



MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

1. Introduction

Culture NL Ltd considers the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees to be of the highest importance. Consequently, it is our policy to manage employee absence and to support employees who are sick and unable to work.

Although some employee sickness is inevitable, we recognise that work is beneficial to health, wellbeing and self-esteem and that through attendance at work Culture NL Ltd I will be able to provide high quality services for the public.

2. Scope

The Policy is applicable to all employees of Culture NL Ltd.

3. Principles

Culture NL Ltd will:

- manage employee sickness absence effectively in a fair, supportive and consistent way;
- treat employees who have suffered ill health, injury or disability with dignity and respect at all times;
- promote employee health, safety and wellbeing and seek to prevent occupational injury and absence;
- take appropriate action aimed at reducing sickness absence levels;
- ensure employees are aware of their responsibilities relating to attendance at work and complying with sickness absence notification procedures;
- support managers in managing sickness absence and return to work plans;
- access professional occupational health advice and support;
- provide employee access to short term counselling and access to up to 3 physiotherapy sessions where appropriate;
- make reasonable adjustments where the need arises for employees with regard to their working arrangements or working conditions so they can continue to work;
- keep in contact with absent employees;
- record, measure and monitor sickness absence.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Employees

All employees have a responsibility to:

- Attend work unless unfit to do so.
- Comply with sickness absence notification and certification procedures
- Participate in return to work discussions and sickness absence review meetings as required.
- Co-operate with attempts to assess fitness for work, including attending referral meetings to the Occupational Health Service as required.
- Receive and follow medical advice and treatment where appropriate in order to facilitate a return to work.
- Not engage in any activity which may delay recovery.
- Maintain regular contact with their line manager when absent in accordance with the Employee Sickness Absence Guide and/or local arrangements.
- Be familiar with, and comply with, the Employee Sickness Absence Guide.

A failure to comply with the above may lead to sick pay being suspended or withheld.

Line Managers

All Line Managers have a responsibility to:

- follow the standard process for recording sickness absence details and certification in a timely manner and take remedial action if these procedures are not followed;
- monitor and manage sickness absence in accordance with this policy and good management practice, balancing the needs of the service, pressure on other employees, and responding compassionately to individuals.
- address individual cases of sickness absence, investigating and providing support as appropriate;
- maintain confidentiality regarding the causes of an employee's absence, with the exception of payroll linked notification processes and any guidance sought from occupational health and HR staff;
- conduct routine return to work discussions;
- use managerial discretion responsibly and reasonably taking account of all mitigating factors;
- liaise with HR on referral to Occupational Health at an early stage where appropriate in order to support a sustained return to work;
- ensure that significant risks are controlled in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy so as to prevent/reduce cases of work-related injury and ill health absence;
- make employees aware of the support available to them and their need to raise any concerns to their line manager so prompt action can be undertaken;

- ensure that all new and existing employees are made aware of the sickness absence notification and certification process and their responsibilities during a sickness absence period;
- make clear to new employees that sickness absence levels are reviewed on an ongoing basis;
- maintain regular and appropriate contact with employees who are absent from work due to sickness;
- manage absences by considering appropriate action to be taken when sickness triggers are reached and undertaking sickness absence review meetings to facilitate and implement return-to-work plans as appropriate.
- liaise with the HR to make referrals to the occupational health service, when required.
- ensure that an early referral is made for all significant absences to occupational health wherever appropriate. (for example as soon as an employee is absent due to stress and musculoskeletal symptoms);
- Ensure that Work Related Stress Risk Assessments are carried out as soon as possible following notification of work related stress;
- be familiar with, and comply with, the associated procedures to manage sickness absence and attend related training events as appropriate.

Human Resources

Human Resources (HR) staff will:

- identify sickness absence trends and their causes;
- provide advice, guidance and support in the application of the policy and Procedure;
- make referrals to Occupational Health on behalf of the manager and provide support in the management of individual cases of sickness absence;
- facilitate links as appropriate with other specialists such as, Occupational Health, Health and Safety Staff, Legal Services and others as required.

5. Organisation & Arrangements

This Sickness Absence Policy is applied in accordance with guidance provided in the following supporting documents that are available from HR:

- Managing Sickness Absence Guidance
- Employee Sickness Absence Guide

6. Review

The content of this Policy and associated documents, and its effectiveness, will be subject to a three-yearly review. However, should circumstances require this Policy to be reviewed at an earlier date then appropriate amendments will be made.