

<b>Date Issued</b>	October 2008
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>September 2023</b>
<b>Department</b>	Corporate
<b>Title</b>	<b>Attendance and Absence Management Policy</b>
<b>Objective</b>	To ensure a fair and consistent approach to managing attendance.
<b>Responsible</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Next Review Date</b>	September 2028

*This policy and the guidelines it contains are intended to complement, and not replace, our Terms and Conditions of Service. The Attendance and Absence Management Procedure and the Ill Health Capability Procedure also complement this policy.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 We recognise that on occasions, it may be necessary for employees to be absent from work. However, we also have a duty to provide a reliable service to our customers and we therefore need to ensure that we help employees maintain the highest possible level of attendance.
- 1.2 This policy is designed to help all employees achieve good attendance, and to ensure that we adopt a consistent and fair approach to managing attendance throughout the organisation.

## **2.0 AIMS OF THE POLICY**

- 2.1 To manage attendance in a way that reflects genuine concern for employees, and to develop a positive attitude towards attendance.
- 2.2 To set clear expectations for standards of attendance that we require for all employees.
- 2.3 To separate two processes: attendance and absence management, and to provide guidelines for employees and managers in how to manage these.
- 2.4 To identify the causes of absence and wherever possible develop a programme of supportive and preventive measures.
- 2.5 To ensure training and support is available to both managers and employees.

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### **3.0 PRINCIPLES**

We require good attendance from all employees to meet our objectives.

- 3.1 If the level of attendance is unsatisfactory then we will inform employees what improvement is required and the possible consequences of failure to do so (which may include disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal)
- 3.2 If there is an underlying medical condition causing absence(s), then we will consider reasonable adjustments.
- 3.3 Managers will conduct “return to work” interviews within the spirit of this policy.
- 3.4 All employees will strictly adhere to our absence reporting procedures. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and organisation sick pay being withheld.
- 3.5 We will maintain accurate, up-to-date attendance records for all employees to manage absence effectively.

### **4.0 ABSENCE REPORTING**

- 4.1 Reporting  
All employees must notify their line manager of their absence in line with the Attendance and Absence Management Procedure.
- 4.2 Certification  
All employees must ensure that the appropriate self-certificate or medical certificates (fit note) are submitted in line with the Attendance and Absence Management Procedure
- 4.3 Keeping in Touch  
Employees are responsible for phoning their line manager to let them know the reasons for any absence and when a return to work is expected. If, in the event of an emergency, the employee cannot get to a phone on day one of the absence, they should make sure that someone else calls on their behalf. After this, employees should contact the line manager as soon as they can and maintain regular contact by calling daily during the first week of the absence (unless otherwise agreed with your line manager) and weekly thereafter. If the employee fails to keep in contact as outlined above, we will initiate and maintain contact with you.

We expect the employee to let us know the following information: the reason for the absence, when a return to work is expected and contact details which can be used to maintain contact during the absence. (If this information is not provided, we will contact you to find out this information).

- 4.4 Failure to Comply  
Where the employee does not follow reporting, certification, or required keeping-in-touch arrangements, we may withhold Organisation Sick Pay. Failure to comply with these requirements may also lead to disciplinary action against you in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Similarly if we

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suspect that an employee has falsified their reason for absence, we will take disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal.

### 5.0 ABSENCE NOT RELATED TO ILLNESS

Our Terms and Conditions of Employment contain guidelines for absences relating to a number of reasons. Our policy on these is as follows:

#### 5.1 Social Purposes

Employees will normally be expected to use their annual leave or flexi time. Unpaid leave maybe granted if the employee has no annual leave or flexi time to use.

#### 5.2 Bereavement

Leave with pay will be granted as follows:

- 5 days leave – for close relatives (spouse/partner, parents, siblings, child) or where the employee is responsible for making funeral arrangements
- 1 days leave – other relatives
- In all other cases annual / flexi time leave will be granted as appropriate to attend a funeral

Unpaid or annual leave may be granted to extend these periods if necessary.

#### 5.3 Domestic Stress

Employees will normally be expected to use annual or flexi time leave. However a maximum of 1 day (7 hours) paid leave may be granted in any leave year for absences required due to domestic stress or emergency e.g. emergency repairs, sickness of a dependent or relative.

#### 5.4 Moving Home

A maximum of 1 day paid leave may be granted in any leave year.

#### 5.5 Jury/Witness Service

Employees who receive a summons to serve on a jury, should report this to their line manager. We will grant leave, unless an exemption is secured. This leave will be with pay, after taking off allowances for loss of earnings employees are entitled to. Employees should make sure that they claim these allowances from the court.

#### 5.6 Public Duties

Before committing to paid or unpaid external work, e.g. Children's Panel Hearings, Justice of the Peace etc, employees are required to discuss the impact that this may have on their attendance at work. The approval process will include agreement on how the leave is to be treated.

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### **6.0 Attendance Management**

- 6.1 This refers to dealing with unacceptable levels of attendance, with no reference to reasons for absence or medical condition.
- 6.2 We will aim to assist in maintaining a good attendance record. This will involve ensuring return to work meetings are completed and helping investigate and address any identified underlying causes of absence.
- 6.3 Where this fails to secure a required improvement, we will invoke the terms of the disciplinary procedure. Unsatisfactory attendance reviews can result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- 6.4 If at any stage during this process it becomes apparent that an underlying health condition is involved, medical information will be sought, and further discussion will take place prior to deciding on any appropriate action, if any.
- 6.5 Absence periods related to pregnancy or underlying health conditions classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 will not be considered for the purpose of attendance management process.

### **7.0 SHORT TERM SICK LEAVE**

- 7.1 We aim to secure better attendance by supporting and encouraging the employee concerned in the first instance. This will involve maintaining good records, ensuring return to work interviews take place in line with this policy, and helping to investigate and address any identified underlying causes of absence.
- 7.2 Where this fails to secure an improvement in attendance, we will invoke the terms of the disciplinary procedure, which may include dismissal.
- 7.3 If at any stage during this process it becomes apparent that an underlying health issue is involved which results in long term or persistent absence, then the Long Term Sick Leave process (section 8) will be followed.
- 7.4 Absence periods related to pregnancy or an underlying medical condition that falls within the scope of the Equality Act will not be counted for the purpose of the attendance management process (i.e. it will not be included in trigger factor levels – see below).
- 7.5 Attendance review triggers  
We use the Bradford Formula to monitor absenteeism. This model helps us to identify employees who have recurring absences and to put in place appropriate measures to help them improve their attendance. It is weighted towards scores that identify those with a number of short spells of absences.

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The Bradford formula works as follows:

$(S \times S \times D)$

*S* = number of spells of absence in the last year

*D* = number of days of absence in the last year

Part time staff will have their trigger levels calculated on a pro-rata basis. Below is a table showing trigger levels for different part time hours worked.

Hours worked per week	% of full time hours	Bradford Trigger Levels		
35 Hours	100%	40	40-160	Over 160
28 Hours	80%	32	32-128	Over 128
24 Hours	68%	28	28-109	Over 109
21 Hours	60%	24	24-96	Over 96
17.5 Hours	50%	20	20-80	Over 80

7.6 We use the following table to ensure consistency, when dealing with short-term absence:

Sickness absence	Actions may include:
A Bradford Score of under 40 points on a rolling yearly basis or pro-rata as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Self Certificate</li> </ul>
A Bradford score of between 40-160 points on a rolling yearly basis or pro-rata as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Management Team informed of sickness absence</li> <li>• Manager conducts a Return to work interview</li> <li>• Monitor absence and set a review date</li> </ul>
A Bradford Score over 160 points or pro rata as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Management Team informed of sickness absence</li> <li>• Manager conducts a Return to work interview</li> <li>• referral to Occupational Health* and/or Counselling** (unless there is good reason not to, and it is agreed by Senior Management Team)</li> <li>• Monitor absence and set a review date</li> </ul>

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Sickness absence	Actions may include:
A regular pattern of sickness absence identified (e.g. usually sick Mondays, Fridays or following periods of annual leave)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Senior Management Team informed of sickness absence</li><li>• Manager conducts a Return to work interview</li><li>• Referral to Occupational Health* and/or Counselling**</li><li>• Monitor absence and set a review date</li></ul>

\* It is important that employees advise their Manager immediately if they miss or cancel an appointment otherwise disciplinary action may be taken. In addition, since our Occupational Health consultant may charge for any missed or late cancellation of appointments, employees who miss or cancel an appointment will normally be liable to pay any charge incurred.

\*\* We may ask employees to contact our employee counselling service, if we feel this is appropriate. In this instance, the Association will allow the employee to attend sessions in working time. See **Appendix 1** for further details.

### 8.0 LONG TERM SICK LEAVE

8.1 We will be sympathetic and understanding towards any employee with a long-term and/or underlying/chronic health condition. Employees who find themselves in such a position should be confident that their manager will react in a supportive fashion if approached.

8.2 The following will always be considered in relation to long-term absence:

- The nature of the illness and any contributing factors
- The likely duration and/or frequency of the absence(s)
- Any actions that can be taken by the employee
- Any reasonable adjustments that we could make
- Any possible redeployment opportunities
- The nature of the duties in relation to the health conditions
- Our business needs and the impact that the employee's absence is having upon these
- The employee's entitlement to statutory and company sick pay

8.3 Throughout the duration of the employee's absence it will be expected that they will keep in touch and advise of progress in accordance with section 4.

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- 8.4 Where the absence exceeds 4 weeks unless there is a good reason not to do so (e.g broken limb) we will obtain medical reports and assessments during the absence. The manager will discuss the report with the employee.
- 8.5 If a medical professional makes suggestions for any reasonable adjustments, these will be discussed with the employee prior to returning to work to determine if these can be accommodated, along with any suggestions we or the employee may also have made. Although we are not bound by the doctor's suggestions, we will make all possible efforts to accommodate a prompt return and good attendance. If we agree any reasonable adjustments, we will also set time scales and reviews to assess if they are still required and suitable.
- 8.6 Where the employee disagrees with any medical reports, they will be free to submit alternative medical evidence. Where the employee refuses access to medical records or does not attend an independent medical assessment, the process will be managed, and decisions made based on the information available.
- 8.7 If the employee returns to work after a long period of illness, entitlement to annual leave will normally be limited to the statutory minimum.
- 8.8 When managing a long-term absence, a termination of employment for the reason of ill health capability may be considered where all other options have been exhausted, and the organisation can no longer sustain the absence.  
*N.B if this outcome is being considered we will seek professional advice.*
- 8.9 Where employees leave due to ill health, we will make every effort to help secure appropriate access to the pension scheme and/or other relevant financial benefits that may be available.

### 9.0 STATUTORY SICK PAY (SSP)

- 9.1 If eligible to SSP, this is irrespective of their entitlement to company sick pay. SSP is reviewed by the Government. It is not paid for the first three days of absence and runs for 28 weeks after that. An employee who is no longer entitled to SSP may be entitled to other welfare benefits. Employees should enquire about these benefits at their local Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). We will notify employees if they are not entitled to SSP and send the appropriate government form but it is the responsibility of the employee to claim any other state benefit they may be entitled to.

### 10.0 ORGANISATION SICK PAY

- 10.1 All employees, regardless of length of service or hours of work, benefit from this scheme **provided** that their absence from work is due to **their own** sickness or injury and that they comply with this policy and the supporting procedure. They will, however, be excluded where:
- they are sick whilst taking part in a stoppage of work due to a trade dispute,  
**or**

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- they are sick whilst on maternity leave, **or**
- on the first day of sickness they have already exhausted their entitlement to Organisational Sick Pay, **or**
- the sickness or injury arises out of or in the course of following another occupation or sport as a profession.

10.2 Employees must not undertake any other paid work whilst in receipt of Organisational Sick Pay. Failure to comply with this could result in disciplinary action.

### Scale of Allowances

In any **one** period of **52 weeks** we will pay Organisation Sick Pay in accordance with the following scale:

<b>Continuous service at starts:</b>	<b>paid for:</b>	<b>FullPay</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>Half the date sickness</b>
		<b>Pay</b>		<b>paid for:</b>
Up to 1 year		<b>5 weeks</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>5 weeks</b>
Over 1 year and under 2		<b>9 weeks</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>9 weeks</b>
Over 2 years and under 3		<b>18 weeks</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>18 weeks</b>
Over 3 years and under 5		<b>22 weeks</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>22 weeks</b>
Over 5 years		<b>26 weeks</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>26 weeks</b>

*For further information see Section A5 in our Terms and conditions of service*

## 11.0 OTHER PROVISIONS

### 11.1 Absence and holidays

If an employee is on annual leave and falls sick and wishes to claim their annual leave back, they should follow the normal reporting procedure within the Attendance and Absence Management Procedure. This means that they should let their manager know of their sickness as soon as possible and provide them with the appropriate fit note (where required). In this instance Occupational Sick Pay will be payable and annual leave will be returned.

If an employee is on annual leave and falls sick and wishes to claim their annual leave back but does not follow the normal reporting procedure within the Attendance and Absence Management Procedure (e.g. they only make their manager aware of their sickness on their return to work), but have provided certification to cover their absence (i.e. an appropriate fit note), they can claim back their annual leave and Occupational Sick Pay will be payable. It is noted however, that staff do not need to report sickness while on annual leave if they do not wish to.

We understand that in some instances (such as hospitalisation) it may be difficult to follow the reporting procedure. These will be considered on an individual basis. However, the aim of this approach is to ensure that, as far as reasonably possible, employee and employer communicate about

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circumstances that could disrupt the working environment for both the individual employee and their colleagues as soon as is reasonably practical, whilst also ensuring that all employees receive their holiday and contractual entitlements.

Failure to report absence any later than the first day of returning to work will result in any request to reclaim holiday being refused. However, an employee is not obliged to reclaim any annual leave or report any sickness absence during a period of approved annual leave. If the employee wishes the leave to remain as annual leave, no action is required.

- 11.2 If an employee is on long term sick leave and wants to go on holiday, they **must** advise their manager first and request annual leave which will be deducted from their annual leave entitlement. Normal pay will be given for the annual leave period. Failing to comply with this may result in disciplinary action.
- 11.3 If there is a public or general holiday during an employee's period of sickness, the employee will receive full contractual payment for that day. However, we will not take that day from their current entitlement under the sickness allowance scheme. We will treat it as if having the holiday.
- 11.4 Doctor/hospital/dental appointments  
We expect all general, dental and medical appointments to be made out-with working hours (core time). If an employee chooses to make an appointment during working hours, then he/she should request time off from their Manager using annual leave, TOIL or unpaid leave.  
  
We recognise however, that certain hospital/medical appointments are out-with the control of the employee. Where this is the case, the employee should produce evidence of this to their Manager (i.e hospital letter, appointment card). The employee can then attend during their normal working day without loss of time. If no evidence is produced, the time will be deducted from either annual leave, TOIL or will be unpaid leave,
- 11.5 Conduct whilst off sick  
When on sick leave, employees are still bound by their contract of employment and all policies (including Code of Conduct). They are still bound by the duties of fidelity and are expected not to participate in activities that would be at odds with the reason for the absence. Any breach of contract will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. This includes conduct on social networking sites and any other publicly made remarks regarding the Association, its customers, work colleagues, partners and anyone else who is connected with us.
- 11.6 Cosmetic procedures  
Absence due to cosmetic procedures (whether carried out in the UK or abroad) will not normally fall under the sick leave or pay arrangements unless it is recommended by health professionals. In these cases, the employee should request time off and agree with their line manager how the absence will be processed e.g. annual leave or unpaid leave.
- 11.7 IVF treatment  
Absences resulting from IVF treatment will not be processed as sick leave or attract Organisation Sick Pay. The same applies to a partner of a person that is undergoing such treatment. Instead, employees should discuss with their manager how time off for the treatment could be accommodated, using annual

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leave, flexi time or unpaid leave. Absences relating to IVF treatment will also not be treated as relating to pregnancy unless the employee actually falls pregnant, although as an employer, we shall be as supportive as possible.

### **11.8 Stress management**

Stress is not an illness. It can result from an illness or lead to one but it is not an illness itself. The same relates to "nervous debility" or any other diagnosis of that type. If an employee goes off sick with stress, the line manager will endeavour to find out the underlying cause so that an appropriate action can be taken (if any) and in particular to determine whether conditions at work cause or contribute to stress and whether something could be done to help the situation. We will follow procedures as outlined in the stress management policy. If the absence is certified by a doctor, the line manager may ask for the doctor to clarify the underlying cause for stress.

## **12.0 ABSENCE MONITORING**

12.1 A fundamental feature of good attendance management is the accurate and timely recording of all absences. This is essential both in terms of managing attendance and absence and the requirements of the Statutory and Organisational Sick Pay arrangements. Good information allows patterns to be identified and can provide an early indication of underlying problems. The sooner such problems are identified and acted upon, the more likely a successful conclusion for both employee and employer can be achieved.

12.2 Accurate recording is also essential in satisfying any concerns over the fairness of any actions taken by managers. The responsibility for maintaining such records rests with our Executive Support Officer.

12.3 We will carry out a return to work interview once an employee reaches a certain absence level (see section 7). This will be done by the employee's manager (or another manager if they are not available) on the first day back to work. We will keep completed forms in the employee's personal file. The return to work interview forms contain confidential information and may only be viewed by authorised personnel, normally the employee's manager or any other manager who deals with the case.

12.4 Having maintained attendance records, the Executive Support Officer will provide aggregated statistics for discussion at Business Management meetings and at Departmental Meetings with Employees. Individual cases will not be discussed as they form a confidential record of each employee.

## **13.0 DISHONEST ABSENCE**

13.1 If an employee is found to falsify or exaggerate their absence, this will be treated as gross misconduct. An investigation will be carried out in accordance with our disciplinary procedure and disciplinary action may be imposed, including dismissal or future withdrawal of our sick pay benefits.

**14.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

14.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

14.2 The Chief Executive will ensure that the policy is reviewed at least every five years by the Management Committee.

**Appendix 1**

**Contact details of Employee Counselling Service:**

**Rowan Consultancy**

To arrange and appointment or to speak to someone: 01738 562005