

Staff Absence Policy

What is this policy for?

We care about the health, wellbeing and attendance of everyone who works for us.

Everyone's contribution helps towards the company's success. So when someone can't work for any reason, we miss that contribution. This absence policy explains:

- what we expect from managers and employees when handling absence
- how we'll work to reduce levels of absence.

This policy is in line with ACAS guidelines. We welcome any ideas that may help improve it.

Key principles

1. We don't want anyone to struggle financially because they're unable to work through illness.
2. We want to have a happy and healthy workforce.
3. Regular, punctual attendance is important.
4. We'll support those who have genuine grounds for absence. This support includes:
 - a. 'special leave' for necessary absences not caused by sickness
 - b. a flexible approach to taking annual leave
 - c. access to counsellors where necessary
 - d. rehabilitation support in cases of long-term sickness.
5. We'll take into account any advice given by a doctor on a 'Statement of Fitness for Work'.
6. If needed, we'll bring in an occupational health adviser to help find the best way to improve someone's health and wellbeing.
7. We'll use the disciplinary procedures when someone can't explain their absence or we don't think the reason is satisfactory.
8. There's a lot of sensitive information regarding sickness. Everything we do will be in line with data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

What you should do if you're too ill to work

If you can't work, let your manager know as soon as possible, ideally within **[specify time period e.g. one hour]** of your start time. You'll need to give them:

- an indication of your illness, and
- a likely return date.

Your manager will check whether there's any information they need to cover your work while you're off.

If you haven't contacted your manager within [specify time period e.g. one hour] of your start time, we'll try to contact you.

If you don't feel you can discuss medical problems with your manager, please speak to someone you feel comfortable with.

Do we keep a record of sick leave?

[If you use Timetastic]

We use Timetastic to keep track of all time off work, and we'll give you the login details you need. Sick leave is recorded in Timetastic like any other absence. The summary shows you how much you've taken each year.

[If you don't use Timetastic]

Describe your system for keeping a record sick leave here.

When you need to get a sick note

You can self-certify your sickness for the first seven days.

After that you'll need to get a Statement of Fitness for Work ('Fit note') from your doctor.

If you're likely to be off more than four weeks, we'll agree a timetable with you for making contact, so we can keep each other updated.

What if your doctor says you 'may be fit for some work'?

If your doctor says you 'may be fit for work', your doctor should give some details of the level of work they think you're able to do.

We'll work with that advice and agree ways of helping you get back to work. For example, we might look at a phased return to work or different duties.

It may be that we can't provide the support you need by making the necessary workplace adjustments, or you may not feel able to return. If so, we'll use the fit note in the same way as if the GP advised you were 'not fit for work'.

What happens when you come back to work?

When you return to work you'll need to have a discussion with your manager so they can:

- understand the reason for your absence
- see what they or the company can do to help
- be sure that you're really fit to return to work
- agree any adjustments to your working conditions.

What triggers a formal review?

If your absences become disruptive to our operations, we'll need to look at further action to help improve your attendance.