

Sickness Absence Policy

About this policy

1. This Full Fat Sickness Absence Policy sets out our procedures for reporting sickness absence in a fair and consistent way.
2. Sickness absence can vary from short intermittent periods of ill-health to a continuous period of long-term absence and have a number of different causes.
3. Full Fat wants to ensure that reasons for sickness absence are completely understood in each case and are investigated where necessary.
4. Where reasonably possible, measures will be taken to assist those who have been absent by reason of sickness to return to work.
5. This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers.
6. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.
7. This policy has been agreed following consultation with the Board & Partners at Full Fat.

Who is responsible for this policy?

1. The board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
2. Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.
3. This policy is reviewed annually by the board.
4. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the senior management team.



Disabilities & medical conditions

1. Full Fat is aware that sickness absence may result from a disability or medical conditions. At each stage of the sickness absence meetings procedure (set out below) we will give particular consideration to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of a job or aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work or assist a return to work.
2. If you consider that you are affected by a disability or medical condition which affects your ability to undertake your work, you should inform your line manager or a member of the senior management team.
 - a. Any information you provide will be handled in a confidential manner and proceed in accordance without Data Protection Policy.

Sickness absence reporting procedure

1. If you are taken ill or injured while at work you should report or be taken to the one of the senior management team.
2. Managers should contact to make arrangements for anyone who is unwell to be accompanied home or to receive medical treatment where necessary.
3. If you cannot attend work because you are ill or injured you should telephone your line manager as early as possible or before 9:30am, the following details should be provided:
 - a. The nature of your illness or injury
 - b. The expected length of your absence from work
 - c. Your contact details should they differ from what is on file
 - d. Any outstanding or urgent work to be handed over



4. If you are absent for seven days or under, we require you to submit a Self-Certification Form, which is available to download from the Full Fat Handbook or from your line manager

Line Manager reporting procedure

1. Any sickness absence that is notified to you as a manager is recorded and reported to one of the senior management team
2. Arrangements are made, where necessary to cover work and to inform colleagues and clients (confidentially must be maintained at all times)
3. As a line manager you are expected to contact the employee during their sickness absence to inquire after their health and to be advised if possible on their expected return date.
4. Update your Timetastic with your days taken ill.

Evidence of incapacity

1. For sickness absence of seven or less calendar days you must complete a self-certification form which is available from the Full Fat handbook or from your line manager
2. For absence more than seven calendar days you must obtain a certificate from your doctor. This is known as a 'statement of Fitness for Work', stating that you are not fit for work and the reasons why.
 - a. Once the statement of fitness for work has been received please send this to your line manager as soon as possible
 - b. If your absence continues, we may require you to provide further medical certificates to cover the whole period of absence
3. If your doctor provides a certificate stating that you 'may be fit for work' you should inform your line manager.
 - a. We will discuss with you any additional measures that may be need to facilitate your return to work in a interview



- b. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, you will remain on sick leave and we will set a review date for the situation
- 4. If we are concerned about the reason for your absence, we may require further medical certificates for each absence regardless of duration.

Unauthorised absence

- 1. Cases of unauthorised absence will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy.
- 2. If you do not report for work and have not telephoned your line manager or one of the senior management team members to explain the reason for your absence, your line manager will try to contact you. This is not treated as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.

Sick Pay

- 1. You may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you satisfy the relevant statutory requirements. Qualifying days for SSP are Monday to Friday.
- 2. The rate of SSP is set by the government in April each year.
 - a. No SSP is payable for the first three consecutive days of absence.
 - b. It starts on the fourth day of absence and may be payable for up to 28 weeks. If you are not eligible for SSP or if your SSP entitlement is coming to an end we will give you a form SSP1 telling you the reasons.
- 3. After you have completed your probationary period you will be entitled to receive your full salary during any periods of sickness absence up to a maximum of one calendar week in any 12-week period.
- 4. If you have been on long term sick leave continuously for more than a year you will not qualify for Company sick pay again until you have returned to work for a total of 26 weeks.



5. If a period of sickness absence is or appears to be occasioned by actionable negligence, nuisance or breach of any statutory duty on the part of a third party, in respect of which damages are or may be recoverable, you must immediately notify a member of the senior management team of that fact and of any claim, compromise, settlement or judgment made or awarded in connection with it and all relevant particulars that we may reasonably require. If we require you to do so, you must cooperate in any related legal proceedings and refund to us that part of any damages or compensation you recover that relates to lost earnings for the period of sickness absence as we may reasonably determine, less any costs you incurred in connection with the recovery of such damages or compensation, provided that the amount to be refunded to us shall not exceed the total amount we paid to you in respect of the period of sickness absence.
6. Any employer and employee pension contributions will continue subject to the relevant scheme rules during any period of company sick pay or SSP.

Sick leave and holidays

1. To be able to claim company sick pay you must notify your manager of your incapacity immediately, and the usual requirements for medical evidence in this policy will also apply, even if you are abroad.
2. If you are on sick leave you may choose to cancel any pre-arranged annual leave that would otherwise coincide with your sick leave. You should notify your manager as soon as possible that you wish to do this.



Keeping in contact

1. If you are absent on sick leave you should expect to be contacted from time to time by your line manager or a member of the senior management team in order to discuss your wellbeing, expected length of continued absence from work and any of your work that requires attention. Such contact is intended to provide reassurance and will be kept to a reasonable minimum.
2. If you have any concerns while absent on sick leave, whether about the reason for your absence or your ability to return to work, you should contact your line manager or member of the senior management team.

Medical examinations

1. We may, at any time in operating this policy, require you to consent to a medical examination by a doctor nominated by us.
2. You will be asked to agree that any report produced in connection with any such examination may be disclosed to us and that we may discuss the contents of the report with the relevant doctor.

Return to work interviews

1. If you have been absent on sick leave for 14 working days we will arrange for you to have a return-to-work interview with your line manager and a member of the senior management team.
2. A return-to-work interview enables us to confirm the details of your absence. It also gives you the opportunity to raise any concerns or



questions you may have, and to bring any relevant matters to our attention.

3. Where your doctor has provided a certificate stating that you "may be fit for work" we will usually hold a return-to-work interview to discuss any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate your return to work
4. We are committed to helping members of staff return to work from long-term sickness absence. As part of our sickness absence meetings procedure (see below), we will, where appropriate and possible, support returns to work by:
 - a. Obtaining medical advice
 - b. Making reasonable adjustments to the workplace or working practices
 - c. Agreeing a return-to-work programme with everyone affected
5. If you are unable to return to work in the longer term, we will consider whether you are entitled to any benefits under your contract.

Sickness absence meetings procedure

1. We may apply this procedure whenever we consider it necessary
2. Unless it is impractical to do so, we will give you two 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.
3. The meeting will be conducted by your line manager and or a member of the senior management team. You may bring a companion with you to the meeting who may be either a union representative or a colleague or a friend.
 - a. The details of your companion must be given to your line manager or a member of the senior management team well in advance of the meeting



- b. Your companion may ask questions and sum up your position but will not be allowed to answer questions on your behalf
- 4. You must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. Failure to do so without good reason may be treated as misconduct.
- 5. 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 five 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).

Stage 1: First sickness absence meeting

- 1. The purposes of a first sickness absence meeting may include:
 - a. Discussing the reasons for absence.
 - b. Where you are on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last.
 - c. Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences.
 - d. Considering whether medical advice is required.
 - e. Consider what, if any, measures might improve your health and/or attendance.
 - f. Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting under the sickness absence procedure.

Stage 2: further sickness absence meeting(s)

- 1. The purposes of further meeting(s) may include:
 - a. Discussing the reasons for and impact of your ongoing absence(s).
 - b. Where you are on long-term sickness absence, discussing how long your absence is likely to last.



- c. Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, discussing the likelihood of further absences.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. Considering possible redeployment opportunities and whether any adjustments can reasonably be made to assist in redeploying you.
- g. Where you are able to return from long-term sick leave, whether to your job or a redeployed job, agreeing to a return-to-work programme.
- h. 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.
- i. Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting(s). 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

- 1. 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.
- 2. The purposes of the meeting will be:
 - a. To review the meetings that have taken place and matters discussed with you.



- b. 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.
- c. To consider any further matters that you wish to raise.
- d. To consider whether there is a reasonable likelihood of you returning to work or achieving the desired level of attendance in a reasonable time.
- e. To consider the possible termination of your employment.
 - i. Termination will normally be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Appeal(s)

1. You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure and you may bring a companion to an appeal meeting.
2. An appeal should be made in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to your line manager or a member of the senior management team within two days of the date on which the decision was sent to you.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Depending on the circumstances, an appeal meeting may be a complete rehearing of the matter or a review of the original decision.
6. The final decision will be confirmed in writing, if possible within one week of the appeal meeting. There will be no further right of appeal.



7. 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.

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