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## Sickness Absence Policy

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### SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETINGS PROCEDURE

#### STAGE 1 - SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

The purposes of a first sickness absence meeting may include:

Discussing the reasons for absence;

- Where you are on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last;
- Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences;
- Considering whether medical advice is required;
- Considering what, if any, measures might improve your health and/or attendance; and/or
- Reaching agreement on a way forward, including any action that will be taken (and if so, then by whom). This should include a time-scale for review and/or a further meeting under the *Sickness Absence Procedure*.

#### STAGE 2 – A FURTHER SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

Depending on the matters discussed at the first stage of the sickness absence procedure, a further meeting or meetings may be necessary. Arrangements for meetings under the second stage of the sickness absence procedure will follow the procedure set out above for other sickness absence meetings.

The purposes of further meeting(s) may include:

- Discussing the reasons for and impact of your ongoing absence(s);
- Where you are on long-term sickness absence, discussing how long your absence is likely to last;
- Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, discussing the likelihood of further absences;
- If it has not been obtained, considering whether medical advice is required. If it has been obtained, considering the advice that has been given and whether further advice is required;
- Considering your ability to return to/remain in your job in view both of your capabilities and our business needs and any adjustments that can reasonably be made to your job to enable you to do so;

- Considering possible redeployment opportunities and whether any adjustments can reasonably be made to assist in redeploying you;
- Where you are able to return from long-term sick leave, to discuss the content of a return to work programme;
- If it is considered that you are unlikely to be able to return to work from long-term absence, whether there are any benefits for which you should be considered;
- Reaching agreement on a way forward, including any action that will be taken (and if so, then by whom). This should include a time-scale for review and/or a further meeting under the Sickness Absence Procedure. This may, depending on steps we have already taken, include warning you that you are at risk of dismissal.

### STAGE 3 - FINAL SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, we may invite you to a meeting under the third stage of the sickness absence procedure. Arrangements for meetings under the third stage of the sickness absence procedure will follow the procedure set out above for other sickness absence meetings.

The purposes of this meeting will be:

- To review the meetings that have taken place and matters discussed with you;
- Where you remain on long-term sickness absence to consider whether there have been any changes since the last meeting under stage two of the procedure; either as regards your possible return to work or opportunities for return or redeployment;
- To consider any further matters that you wish to raise;
- To consider whether there is a reasonable likelihood of you returning to work or achieving the desired level of attendance in a reasonable time; and
- To consider the possible termination of your employment;
- Termination on the grounds of incapacity will normally be with notice, or a payment in lieu of notice, in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment.

## APPEALS

You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure. As with any formal meeting under the Sickness Absence Procedure, you may bring a companion to an appeal meeting.

An appeal should be made in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to the Personnel Manager within 7 days of the date on which you received the decision. Unless it is not practicable, you will be given written notice of an appeal meeting within one week of the meeting. In cases of dismissal the appeal will be held as soon as possible. Any new matters raised in an appeal may delay an appeal meeting if further investigation is required.

You will be provided with written details of any new information which comes to light before an appeal meeting. You will also be given a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the meeting.

Where practicable, an appeal meeting will be conducted by a director or manager who is senior to the individual who conducted the Sickness Absence Meeting.

Depending on the grounds of appeal, an appeal meeting may be a complete rehearing of the matter or a review of the original decision.

Following an appeal, we may confirm, revoke or vary the original decision. This final decision will be confirmed in writing, if possible within 7 of days of the appeal meeting. There will be no further right of appeal. The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.

## OBTAINING MEDICAL EVIDENCE

As part of the Sickness Absence Meetings process, you may be asked to consult your doctor to see if any medical treatment is considered necessary or advisable in the circumstances.

When repeated periods of sickness occur in any 12 month period, we may ask you to obtain a Private Medical certificate from your Doctor (at the Company's expense), even if those absences are not, individually, for five consecutive working days. You must make this certificate available to the Management at the earliest possible opportunity.

KPP may also ask you for permission to approach your doctor for a report on the nature of your problem(s) as well as some recommendations for you and the company to follow in order to promote your rehabilitation.

KPP may also ask you to undergo a private medical examination with an Occupational Health or other specialist (e.g. a consultant psychiatrist in cases of long-term depression) at the Company's expense, to obtain a separate, independent medical opinion to determine the nature and extent of the employee's problem(s) and his/her fitness to perform his/her contractual obligations.

If an employee refuses to co-operate in providing medical evidence or refuses to undergo an independent medical examination, a decision will be taken about the employee's future employment on the basis of the information available at the time. We may also take disciplinary action against the employee concerned for refusing to obey a lawful instruction (See Appendix III).

In the event of any employee experiencing minor illness at work and having to leave work before the end of their normal working day, it will be their personal responsibility to arrange transport home.

If an employee is unable to return home independently, they are asked to make enquiries regarding the possibility of being collected by a relative, friend or neighbour.

If it is not possible to arrange collection in this way, transport will be arranged but employees may be asked to make a contribution towards the cost of this transport.

### TIME KEEPING; APPLYING FOR LEAVE; UN-AUTHORISED ABSENCE;

Your normal hours of work are listed in your terms and conditions of employment and you are expected to present yourself in plenty of time to enable you to start work at the pre-stated time. You should not leave your post until your stated finishing time.

You should ensure that any work in hand at the end of your working period is left in a satisfactory state or completed before you leave.

All work areas, benches etc. should be clean and tidy before employees leave at the end of the day.

Lateness for work will result in your wages or salary being reduced according to Time & Attendance rules. Persistent lateness will invoke the company *Disciplinary Procedure* (See Appendix III).

You may not leave work before your normal finishing time without prior permission. Having obtained permission for time away from work during the normal working period you must report to your Supervisor or Manager (as appropriate) before leaving and upon returning to work.

An unpaid break of 15 minutes is allowed during the morning work period. It should be noted that this is the time allowed from stopping work to the time of re-starting work. Exceeding the permitted time away from work may result in disciplinary action. The morning break is generally taken from 10.00 to 10.15 a.m.

Lunch breaks may be taken at the time, and for the time, allotted by the management as noted in this manual. Lunch break is normally taken from 12.30 to 1.00 p.m.

Where the reason and timing of your absence is known prior to the absence occurring, a completed Leave Application form should be completed in advance. Your immediate Supervisor or Manager should be informed about the proposed leave and the completed application form passed for approval.

Approval of any application for leave will only be granted after considering the terms and conditions of your employment, the workload at that time and the number of other staff who are already booked for leave at the same time.

If it is not possible to approve an application for leave or approval must be delayed for any reason, you will be informed about the reason(s) for this. However, in certain circumstances, you may be asked to re-consider your application or asked to amend requested date(s) etc.

If you require leave for an important occasion, it is essential that you apply for the period of leave giving as much notice as possible even if the booking is initially made on a provisional basis.

When considering the booking of a holiday, flights etc. **please do not confirm bookings, dates, tickets etc. without having first received approval for the period of leave.**

After the initial approval leave applications will be entered in the Leave and Sickness computerised log.

While every effort is made to grant employees leave at the time of their choice, this cannot be guaranteed due to the needs of the business. If an application for leave is refused and the period of leave is still taken under these circumstances, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

The reasons for repeated absences will be monitored in order to maintain our policy of care for our employees and in order to help employees overcome any personal difficulties and problems which are preventing them attending for work on a regular, punctual basis.

Each case of unauthorised absence will be considered on its merits. Absenteeism which appears unreasonable or unwarranted will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the established procedures.

Management reserves the right to suspend leave accrual during extended periods of unpaid leave. Accrual of leave will be suspended during periods of unauthorised absence.

## TIME OFF FOR PUBLIC DUTIES

We wish to enable staff to perform any public duties that they may be committed to undertake, and so will give them time off to do so where it does not conflict with the operational needs of our business. We are not obliged to grant staff paid leave for these purposes. The circumstances in which we are prepared to do so are set out below.

## JURY SERVICE

You should tell your Manager as soon as you are summoned for jury service and provide a copy of your summons if requested. Depending on the demands of our business we may request that you apply to be excused from or defer your jury service.

Employers are not required to pay staff while they are absent on jury service. You will be advised at court of the expenses and loss of earnings that you can claim. We pay basic pay to staff who are doing jury service (less any amounts you can claim from the court for lost earnings), for up to 5 working days. Payment for time off beyond 5 working days may be paid at our discretion.

## VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SERVICE

Employees are entitled to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to carry out certain public duties. "Public Service Duties" includes service as a:

- Tribunal member;
- Magistrate;
- Local councillor;
- Member of an NHS Trust;
- Prison visitor;
- Lay visitor to police stations; or
- School governor

If you are unsure whether a public service that you perform is covered by this policy, you should speak to the Personnel Manager.

As soon as you are aware that you will require time off for performance of a public service you should notify the Personnel Manager in writing, providing full details of the time off that is being requested and the reasons for your request. In order that arrangements can be made to cover your duties in your absence you should make your request in good time.

We will agree to requests for time off to undertake public duties wherever reasonably possible (having regard to the criteria set out in this policy). If it is not possible to accept a request, you will be given written reasons for our decision.

Each request for time off will be considered on its merits, in the circumstances in which it is made including:

- Whether the activity is reasonable in relation to your employment;
- How much time off is reasonably required for the duty in question;
- How much time off you have already taken for this public duty; and
- How your absence will affect our business.

## RESERVE FORCES DUTIES

We are aware that members of the Reserve Forces (the Territorial Army, Royal Navy Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve or Royal Auxiliary Air Force) may be called-up at any time to be used on full-time operations and will be expected to attend regular training.

We are under no obligation to offer leave (either paid or unpaid) for reservist staff to undertake training and expect existing holiday entitlement to be used to meet reservist commitments. In exceptional circumstances we may, at our discretion, grant additional leave (either paid or unpaid) for these commitments to be met.

If we receive notice that you have been called-up we may apply to an adjudication officer for the notice to be deferred or revoked if your absence would cause serious harm to our business (which could not be prevented by the grant of financial assistance).

Once your military service has ended you may submit a written application for reinstatement to your employment. This should be made by the third Monday following the end of your military service and you should notify us of the date on which you will be available to restart work.

If it is not reasonable and practicable to reinstate you into your former employment then, as far as is reasonably practicable, we shall offer you the next most suitable alternative employment that we have.

## SICKNESS

In the case of sickness, accident or other emergency, the company should be notified at the earliest opportunity and, at the latest, within one hour following your normal start time unless there are very exceptional circumstances.

Failure to give such notification may result in disciplinary action in accordance with established procedures or the absence being interpreted as unauthorised absence without pay.

It is your responsibility to keep the company advised of the circumstances which are preventing you from attending for work.

You should advise us of the date when you or your doctor consider it likely that you will be fit to resume work. If you are unable to do this, you will need to telephone each day you are absent from work to keep us advised as to the circumstances which are preventing you from attending work.

If you are unable to return at the time previously indicated, please let us know immediately and inform us of a revised return date.

On your return to work after a period of sickness you are required to fill out a Sickness Absence Record Form handing this into your manager on the day of your return. This is our approved form for self-certification of absence for periods of from one to seven days.

If you obtain Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or other benefits fraudulently, you may be investigated or prosecuted by the Department for Work and Pensions. You will also face disciplinary action from KPP, which could lead to summary dismissal even for a first offence.

If the absence for sickness exceeds 7 calendar days, you must obtain a medical certificate(s) from a medical practitioner to cover the duration of the absence. All such certificates should be forwarded to your Manager at the earliest possible opportunity.

Absence on the grounds of sickness for a period of 24 hours immediately preceding or following a statutory public holiday or period of leave will be treated as unauthorised unless supported by a Medical Certificate or authorised Sickness Absence Record Form.

Statutory Sick Pay will be payable as outlined in your terms and conditions of employment. SSP will not be paid under any circumstances unless supported by a fully completed signed Sickness Absence Record form and/or a Medical Practitioner's certificate

## SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETINGS PROCEDURE

We may apply this procedure whenever we consider it necessary, including, for example, if you:

- Have been absent due to illness on three or more occasions in the previous 12 months;
- Have discussed matters at a return to work interview that require investigation; and/or
- Have been absent for more than 20 days in any rolling three-month period.

We follow this policy in order to help employees overcome any personal difficulties and problems which are preventing them attending for work on a regular, punctual basis, by providing monitoring, counselling and access to medical advice. However there may be cases in which an employee is no longer able to carry out their duties due to long-term illness, in which we may have to consider making reasonable adjustments to the employee's work and/or redeployment to another role and/or dismissal due to incapacity. See Appendix II for further details.

Unless it is impractical to do so, we will give you 7 days' written notice of the date, time and place of a sickness absence meeting. We will put any concerns about your sickness absence and the basis for those concerns in writing or otherwise advise why the meeting is being called. We shall give you a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before your meeting.

The meeting will be conducted by your Manager or Senior Manager where appropriate. The Personnel Manager may also be in attendance. You may bring a companion with you to the meeting). You must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. Failure to do so without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If you or your companion are unable to attend at the time specified you should immediately inform the Personnel Manager, who will seek to agree an alternative time.

A meeting may be adjourned if we are awaiting receipt of information, or we need to gather any further information or consider matters discussed at a previous meeting. You will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the meeting is reconvened.



Confirmation of any decision made at a meeting, the reasons for it, and of the right of appeal will be given to you in writing within 5 working days of a sickness absence meeting (unless this time scale is not practicable, in which case it will be provided as soon as is practicable).

If management considers, at any time, that you have taken or are taking sickness absence when you are not unwell, they may refer matters to be dealt with under our *Disciplinary Procedure* (See Policy).

#### RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED AT MEETINGS

you may bring a companion to any meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up your position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during a meeting.

Your companion may be either a trade union representative or a fellow member of staff. Their identity must be confirmed to the Personnel Manager in good time before it takes place. Members of staff are allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion. However, they are not obliged to act as a companion and may decline a request if they so wish.

Some companions may not be allowed: for example, anyone who may have a conflict of interest, or whose presence may prejudice a meeting. Companions should not normally work at another site, unless no-one reasonably suitable is available at the site at which you work.

We may in exceptional circumstances, at our discretion, permit a companion who is not a member of staff or union representative, such as a family member. We shall only do this where it is necessary to help overcome difficulties caused by a disability, or difficulty understanding English.