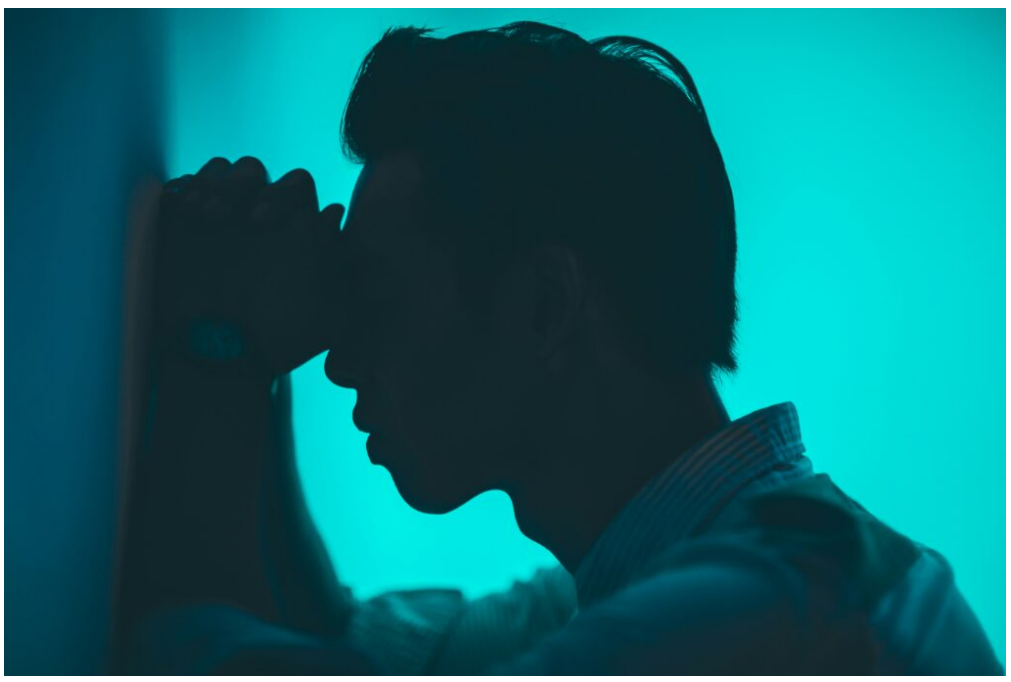
Sickness policy (Template)

Overview

- Model sickness policy
- Further information
- Disclaimer



A sickness policy and procedure should set out clearly how you will deal with, and monitor sickness. It should also detail the rights and obligations of your employees. This will help your employees to realise that you treat these issues seriously and that they have certain responsibilities to fulfil. Having a sickness policy and procedure should also help you to prevent small problems developing into larger ones and may assist you to identify and tackle underlying problems.

You should develop your sickness policy in consultation with line managers and employee representatives or your recognised trade union.

The following is an example of a sickness policy, which should be adapted to suit your own organisation. It should not be regarded as an authoritative statement of the law.

Model sickness policy

[NAME OF ORGANISATION] considers the health and well-being of its employees to be of paramount importance. [NAME OF ORGANISATION] recognises that sickness absence can be in the form of either short term or long-term incapacity to work. [NAME OF ORGANISATION] therefore recognises the need for a clear, fair and consistent policy for managing attendance.

1. Notification of absence

In the event of an employee being unable to attend work due to unforeseen sickness, he or she must notify [INSERT WHO E.G. LINE MANAGER, HR MANAGER AND WHEN TO CONTACT THE NAMED PERSON E.G. BY 10AM, WITHIN FIRST HOUR OF NORMAL STARTING TIME]. The employee should state the reason for

absence and their expected return to work date.

(You may wish to state here when it is appropriate for a third party to contact the organisation on the employee's behalf. You may also wish to include details of who they should contact if the initial contact person is unavailable. You should also include how frequently the employee should remain in contact with the organisation with regard to their absence, e.g. daily)

(As the organisation may need to check with employees regarding information about the employee's current work, you may also wish to add that if the employee does not contact the organisation by the required time the line manager may attempt to contact the employee at home)

2. Self-certification

In the event of the employee being absent from work due to sickness for 7 calendar days or less (which includes weekends and bank holidays), the employee must complete a Sickness Self Certification form as soon as practically possible.

(Note: under statutory sick rules self-certification is only required from the fourth day. The organisation can make it their own policy for employees to self-certify from day one)

3. Medical certificate (fit note)

In the event of the employee being absent from work due to sickness for more than 7 calendar days (which includes weekends and bank holidays), the employee must provide [NAME OF ORGANISATION] with a medical certificate, known as a 'Fit Note' from their GP and forward it to their line manager as soon as possible. The medical certificate should cover every subsequent day of the illness.

(If the absence is likely to be for more than 4 continuous weeks there is a shared responsibility for the organisation and the employee to maintain contact at regular intervals)

4. Medical reports

Where appropriate, and with the agreement of the employee, [NAME OF ORGANISATION] may seek a medical report from the employee's GP or Consultant. This may be requested to:

- Assess whether the employee is fit to carry out their work
- Prevent health and safety risks
- Prevent disability discrimination

Written permission must be gained from the employee first. Employees have a right under the '**Access to Medical Reports Act 1988**' to see their own medical reports before it is given to the employer and to query items in it.

5. Sick pay

Provided that the above procedure has been followed, the employee who is absent from work due to sickness will be entitled to the following:

[INSERT WHAT THE EMPLOYEE IS ENTITLED TO, INCLUDING ANY DIFFERENCES IN REGARDS TO LENGTH OF SERVICE]

Employees who do not follow the correct notification or certification procedures may have their sick pay withheld.

(NB. If the employee is only entitled to statutory sick pay, this must be detailed here. There are specific rules regarding when an employer can withhold statutory sick pay. Further guidance can be sought from HM Revenue & Customs)

6. Return to work interviews

A Return to Work Interview should be held as soon as an employee returns to work following an absence due to sickness to establish: the reason for, and cause of absence; what the organisation/line manager can do to help; and to ensure that the employee is fit to return to work.

7. Long term sickness

[NAME OF ORGANISATION] recognises that on occasion employees may be unable to attend work for extended periods due to ill-health, therefore any action taken will vary according to the circumstances of the particular case.

(NB. Sickness absence of one month or more is generally considered to be long-term absence. Individuals may be absent on long term sick leave for a variety of reasons (e.g. injury, operation, convalescence from illness, diagnosis of a long term disability, terminal illness, etc.)

Managing long-term illness is a difficult process and has the potential to result in claims for unfair dismissal or disability discrimination. Organisations need to handle such issues cautiously and follow both the statutory and the organisation's own capability, disciplinary and dismissal procedures. The issues to be considered during the process and in meetings with the employee include:

- How much damage is being caused by this absence?
- How long will the absence continue for?
- What is the employee's general practitioner, or the organisation's doctor's prognosis?
- Will there be a full recovery or will a return to the same work be imprudent?
- Is alternative work available, with re-training if necessary?
- How long has the employee been working for the organisation?
- Have all possibilities been discussed with the employee and their representative?

(The policy should include details of how the organisation will discuss the issues with the employee, which could be conducted through informal discussions then formal reviews. The policy should also include an appeals process)

8. Sickness during annual leave

There is a legal entitlement to a refund of annual leave if the employee falls ill during a period of annual leave. An organisation must allow employees that are sick whilst on annual leave to have that leave refunded so that they may take the leave at another time. The employee must report their sickness to the organisation in order to claim any holiday as sick leave. It is recommended that the policy includes the requirement for the employee to produce a GP certificate for the illness (regardless of the length of the illness) or if you will allow them to self certify in these circumstances.

9. Right to annual leave

Employees are entitled to accrue statutory annual leave whilst on sick leave. A long-term sick employee is still entitled to annual leave, but cannot claim sick pay and holiday pay at the same time. It's up to the

employee to request holiday while off sick.

10. Disciplinary action

Non-compliance of this policy or abuse of the sickness policy may lead to disciplinary action as detailed in [NAME OF ORGANISATION]'s Disciplinary Procedures.

11. Data protection

[NAME OF ORGANISATION] respects the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness. This policy will be implemented in line with all data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

Further Information

ACAS

Tel: 08457 474747

www.acas.org.uk

Sick Leave

UK Government

https://www.gov.uk/taking-sick-leave

Disclaimer



Third Sector Support Wales is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales.

It consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).
For further information contact
https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.