



ABILITY · EQUALITY · INDEPENDENCE

Sickness Absence and Wellbeing Policy & Procedure



Content



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- Objectives of this training session
- What's new in the policy
- Why is managing sickness absence so important?

The Policy

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- Return to work meetings
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- Medical advice
- Short term absence
- Long term absence
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- Managing mental ill health

Objectives



- Review and understand updates to the sickness absence and wellbeing policy
- Reminder of current processes
- Understand why managing sickness absence is important
- To feel confident around absence relating to disability, pregnancy and mental ill health

What's new?

- New policy name
- No longer 'trigger points' → 'absence review points'
- Managing mental ill health
- Incorporated the Stress Policy
- New short term absence process
- New occupational health referral process
- Phased return will now be fully paid for up to 4 weeks
- Inclusion of long-term absence process, moved from Dealing with Poor Performance & Capability Policy, with more detailed information
- A section on Ill health Capability



Why is managing sickness absence so important?

Q: What is the national average of sick days for health and social care workers per year?

A: 7 days (ONS)

Q: What is Grace Eyre's average number of sickness days per year per employee?

A: Average is 7.75 per employee (Q1 2021)

Q: What is the approximate minimum cost of sickness per year in Grace Eyre?

A: £136,012

Why is managing sickness absence so important?

- To support employee's health and wellbeing effectively
- Supporting employees to return to work as quickly as possible
- Minimising reoccurrence of absence
- Helping employees stay in work
- Ensuring a consistent approach in the minority of cases where employees could try to take advantage of our occupational sick pay scheme.
- Encouraging and supporting work life balance
- Keeping the cost of sickness as low as possible for the organisation
- Reducing and preventing stress at work
- To minimise disruption to the services we provide

Notification and evidence – Key Points

- Absences should be recorded on Salesforce, on the day someone rings in sick, with as much information on the absence as possible.
- A continuous absence should be one entry on Salesforce - unless it goes over into another month.
- Edit entries to extend a sickness absence.
- All entries must be added by the 10th of the following month because the payroll report will not pick up late entries and they may get overpaid.
- If something needs to be changed after 10th of the month following the absence, please contact Ali Warne or Chloe Stanton so we can ensure correct pay adjustments and recording.

Notification and evidence – Key Points

GP Certificate/Statement of fitness for work

- GP certificates are required from the 8th calendar day of the absence.
- You should request the employee to get one and email a copy in urgently
- Copies should be forwarded to Humanresources@grace-eyre.org as soon as you receive them.

Recording absence on salesforce

It is important to record absences correctly on salesforce correctly because:

- Monitoring sickness absence review points (triggers)
- Payroll
- SSP eligibility

Recording absence on salesforce

This staff member was absent continually from 19/07/2021 – 11/08/2021

Q - What is wrong with this entry?

Record Type	Status	Absence Type	Absence Start Date	Absence End Date
Sickness Absence	Approved	Sickness	04/08/2021	11/08/2021
Sickness Absence	Approved	Sickness	28/07/2021	04/08/2021
Sickness Absence	Approved	Sickness	26/07/2021	26/07/2021
Sickness Absence	Approved	Sickness	19/07/2021	20/07/2021

Recording absence on salesforce

Correct entry for a continuous entry from 19/07/2021 – 11/08/2021

Record Type	Status	Absence Type	Absence Start Date	Absence End Date
Sickness Absence	Approved	Sickness	01/08/2021	11/08/2021
Sickness Absence	Approved	Sickness	19/07/2021	31/07/2021

Return to work meetings

- Should be held either online/phone/F2F, on the day a member of your team returns to work or as soon as practically possible.
- Recorded on return to work form and salesforce, fully completed
- Saved format **Yearmonthday – initials Return to work – 20210928 – FP**

Return to work

- A copy of the Return-to-work form must be
 - sent to the employee
 - sent to Humanresources@grace-eyre.org, so we have a full record and can pick up any Absence Review meetings required as soon as possible
 - Highlight if absence review points are reached

Special cases – disability and pregnancy

Pregnancy

- Pregnancy related absence not included in absence review points
- Paid time off for antenatal appointments
- Risk assessment to be completed
- Flexible working to support the employee
- Confidentiality

BREAKOUT EXERCISE

Special cases – disability

Group 1

- What issues might you face managing absence related to a disability?
- What are the health conditions that are automatically a disability – can you name them?

Group 2

- How would you define a disability?
- What are the responsibilities of an employer to an employee with a disability?
- Can you dismiss an employee who has a disability because of their absence or capability?

Special cases – disability and pregnancy

Disability – Key points

- Identifying when absence is related to a disability
- Providing consistent and meaningful support
- Obtaining medical evidence and advice
- Reasonable adjustments
- Flexible working
- Risk assessments
- Adjusting absence review points and outcomes

**Managing
absences
relating to
disabilities
– frequent
short term
absences**

Absence

- **Frequent absence relating to 1 or several disabilities**
- Return to works highlight absence is relating to a disability
- Absence review point meeting arranged when required

Supporting

- Support offered informally and formally
- Warnings and targeting setting to be adjusted on a case by case basis

Capability

- Ongoing absence having serious and detrimental affect on organisation
- All alternative options exhausted
- Ill health capability explored / dismissal considered

Managing absences relating to disabilities

– Long term absences

Absence

- Long term absence relating to a disability
- Highlighted in long term absence review meetings

Supporting

- Support offered informally and formally
- Targeting setting to be adjusted on a case by case basis

Capability

- Ongoing absence having serious and detrimental affect on organisation
- All alternative options exhausted
- Dismissal considered at stage 3



Medical advice

- What is the difference between medical reports and occupational health report?
- When OH should be used and how it can help?
- Access to work
- Phased return – paid 4 weeks



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15 minute break time

Short term absence (up to 4 weeks)

Main changes

- Trigger points now called absence review points
- 1 informal (just manager attend), 3 formal stages (HR and rep present)

What were the main causes of short term absence in 2021 according to the CIPD?

- Minor illness (includes colds/flu, stomach upsets, headaches and migraines).
- Musculoskeletal injuries, including back pain.
- COVID-19 (including confirmed cases, self-isolation, quarantine and shielding).
- Stress.
- Mental ill health (for example depression and anxiety).

Short term absence process

Absent review point 1

- Informal health and wellbeing meeting with manager
- Outcome and improvements required confirmed in writing

Absent review point 2

- Formal health and wellbeing meeting with manager HR and Representative if required
- Possible outcomes – First written warning

Absent review point 3

- Formal health and wellbeing meeting with manager HR and Representative if required
- Possible outcomes – First written warning, final written warning or dismissal

Absent review point 4

- Formal health and wellbeing meeting with manager HR and Representative if required
- Possible outcomes – First written warning, final written warning or dismissal



BREAKOUT EXERCISE

Short term absence (up to 4 weeks)

Discuss how you would use the policy to manage the cases:

Group 1 – Your team member has been absent for 3 weeks with a stomach ache

Group 2 – Your team member has been off on 3 occasions in the last 2 weeks with different ailments. E.g one day headache, one day toe ache

Consider the following:

What issues might you face?

How would you support the employee?

What are the possible outcomes of the case?

What made you come to that conclusion?

Long term absence (over 4 weeks)



Main changes

- Clear 3 stage long term absence process.
- Guidelines on stages, timings and outcomes.
- Extended Sick leave pay
- Maintain contact with employee on long term absence

Long term absence process

Stage 1

- At 28 days
- 1 meeting at 28 days
- Targets, support offered confirmed in writing

Stage 2

- 2 – 12 months absence
- Meetings every 1-2 months
- Targets, support offered, discussing their capability to fulfil the role, medical evidence and possibility to discuss dismissal

Stage 3

- 6 months +
- Every 1-2 months
- Final stage, all outcomes and support options have exhausted and explored. Possibility of dismissal if no date of return determined

Long term absence (over 4 weeks)

Long term absence Review meetings

- When an employee is approaching 4 weeks absence – you should notify HR as we may not have picked this up.
- HR will work with managers to support arranging meetings, documentation and advising on the process.
- These meetings are to ensure that absences are managed effectively, and relevant support can be put in place to support the member of staff to return to work.
- All long terms cases should be treated on an individual basis. HR will support and guide

BREAKOUT EXERCISE



Long term absence (over 4 weeks)

You have a team member who has been absent for 8 weeks

Group 1 – stress & anxiety

Group 2 – torn ligament in leg

In your groups discuss the following:

What support can we offer staff on long term absence?

Why is it important to maintain formal and informal contact with the employee?

How will you ensure the meetings are meaningful and supportive?

Ill health capability



- An employee is not absent from work, but their ill health is affecting their performance; or
- Reasonable adjustments or support previously put in place to help manage an employee's ill health is no longer available or viable; or
- Frequent long term absence.

Managing mental ill health



- Now a section in the policy
- When it is likely to be disability and come under equality act
- How and when to use stress risk assessment



Summary

- New ST & LT absence processes – become familiar
- Clear documentation and communication is key
- Need to show clear evidence of any formal process
- Prompt RTW and completion of absence recording in salesforce so important
- But...HR will support you through the processes