

# Sickness Absence Policy



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# **Sickness Absence Policy**

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Releasing Potential understand that employees may need to be absent from work from time to time due to sickness. This policy covers employees and their line managers in handling time off from work where the reason for absence is sickness.

## **1. Procedure for reporting sickness absence**

We encourage staff to keep an open dialogue with their line manager regarding their health.

If you are unable to come to work because of sickness absence, you need to contact your line manager at least one hour before you are due to start work, providing details of your plan for the day. If the staff member is too unwell or otherwise unable to contact the Organisation, they should:

- Ask their named emergency contact or a close family member to make contact on their behalf
- Staff who are off sick should advise their line manager on any urgent or outstanding work-related matters that need attention

## **2. Certification**

On your return you will be asked to complete and sign a self-certification form. Absences of more than 5 working days will require you to obtain a sick certificate from your GP.

The self/certification form or fit note should cover each day of absence and, if multiple fit notes are issued, they should be provided to the employee's line manager.

Failure to follow the certification process outlined above may be considered misconduct and may be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary process.

## **3. Unauthorised absence**

If a staff member does not report for work and we receive no contact from them or someone on their behalf, their line manager will contact them as soon as possible to: -

- Make sure they are safe
- Give them an opportunity to explain their absence

Staff should not treat this as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.

Where staff remain absent without leave and/or there are grounds to believe that they are acting dishonestly or failing to follow the procedures above, we may treat this as an unauthorised absence without pay.

We may deal with cases of unauthorised absence under our disciplinary procedures – see our staff disciplinary procedures for more detail

## **4. Maintaining contact with line managers during sick leave**

If staff are absent on sick leave, their line manager may contact them from time to time to discuss:

- Their wellbeing and expected length of continued absence from work
- Any of their work that requires attention

The purpose of such contact is to reassure the staff member, and line managers will keep it to a reasonable minimum.

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

## 5. Sick leave and pay

Releasing Potential operates a discretionary sick pay scheme of up to 5 days within a rolling 12-month period, for all employees who have successfully completed their probationary period and satisfied the sickness reporting procedure detailed in the Staff Handbook. If you do not qualify for Company sick pay, you may still be eligible to receive Statutory Sick Pay subject to meeting the qualifying conditions. Any sickness over 5 days in the holiday year will be reviewed.

If you qualify for Company sick pay, payment will be made for those days you would normally have worked at the rate you would have expected to have received for that day. Where applicable this will be a payment made up of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) plus an addition to ensure the payment received by you is equivalent to your normal pay for that day. Where SSP is not payable e.g. during the first 3 days of any absence payments under this scheme will be equivalent to your normal daily pay. The entitlement is expressed in 'workdays' i.e. days you would normally have worked. The number of workdays due to be paid will be calculated by calculating the total period of continuous service at the beginning of each pay period (each calendar month), deducting any payments already received under this scheme in the preceding 11 months and thus identifying the number of days remaining to be paid in this pay period (calendar month).

Employees may receive Statutory Sick Pay at the statutory rate as long as they have completed the necessary notification. SSP is paid only from the fourth consecutive qualifying day of sickness. Absence from work from this day is known as a period of incapacity (PIW). A PIW is the period of time during which an employee is incapable of working.

All days including weekends, holidays and days not normally worked are taken into account in calculating the PIW. A PIW which occurs within 56 days of a previous PIW will be linked, counting as one period of sickness. The first 3 days of any absence are not paid. If you are not eligible to receive SSP for whatever reason you will be notified.

On returning to work, the Company reserves the right to request a GP's certificate to confirm your fitness to return to work.

Read more about eligibility and payment rates at <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay>.

## 6. Pension contributions during sickness absence

Both the employer and the staff member will continue to contribute to the staff member's pension scheme during any SSP.

## 7. Returning to work

When a staff member returns to work after sickness absence, of 5 days or more, their line manager will arrange a return-to-work meeting to:

- Discuss the staff member's absence, making sure they have recovered and establishing whether there are any continuing underlying issues
- Talk about any support the staff member needs
- Allow the staff member to raise concerns
- Update the staff member on any work matters
- Complete a return-to-work interview form (**see appendix A**)
- If relevant, review their sickness absence record for the past year and make them aware if they are approaching a trigger point

A fit note may make a recommendation for temporary changes to be made to an employee's working environment or conditions to facilitate a return to work. Where the fit note contains recommendations for changes to be made to working conditions or practices, the Company will consider those recommendations and try as far as possible to accommodate those changes, where permissible in accordance with the needs of the business.

## **8. Long-term Sickness**

Employees are expected to keep their line manager updated with details of their health and expected date of returning to work. Line managers will arrange periodic meetings with the employee to discuss the current situation so that each side is kept up to date with developments.

Employees should be aware that although the Company is sympathetic towards genuine illnesses, it is not realistic for sickness-related absence to continue forever. The Company will be eager to get any employees on long-term sickness absence back into the workplace as appropriately and effectively as possible, but the employment may need to be reviewed if this cannot be achieved.

There will be a full consultation with the employee, together with a medical investigation and consideration of redeployment or alternative employment. Employment may be terminated after full compliance with the Company's termination procedures in these circumstances. If long-term sickness absence leads to dismissal, the employee will be provided with the reasons for the dismissal in writing.

## **9. Disability**

The Company has a duty to make reasonable adjustments where an employee has a disability covered by the Equality Act 2010. The duty to make the adjustments is 'reasonable' so if the suggested adjustment is not viable it will not be made. It may also be the case that no reasonable adjustments are possible to facilitate a return. There may be no alternative roles or employment available and if there is no prospect of the employee being able to return to work in the near future, it may be inevitable that a decision to dismiss is the last and only option.

## **10. Data protection**

All discussions and sensitive medical and personal information about staff members' sickness and other absence will be treated confidentially by all parties concerned. This data will be collected, used and stored in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. Please refer to our privacy notice for staff members for more detail on how data will be processed which can be found in our Data Protection Policy.

## **11. Roles and responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees and the CEO are responsible for making sure that:

- › This sickness absence policy is applied consistently across the Organisation and that it is in line with equality legislation
- › All staff are aware of this policy and their responsibilities

## **12. Links to other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

[Staff Capability, Discipline and Grievance Procedure.docx](#)

[GDPR Policy.docx](#)

[Staff Wellbeing.docx](#)

## **13. Appendix A – Return to Work Interview Form**

**Appendix A**

**RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW FORM**

**This form must be completed and discussed with the employee by the manager for every episode of sickness and retained in the employee's personnel file.**

**Name of Employee:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of return-to-work interview:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Conducted by:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Reason for absence as stated by employee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Is the absence work related?** (check if an incident form has been done)  
**Yes**

**No**

**Is the absence pregnancy related?**

**Yes**

**No**

(if yes then a risk assessment must be undertaken)

**Could this absence be related to a disability?**

**Yes**

**No**

(if yes then consider whether any reasonable adjustments would assist them)

**Could this absence be related to a health condition?**

**Yes**

**No**

(if yes then consider whether any tailored adjustments would assist them)

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**Is the employee now fit to undertake all duties?**

**Did the employee seek advice from their Medical Practitioner / GP/been referred to a consultant?  
If so, are they receiving any medication and/or require further treatment?**

**Are there likely to be any further absences resulting from their recent illness/injury etc.?**

**Are there any underlying health conditions relating to the absence?**

**Can any support/ assistance / signposting be given to the employee?**

**Does the employee have any concerns about any work-related issues, which may have a bearing on their sickness absence/ attendance?**

**Has the employee been referred to Occupational Health? If so, what was the advice? If not, consider whether a referral is required.**

**Any other comments/recommendations/actions required?**

Total no. of calendar days absent: \_\_\_\_\_ Total no. of episodes in the last 12 months \_\_\_\_\_

Is a Review Prompt discussion required?

Yes

No

(N.B apply discretion and record rational below)

Following consideration does this episode require progression  
under the Management of Attendance Policy?

Yes

No

\_\_\_\_\_ This  
section must be signed by both the line manager and the employee as a true and accurate record  
of the discussion that took place during the return to work interview.

Manager's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_