will be to discuss the reasons for your absence, how long it is likely to continue, whether it is likely to recur, whether to obtain a medical report, and whether there are any measures that could improve your health and/or attendance.

11.2 In cases of long-term absence, we may seek to agree a return-to-work programme, possibly on a phased basis.

11.3 In cases of short-term, intermittent absence, we may set a target for improved attendance within a certain timescale.

12. IF MATTERS DO NOT IMPROVE

If, after a reasonable time, you have not been able to return to work or if your attendance has not improved within the agreed timescale, we will hold a further meeting or meetings. We will seek to establish whether the situation is likely to change and may consider redeployment opportunities at that stage. If it is considered unlikely that you will return to work or that your attendance will

improve within a short time, we may give you a written warning you that you are at risk of dismissal. We may also set a further date for review.

13. FINAL SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

Where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, and the situation has not changed significantly, we will hold a meeting to consider the possible termination of your employment. Before we make a decision, we will consider any matters you wish to raise and whether there have been any changes since the last meeting.

14. APPEALS

- 14.1 You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure. If you wish to appeal you should set out your appeal in writing to either the Chief Executive Officer, Chair of the Board or authorised deputy stating your grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.
- 14.2 If you are appealing against a decision to dismiss you, we will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will be dealt with impartially and, where possible, by a more senior manager who has not previously been involved in the case.
- 14.3 We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. There is no further right of appeal.
- 14.4 The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.