

Sickness absence policy

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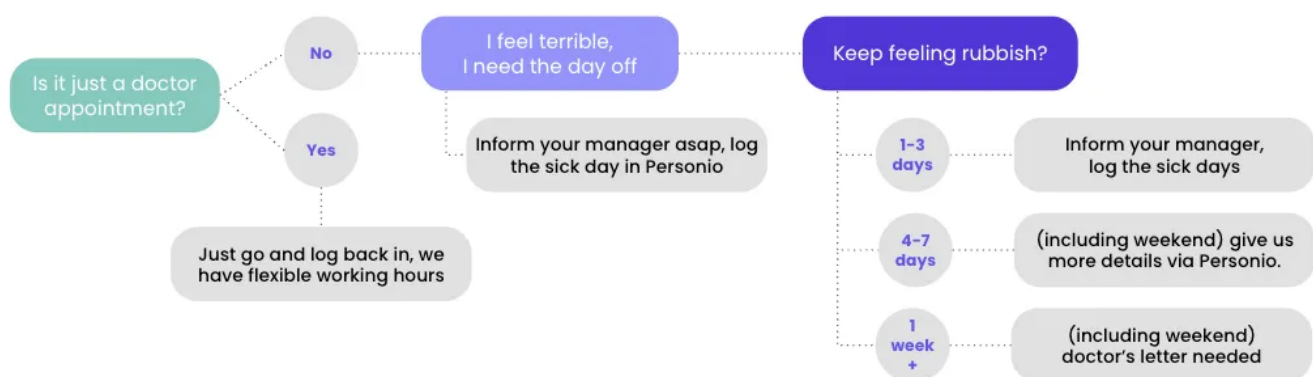
About this policy

This policy sets out our procedures for reporting sickness absence and for the management of sickness absence in a fair and consistent way. 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 (e.g. injuries, recurring conditions or serious illness requiring lengthy treatment).

This policy applies to all employees but does not apply to agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors. Any information you provide to us about your health will be processed in accordance with our employee privacy policy. We recognise such data is sensitive and will handle it in a confidential manner.

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.

The easy bits:



In any sickness case, your Manager must be informed!

If your manager is not there, reach out to [People team].

Sick pay entitlement

We believe in supporting our people as we can. For this reason, each employee is entitled to [insert your timeframe] of normal pay when on extended sick leave.

After these two weeks

You may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you satisfy the relevant statutory requirements.

You qualify for SSP if you have been sick for 7 or more days in a row (including non-working days) – known as a ‘period of incapacity for work’. SSP will be given for qualifying days (your normal working days)

The rate of SSP is set by the government in April each year and it 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. If you want to know more about SSP please speak with your manager.

Any employer and employee pension contributions will continue subject to the relevant scheme rules during any period of company sick pay or SSP.

Note: If a pattern of continual sickness arises, the HR team may reach out to understand the situation.

Sickness absence reporting procedure

If you are ill or injured while at work you should report this to your manager and ask for permission to leave work. Managers should take appropriate steps to make arrangements for anyone who is unwell where necessary.

If you cannot attend work because you are ill or injured you should normally contact (using your usual method of communication) your manager as early as possible each day that you are sick (unless otherwise formally agreed) and no later than 30 minutes after the time when you are normally expected to start work. The following details should be provided:

- 1.** The nature of your illness or injury.

2. The expected length of your absence from work.
3. Contact details.
4. Any outstanding or urgent work that requires attention.

Your manager should ensure that any sickness absence that is notified to them is recorded and arrangements are made, where necessary to cover work and to inform colleagues and clients while maintaining confidentiality to the greatest extent possible.

Evidence of incapacity

→ For sickness absence of up to three days you do not need to provide any medical evidence to us.

→ For absences of between four and seven calendar days you must submit your sick leave (with details) via [insetr people management software] with details provided in the comment section. If in doubt, contact the People team.

→ For absences of more than seven days (inclusive of weekends) you must provide a medical certificate from a doctor, nurse, occupational therapist, pharmacist or physiotherapist (a "Statement of Fitness for Work") stating that you are not fit for work and the reason(s) why.

This should be forwarded to your manager as soon as possible. If your absence continues, further medical certificates must be provided to cover the whole period of absence.

If your medical professional provides a certificate stating that you "may be fit for work" you should inform your manager immediately. We will discuss with you any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate your return to work, taking account of your doctor's advice. This may take place at a return-to-work interview (see below). If appropriate measures cannot be taken, you will remain on sick-leave and we will set a date to review the situation.

Where we are concerned about the reason for absence, or frequent short-term absence, we may require a medical certificate for each absence regardless of duration. In such circumstances, we will cover any costs incurred in obtaining such medical certificates, for absences of a week or less, on production of a doctor's invoice.

Unauthorised absence

Cases of unauthorised absence will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Absences that have not been notified according to our absence reporting procedures will be treated as unauthorised absences.

Disabilities

We are aware that sickness absence may result from a disability. At each stage of the sickness absence meetings procedure (set out below in this policy) particular consideration will be given to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of a job or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and/or assist a return to work.

If you consider that you are affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects your ability to undertake work, you should inform your manager. Any information you provide will be handled in a confidential manner and proceed in accordance with our employee privacy policy.

Keeping in contact during sickness absence

If you are absent on sick leave you should expect to be contacted from time to time by your manager 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.

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 feel free to contact your manager or the People team at any time.

Medical examinations

We may, at any time in operating this policy, require you to consent to a medical examination by a doctor nominated by us at our expense.

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.

If you have been absent on sick leave for more than 7 days we will arrange for you to have a return to work interview with your manager. This enables us to confirm the details of your

absence and it also gives you the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions you may have and to bring any relevant matters to our attention.

Returning to work from long-term sickness absence

We are committed to helping employees 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:

1. Obtaining medical advice;
2. Making reasonable adjustments to the workplace, working practices and working hours;
3. Considering redeployment; and/or
4. Agreeing a return-to-work programme with everyone affected.

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 and/or any insurance schemes we operate.

Sickness absence meetings procedure

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

1. Have been absent due to illness on a number of occasions (in general three or more absences within a 12 month period);
2. Have discussed matters at a return-to-work interview that require investigation; and/or
3. Have been absent for more than 7 days.

Unless it is impractical to do so, we will give you 5 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. A reasonable opportunity for you to consider this information before a meeting will be provided.

The meeting will be conducted by your manager. You may bring a companion with you to the meeting. This can either be a trade union representative (if applicable) or a colleague.

Their details must be given to the manager conducting the meeting, in good time before it takes place. Employees are allowed reasonable time off 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 wish. We may at our discretion allow other companions (family members etc.) where this will help overcome difficulties caused by a disability, or difficulty understanding English. 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 however confer privately with your companion during the meeting.

You must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. Failure to do so without good reason must be treated as misconduct. If you are unable to attend you must immediately inform your manager who will seek to agree an alternative time.

A meeting may be adjourned if your manager is awaiting receipt of information, needs to gather any further information or give consideration to matters discussed at a previous meeting. You will be given 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 7 days of a sickness absence meeting (unless this is impracticable, in which case it will be provided as soon as is practicable).

If at any time your manager considers 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 policy.

Stage 1: Sickness absence meeting

The purposes of a first sickness absence meeting may include:

1. Discussing the reasons for absence.
2. Where you are on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last.
3. Where you have been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences.
4. Considering whether medical advice is required.

5. Considering what, if any, measures might improve your health and/or attendance.

6. Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting under the sickness absence procedure. This will be confirmed in writing.

Stage 2: Further sickness absence meetings(s)

Depending on the matters discussed at the first stage of the sickness absence procedure, a further meeting or meetings may be necessary.

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, whether to your job or a redeployed job, agreeing 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.
 - Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting(s), confirmed in writing. This may, depending on steps we have already taken, include warning you that you are at risk of dismissal.
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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.

The purposes of the 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.

To consider the possible termination of your employment.

Should termination be the appropriate outcome it will normally be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Appeals

You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure and you may bring a companion to an appeal meeting. The appeal must include the grounds and what redress is being sought. Grounds for an appeal will be:

- a.** New information is available not previously taken into account;
- b.** The process for considering sickness absence was flawed and did not correctly follow the Company's policies and procedures;
- c.** The decision made during the procedure was not a decision that could reasonably have been made on the basis of the information available.

An appeal should be made in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to your manager within 7 days of the date on which the decision was sent to you.

Unless it is not practicable, you will be given written notice of an appeal meeting within one week of the appeal being made. 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 manager senior to the individual who conducted the sickness absence meeting.

The appeal process will be a review of the original decision based upon the grounds of appeal.

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.

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.