

# ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to support and help employees who are absent from work to achieve and maintain full attendance and to support and assist employees who are on long term sickness absence to return to work as quickly as is appropriate in their circumstances.

In taking steps to monitor and control absence we aim to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Company and its employees.

This policy is designed to ensure all employees are aware of their obligations in the event of absence.

## 2. NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

- a) On your first day of absence from work you should notify your manager.
- b) Notification should be made at least one hour before your shift is due to start but try to give as much notice as possible to enable us to cover your duties.
- c) You should notify us personally and by telephone. E-mails and text messages are not an acceptable form of notification.
- d) You should provide us with the reason for your absence and brief details of the symptoms.
- e) You should try to give us some indication of your expected date of return. The notification procedures should be followed on each day of absence unless you are covered by a doctor's medical certificate.
- f) If you are unable to contact your manager when you telephone, you should leave a contact number and they will call you back within 30 minutes.
- g) It is not acceptable to leave a message with any other member of staff.
- h) If your absence extends to more than seven calendar days, you must provide us with a medical certificate. Subsequent medical certificates must be provided to cover the whole of your absence.

- i) If your absence is to attend an appointment at the hospital, doctors, or dentist then an appointment card must be produced.

### 3. RETURNING TO WORK

- a. You must telephone your manager as soon as you become fit to work, even if that day falls on a 'none working day' and must be at least the day before you are due to return to work to enable us to reschedule any staffing arrangements. Failure to provide such notification (even if your medical certificate expires) may result in you being sent home from work for the day without pay.
- b. Upon your return to work, you must obtain a Self-Certification Form from your Manager before commencing work, complete this form and hand it to your Manager.
- c. Following any absence, whether self-certified or supported by a medical certificate, you will also be required to attend a Return-to-Work Interview with your Manager to discuss the reasons for your absence and your current fitness for work.

### 4. FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE PROCEDURES

If you fail to follow any of the above reporting procedures, you may be exempt from receiving Company sick pay, irrelevant of your reason for absence. Failure to follow the procedures may result in disciplinary action being invoked.

### 5. ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

As an organisation we need to determine at what point absence levels become unacceptable and disciplinary action is required. We operate a system to monitor all absence. This is referred as the 'Bradford Factor'. This works on a points system and any employee with a score of above 100 points in any twelve-month period may be subject to disciplinary action. The Bradford Factor is a formula commonly used in HR to measure employee absence and is a number that represents how many un-planned absences an employee has taken.

- a) **Target**  
Staff whose absence score is above 100 in any twelve-month period may be required to attend a disciplinary hearing.

The absence score system gives higher scores for frequent short absences than for longer continuous periods of absence.

- b) **Formula**  
 $O^2 \times D = \text{"Bradford Factor"}$   
 O = the number of occurrences of absence  
 D = the number of days absent  
*(Number of times absent squared multiplied by the total number of days absent)*

- i. **Example 1 - One Continuous absence of three months.**  
 1st absence for 91 days  
 $1 \times 1 \times 91 = 91$  points.  
  
 91 days continuous absence in twelve months = 91 points

ii. **Example 2** - *Frequent short absences varying in duration.*

1st absence for 3 days

1 (1<sup>st</sup> absence) x 1 (1<sup>st</sup> absence) x 3 (total days) = 3 points

2nd absence for 4 days

2 (2<sup>nd</sup> absence) x 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> absence) x 7 (total days) = 28 points

3rd absence for 2 days

3 (3<sup>rd</sup> absence) x 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> absence) x 9 (total days) = 81 points

4th absence for 1 day

4 (4<sup>th</sup> absence) x 4 (4<sup>th</sup> absence) x 10 (total days) = 160 points

10 days absence in twelve months = 160 points

iii. **Example 3** - *One short absence and one longer absence*

1st absence of 1 day

1 x 1 x 1 = 1 point

2nd absence of 25 days

2 x 2 x 26 = 104 points

26 days absence in twelve months = 104 points

In all instances of absenteeism, a Return-to-Work Interview will take place. The aim of this meeting will be to allow an informal discussion to take place to discuss the absences, which have occurred. It is the Company's policy that this meeting should be handled in an understanding and compassionate manner. It is not intended in any way to be a disciplinary interview.

Should the situation arise where the employee's attendance at work is deemed to be at an unacceptable level, the Company may, after considering all factors including any medical evidence and the employee's own views or opinions, decide to implement the Company's Absenteeism Warning Procedure.

Whilst each situation will be treated on its merits and with sensitivity, it should be recognised that frequent and persistent short-term absence may lead to disciplinary action which could eventually result in termination of employment.

The Absenteeism Warning Procedure is intended to promote consistency and fairness in the way the company controls, reviews and deals with absence/non-attendance. This system is not intended to be punitive. Its aim is to help employees to be aware of the levels of their absenteeism, and the effect that their non-attendance is having on their colleagues and upon the Company.

Once an employee's scoring is APPROACHING 100 their Line Manager at the employee's return to work interview, will advise the employee that they are reaching the unaccepted level of absence.

## 6. ABSENCE MONITORING

We will monitor the attendance records of all our employees. Review meetings will be held with individual employees in line with the following triggers:

- Three separate periods of absence within a 36-week period.
- Bradford Factor score of over 100.

## 7. REVIEW PROCEDURES

- a) The intention of the review procedure is to discuss the reason for your absence levels and to discuss ways in which your attendance can be improved. If there is no improvement, then you may be subject to disciplinary action.
- b) If you are requested to attend a review of your attendance levels, you have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a Trade Union Representative and you should make the necessary arrangements to have someone present at the meeting should you so require.

## 8. INITIAL MEETING

- a) Your manager will write to you to arrange a meeting at a convenient time, date, and venue. You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting should you so wish. You will be provided with details of your absence record prior to the meeting.
- b) At the meeting we will discuss your attendance record, the reasons for your absence/s, any help or support we can offer to improve your attendance if relevant and what improvement is necessary
- c) If the absence is likely to be continuous over a long period of time, then the procedures for dealing with Long Term Sickness (detailed below) will be followed.
- d) Should any underlying health conditions be identified, your absence will be dealt with following the guidelines for Underlying Health Conditions (detailed below).
- e) Should the meeting not highlight any underlying health conditions for your absence/s, you will be informed that your attendance levels need to improve. Review meetings will be arranged at 12 weekly intervals, following the Sporadic Absence Procedures (detailed below), until your attendance reaches an acceptable level. Should there be no improvement at the subsequent meetings, then the disciplinary process will be invoked.

## 9. LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

- a) If you are off work sick for a continuous period of 4 weeks, we will normally contact you with a view to arranging an informal welfare meeting at a convenient time, date, and location. We will meet you at your home, at work or at a location suitable to both parties. You have the right to be accompanied at informal meeting by a friend or relative if you wish.

- b) The aim of the meeting is to keep you in touch with events at work, to discuss your absence and offer any relevant support.
- c) We aim to keep in regular contact with you and hold regular meetings over your period of absence.
- d) Dependent upon the circumstances of your absence, we may, when appropriate, ask your permission to contact a medical professional for a report on your incapacity.
- e) Upon receipt of this report, we will meet again with you to discuss fully the contents of the report and any implications arising from it. We will determine what support and/or reasonable adjustments we can make to assist you in your return to work in the future.
- f) If it is evident from the report and our discussions with you, that a return to work is not possible in the foreseeable future we may have to consider dismissal, but this would be a last resort. If the decision is made to dismiss, you will be paid in lieu of notice. You will have the right to appeal against the decision if you feel it was unfair and details of how to appeal will be detailed in the dismissal letter.

#### 10. UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS

- a) If, at any time during the initial meeting or any subsequent review meeting, an underlying health condition is identified we may, dependent upon the condition, continue with the Sporadic Absence Process or we may ask your permission to contact a medical professional (either your GP, anyone else who is treating you or we may consult an Occupational Health Advisor) to determine the extent of your incapacity.
  - i. Upon receipt of this report, we would meet with you further to discuss the report and any implications arising from it. We would consider what support we could offer and any reasonable adjustments that could be made to assist your attendance at work.
  - ii. If your level of attendance is still unacceptable and we have exhausted all other viable options, we may need to consider dismissal on the grounds of ill-health, but this would be a last resort.
  - iii. If the decision is made to dismiss, you will be paid in lieu of notice. You will have the right to appeal against the decision if you feel it was unfair and details of how to appeal will be detailed in the dismissal letter.
- b) If you have been absent for a continuous period of four weeks or longer, or upon investigation it is determined that you have an underlying health condition which is affecting your ability to attend work regularly, your Manager may request a medical report to determine what help, support or reasonable adjustments may be necessary to aid your attendance at work.
  - i. A meeting will be arranged with you and your manager to discuss the report and ascertain if and when you may be fit to return to work and if

so what, if any, reasonable adjustments may be necessary to facilitate this return.

- ii. It may be necessary to hold regular meetings over a period of time to consider how your illness or condition is progressing.
- iii. Whilst it is the Company's aim to offer support and help to enable you to return to work, if no solution can be found to facilitate a return to work within an acceptable timescale, the Company may have to consider termination of employment on the grounds of incapacity.

## 11. WARNING PROCEDURE

### Stage 1

When the target of 100 "points" has accumulated, or there are three separate periods of absence within a 36-week period, an investigation into the cause of the absenteeism will take place, and may result in the employee being asked to attend a formal disciplinary hearing.

### Stage 2 - *First Formal Hearing – Possible Verbal Warning*

Once the Procedure has commenced and a verbal warning has been issued, it is in force for three months.

### Stage 3 – *Second Formal Hearing – Possible Written Warning*

In the event a further absence occurs in the rolling twelve-month period following stage 2 then a formal written warning may be issued. This warning remains in force for a period of six months. The employee will be informed at all stages that their overall attendance record is unacceptable, and if no improvement is made, this could eventually lead to termination of employment.

### Stage 4 – *Third Formal Hearing – Final Written Warning*

In the event that a further absence occurs in the rolling twelve months period following stage 3 then a formal written warning may be issued. This warning remains in force for a period of twelve months. Any further absence after this stage could result in the company terminating employment by reason of unacceptable attendance record.

## Subsequent Review Meetings

Should there be further cause for concern regarding your attendance levels, the above reviews may be continued, or the process started again.

Signed   
Authorised Signatory for EHGL

Position Group Operations Director

Date 01/09/24

Appendix A

# Return to Work Interview

This form should be completed by the manager on the employees return to work following any period of sickness.

## Personal Details

Name	Forename(s):
	Surname:

## Dates of Absence (including non-working days)

Start Date	Date:
	Time:
End Date	Date:
	Time:

## Reasons for Absence

## Fit for Return?

Yes:  No:  Please give details:

## Comments

What actions has the employee agreed to in order to avoid further absence & any employer action?

BRADFORD FACTOR SCORE	<input type="text"/>	No. Absences in 36-weeks	<input type="text"/>
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Employee Signature:	<input type="text"/>	Date:	<input type="text"/>
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Manager Signature:	<input type="text"/>	Date:	<input type="text"/>
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Appendix B

# Sickness Self-Certification Absence

This form should be completed by the employee on your return to work following any period of sickness. If you are returning to work after a period of sickness of more than 7 calendar days a medical certificate or certificates should already have been provided to cover the period of absence more than these first seven days.

Personal Details			
Name	Forename(s):		
	Surname:		
Dates of Sickness (including non-working days)			
These dates may include when you attended work but still felt unwell.			
Start Date	Date:	End Date	Date:
	Time:		Time:
Dates of Absence			
Start Date	Date:	End Date	Date:
	Time:		Time:
Details of Sickness Injury			
Did you consult a doctor			
YES   NO			
If YES please give details of: Doctor's name, address, date of visit, treatment received and any current treatment. If NO, please state why not:			
Declaration (please read this carefully before signing this form)			
I certify that I was incapable of work because of my sickness/injury on the dates shown above and that this information is true and accurate.			
I acknowledge that false information will result in disciplinary action.			
I hereby give my employer permission to verify the above information.			
Employee Signature:			Date: