

Absence from Work Policy

The Company aims to secure the attendance of all employees throughout the working week and recognises that a certain level of absence may be necessary due to sickness or absence due to a domestic crisis. The following policy outlines the notification procedure, sick pay entitlement, other absences and general rules, which must be adhered to. Payment under this policy will be subject to the full terms and conditions of the policy being met.

PROCEDURE

Absence Notification

On the first morning of absence, you must contact your line manager at the earliest possible opportunity and as close to your normal start time as possible. If the illness is of a minor nature, you should indicate when you believe you will be fit to return to work.

Your absence will be recorded on the HR Cascade system which will trigger an e-mail to you requesting that you complete a self-certificate immediately upon your return to work. Only once HR are in receipt of the completed self-certificate will your record be closed out.

For any absence of five working days or less, you are required to contact the Company on a daily basis in accordance with the reporting procedure set out above. The self-certificate can only be used to cover the first seven calendar days of an absence; thereafter a medical certificate must be provided. Should the absence be for a period in excess of seven calendar days, you are required as an absolute minimum to contact your line manager on a weekly basis, in order to provide an update on your sickness absence.

Statements of fitness for work (previously known as a medical certificate) must be provided to cover any sickness in excess of seven calendar days and must continue to cover all sickness absence. Neither private certificates nor backdated certificates are acceptable. Because there is a limit on the amount of self-certificated illness which will be paid, a statement of fitness for work should be obtained and forwarded to the Human Resources Department as quickly as possible. In any event, this should be no later than the end of the calendar week in respect of which the statement applies. Each subsequent statement of fitness for work must be forwarded in the same manner.

Either self-certification forms or statements of fitness for work should be provided to cover each day of the entire period of absence. All statement of fitness for work should be consecutive in order to ensure there is no break in cover. Failure to cover every day of the absence could result in no pay for the days not covered.

If the statement of fitness for work indicates an earlier return may be possible if suggestions given by the doctor/GP are followed, then you must arrange to discuss this as soon as possible with your line manager. For further details see the guidance note below.

For long-term absence or frequent periods of absence, the Company may request further information from your doctor or alternatively request that you visit a doctor selected by the Company to undergo a medical examination. The Company will meet the cost of any such examination, and you are required to co-operate in the disclosure of all results and reports to the Company. During this absence you may be required to attend review meetings with your manager.

Prior to returning to work you must contact your line manager to advise on the proposed date of your return. Should you feel fit enough to return to work prior to the expiry of your last statement of fitness for work, we ask that you discuss this with your doctor and your line manager.

Your line manager may conduct a return to work interview upon your return to work.

The Company reserves the right to withhold payment where the procedure outlined above has not been followed, or where the required certification has not been provided.

Guidance Note on Statements of Fitness to Work

A statement of fitness for work will advise whether the employee is “unfit for work” or “may be fit for work taking account of the following advice”. If the latter, the doctor will have the opportunity to suggest ways of helping the employee to get back to work. This might include phased return to work, altered hours, amended duties and/or workplace adaptations.

The purpose is not to try to get people back to work before they are ready, but for the individual and the Company to work together to find an arrangement that suits both parties and minimise unnecessary time off work. We will seek to facilitate a return to work as early as possible. However, the Company is not obliged to follow the doctor’s advice if the options are not reasonable or not in the best interests of the business.

Sick Pay Entitlement

The sick pay year runs from 1st January to 31st December and the maximum entitlement to sick pay in any one year is dependent on length of service on the first day of sickness. The maximum entitlement is as follows

Less than 6 months	2 weeks	(including 5 days self-certificated)
At least 6 months but less than 12 months	4 weeks	(including 5 days self-certificated)
At least 1 year but less than 3 years	8 weeks	(including 10 days self-certificated)
At least 3 years but less than 6 years	12 weeks	(including 10 days self-certificated)
6 years or more	26 weeks	(including 10 days self-certificated)

The entitlement during the first 12 months is not cumulative - there is a maximum of 4 weeks’ sick pay during the first year and this includes 5 days’ self-certification.

The number of days entitlement is calculated by multiplying the number of weeks by the number of days each week which an employee is contracted to work.

Company Sick Pay (CSP) is inclusive of any Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) entitlement. Where an employee exhausts CSP, SSP is paid by the Company subject to statutory regulations and adherence to Company policy. SSP is paid up to a maximum entitlement of 28 weeks.

Other Absences

If you intend to be absent or late for work for any reason other than sickness, you must contact your line manager immediately to inform them of the situation. Should your situation be ongoing you must continue to keep your line manager fully advised during this period.

Payment for absence other than sickness will be dependent on the reason for the absence and is subject to management approval. Employees will normally be expected to take holiday to cover such absences.

General Rules

- 1) If sickness commences in one calendar year and continues into the next, an employee's entitlement is that which applied at the commencement of the period of sickness.
- 2) Where a period of absence follows an anniversary at which point the entitlement increases, it is higher of the two entitlements, which applies for that year.
- 3) Where an employee exhausts the full sick pay entitlement, he/she will not re-qualify for payment for a further three months.

- 4) The Company may at its discretion refer an employee's case to an Occupational Health Advisor for independent medical opinion / advice.
- 5) Payment for sickness may be withheld where
 - a) The notification procedure is not followed, or the correct certification is not provided.
 - b) The Company has reasonable doubt of the validity of the absence. Please note that any attempt by the employee to misinform the Company to obtain payment will be treated as theft and the employee will be liable to summary dismissal.
 - c) Following the date of refusal, if an employee has withheld permission for the Company to contact his/her doctor concerning the absence.
 - d) The absence resulted from self-inflicted injury or recovery has been delayed by the employee's actions.
 - e) The Company considers that the scheme is being abused.
 - f) Where an absence precedes or follows a bank holiday.
- 6) Where an employee is absent as a result of an injury and subsequently receives an award for that injury, the amount of sick pay received during that absence is refundable to the Company.
- 7) Where an employee's attendance record is significantly worse than those of comparable employees, where this creates a particular operational difficulty, or it has gone on for a considerable length of time, the employment of that employee may be at risk by reason of capability.
- 8) If an employee has a continuous period of long-term sickness, which carries into a different leave year, an employee will be eligible to take accrued holiday from that previous year upon their return. The carry-over of holiday under these circumstances only applies to statutory holiday and not to additional contractual holiday. A deadline will be set by the Company by which this accrued holiday must be taken. Please be aware however, that an employee will be given the option of taking annual leave during their period of absence, subject to agreement by the Company.
- 9) An employee who leaves the Company following a period of long-term sickness, (and without returning to work) will be eligible to receive payment for outstanding holiday, including any untaken holiday from a previous leave year, where the illness has prevented them doing so. Payment in relation to holiday from a previous year will apply to statutory holidays only and not to additional contractual holiday over and above the statutory minimum. The exception to this rule is where an employee is / has been in receipt of Permanent Health Insurance cover.
- 10) An employee who fails to comply with notification or certification procedures or who otherwise abuses the Company's rules on absence, (including sickness absence), may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.

The Company reserves the right at any time to vary the benefits and conditions set out in this document. Any such variation will be incorporated in the HR Policies section on Insite.