



# Absence Policy

This policy applies to all companies within the Relyon Group.

This policy and associated procedures are designed to provide a systematic framework for the management of sickness absence.

## Definition of Absence

Sickness absence is when an employee is incapable of attending work because they are suffering from a specific illness or physical/mental impairment.

It does not cover the following situations:

- Illness or disablement of family members
- Domestic problems
- Transport difficulties
- Absence as a result of a trade dispute
- Medical appointments including dental

## Eligibility

Most employees will qualify for SSP when they are off work ill with the exception of employees who;

Have not been absent from work for four or more consecutive days generally known as a period of incapacity for work (PIW)

Earn less than the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) for National Insurance contributions in the relevant period prior to being off work

Have not done any work for the Company (that is they reported sick on their first without attending the workplace).

- Are taking part in trade union action
- Are in legal custody
- Have been receiving Incapacity Benefit in the eight weeks prior to their illness

## Routine Medical Appointments

The employee must notify the company as soon as a routine medical appointment is booked. Wherever possible the appointment should be booked outside of the normal shift hours. If it is not possible then the employee will not be entitled to pay for time of relating to medical appointments however annual leave can be booked if the employee wishes to do so.

## **Notification**

The employee must telephone their immediate superior, usually their supervisor or line manager, as early as possible, and no later than 2 hours before their shift start time on the first day of absence.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances contact from a third party, text messages, emails, WhatsApp messages or answer phones messages will not be considered satisfactory.

The employee must provide an explanation for any period they are unable to attend work and details of their expected return date.

Where an employee fails to contact the Company about their sickness absence for any period they may be subject to disciplinary action for both breaching this procedure and/or unauthorised absence.

Employees returning to work after no more than 7 days (calendar days) sick absence must complete a self certification form and attend a return to work interview, on the day of their return.

Where any period of absence through sickness or injury exceeds seven consecutive calendar days the Employee must provide a medical certificate no later than the eighth consecutive calendar day from the date the absence began.

Where a period of absence is continuing an Employee must ensure a valid medical certificate is in place and with the Company no later than the first working day following the expiration of the preceding certificate.

The Company retains the right to require the Employee at any point during their absence to; produce a medical certificate, undergo a medical examination or to attend a consultation meeting with the Company at a mutually convenient location (where appropriate).

Sick pay will not be paid to employees who do not comply with the notification procedure set out in this clause.

## **Calculating Sick Pay**

Statutory Sick Pay is not payable for the first three qualifying days in any period of incapacity for work.

Statutory Sick Pay will be paid from the fourth day of absence at the current applicable rate for a period of up to 28 weeks from any one period of incapacity for work or any multiple linked periods of incapacity.

The Company reserves the right on following any applicable statutory procedure to terminate this employment upon the required notice on incapacity grounds at any stage during or after the sick pay period.

## **Persistent or Intermittent Unrelated Absence**

In order to maintain and demonstrate a consistent approach it is important that all employees are subject to the same process, regardless of whether the same action is taken in each case.

After an employee's return to work after any period of sick leave their line manager should always meet with the employee to discuss their absence, their return to work and any relevant updates. This is an opportunity to discuss any workplace matters and is intended to be a supportive meeting, to assist the employee back to work after a period away.

Persistent or intermittent unrelated absence procedures may be triggered where:

- an employee has been off work for 2 separate episodes of sickness absence with unrelated ailments in a six month period

- an employee has had a total of 10 working days or more sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period.
- a pattern of unrelated sickness absence episodes have been identified e.g. sickness episodes occurring on Mondays or Fridays

Where any of the above apply an employee's line manager will invite them to attend an Informal Absence Review meeting, the employee will be afforded the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a fellow work colleague or a trade union representative.

The Informal Absence Review is an opportunity to review the Employee's sickness record and is intended to be a supportive meeting, to establish if there is any underlying cause responsible for the absence and to assist the employee in improving their attendance.

Where there is no underlying cause for the absence agreed timescales for improvement will be set.

The details of the meeting will be confirmed to the Employee in writing, including what improvement in attendance is expected and the likely consequences if this improvement does not occur.

The company would normally set a 6 month period for improvement within which any further periods of absence may trigger formal capability action and could lead to a formal warning.

Once the formal capability procedure has been commenced further absences may result in a written warning, final written warning and ultimately dismissal.

## Attendance Record

Where an employee's attendance record creates a particular operational difficulty, or where it has gone on for a considerable length of time, the Company will have the right to:

- Require the Employee at any point during their absence to; produce a medical certificate, undergo medical examination or to attend a consultation meeting with the Company at a mutually convenient location (where appropriate).
- Seek the Employee's consent to a medical report from their own GP under the Access to Medical Records Act or refer the employee to an occupational health specialist.
- To make decisions about any possible disciplinary sanction or dismissal on capability grounds based on the available evidence should an Employee withhold their consent to any medical report or referral.

Further the Company will endeavour to:

- Take into account the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) when making any decisions that affect someone who may be disabled as defined by the Act.
- Ensure fair treatment for all by the operation of a consistent procedure.
- Identify the reason for the absence(s) the prognosis and ensure that the employee is aware that the absence is cause for concern and may be putting their continued employment with the Company at risk
- Agree a reasonable period of time over which the employee's attendance record should be reassessed and indicate what the next step will be if the employee fails to reach the required standard of attendance.
- Be open to discussing with the employee about any personal problems
- Consider what reasonable adjustments could be made in the workplace to help the employee should the absence be disability related.

- Ensure the employee is given adequate time in order to access medical advice
- Consult regularly with the employee throughout the period of absence and in particular in relation to any medical report produced.
- Act reasonably in all the circumstances.



