

MANAGING ATTENDANCE - POLICY AND PROCEDURE.

Glasgow Life will at all times try to ensure that all staff achieve and maintain high standards of performance in their work in order to provide the best possible service to customers, both internal and external. To achieve this, the company will establish standards and monitor performance, and provide staff with appropriate training and support to meet those standards. It is recognised that there will be times when a manager has to raise concerns about a member of staff's attendance with them.

The aim of this policy and procedure is to identify and implement the most appropriate support and action at an early stage and, when necessary, to use formal processes.

It is important to point out that:

- there is a range of possible causes of absence and the company will deal sympathetically with genuine illness and incapacity
- there is a range of support available to staff in particular the comprehensive range of services that are outlined fully in the Company's Wellbeing Statement of Intent.

PROCEDURE

Return to Work Discussion

This should be done routinely by the staff member's immediate manager/supervisor on the morning of the first day back at work or, if this is not practical, as soon as possible after this.

Although this is a compulsory requirement for managers, this step is no more than what effective managers do already. At its simplest, it is no more than 'glad to see you're back, hope you're better and let me sign off your self-certification form'.

Where the manager is at all concerned at the person's health or attendance then a more structured, yet still informal, discussion should be held. See Appendix 1 for guidance.

Short Term Absences

Formal interviews will be arranged with staff whose absence record falls into the following categories:

- 3 self certificates or a total of 6 working days within any 6 month period (or 2 self certificates or 3 working days in the first six months of service) for full time staff – pro rata for part time staff
- 5 absences (self certificated and/or medically certificated) or 8 working days within 12 months for full time staff – pro rata for part time staff.
- Any period of unauthorised absence.
- **Any*** period of absence potentially due to a work-related cause. (*This is to ensure that the company is aware of such situations at the earliest stage possible so can identify and implement any remedial/supportive action(s).

The member of staff may be represented by a trade union representative/official or employee of their choice

During the interview the undernoted matters will be considered.

The frequency and reason for the absences, with the member of staff being made aware that his/her attendance record is giving cause for concern.

Any underlying health problem and any medical assistance/advice that the member of staff has been given should be discussed.

The member of staff will be advised to seek proper medical attention if there is an underlying health problem where no medical attention has been sought (If appropriate an occupational health assessment will be requested by the company in order to obtain advice on the nature of the condition and any ongoing impact on the member of staff's attendance at work or ability to carry out their normal duties A refusal by a member of staff to participate in an occupational health assessment may lead the company to withdraw Occupational Sick Pay from him/her and, if appropriate, to a decision taken on continued employment without benefit of relevant medical advice.)

Any personal problems which may be affecting the member of staff's attendance, with the member of staff being advised of the company's Employee Assistance Resource, and any other assistance the company could provide to assist the employee.

The period of time over which the member of staff's attendance will be assessed and the monitoring arrangements implemented to do this.

The next steps, if the member of staff fails to reach the standard required, and to advise the member of staff of these.

Consideration of reasonable adjustments to the member of staff's job to accommodate his/her short-term or long-term requirements, if the member of staff may be considered disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010.

A letter will be sent to the member of staff confirming the facts, the action to be taken, the monitoring arrangements and specifying what will happen if attendance is not improved.

Monitoring /Follow Up Interview.

A follow up interview should be arranged no later than three months from the first formal interview or earlier if appropriate.

The purpose of the follow up interview is to review progress, to note any improvement and to ensure that any necessary action has been implemented and progressed satisfactorily. Where the level of attendance has reached an acceptable level, the member of staff should be encouraged to maintain that level. This should be recorded.

Where there is only a slight improvement, any action should be reviewed and where appropriate further assistance offered. A further review date should be arranged and monitoring should continue until an acceptable level of attendance is achieved. This should be confirmed in writing. Where the level of attendance has not improved sufficiently or has deteriorated, then an assessment should be made by the manager relating to taking this issue forward to a next stage.

NEXT STAGE.

Where a member of staff's short term intermittent absence does not improve to a satisfactory level and these absences are not due to an underlying medical condition, the company's disciplinary procedure will be invoked with action taken in line with that procedure, this action may include the withdrawal of Occupational Sick Pay and other action up to, and including, dismissal.

In circumstances where the company withdraws the right to self certification the member of staff will not receive Occupational Sick Pay for the first 5 working days of any sickness absence. The member of staff will however be required to provide private medical certificates for the first five working days of any sickness absence in these circumstances. The company will reimburse the member of staff fully for the cost of obtaining these certificates

Long Term Absences.

For any period of absence of 20 or more consecutive working days for full-time staff (pro-rata for part-time staff), the company may ask the member of staff to attend a meeting. If the member of staff is too unwell to come to the office, the company reserves the right to meet with him/her at location suitable to them.

The member of staff may be represented by a trade union representative/official or employee of their choice.

The meeting will consider the undernoted matters.

The reasons for the member of staff's absence and its likely duration.
(The member of staff may be requested to attend an occupational health assessment in order for the company to establish the likely length of absence and the longer-term effect on the member of staff's capability in relation to job performance and attendance at work. A refusal to attend an occupational health assessment, without adequate reason, may lead the company to withdraw Occupational Sick Pay and, where appropriate, could result in a decision to terminate employment without appropriate medical advice.)

Reasonable adjustments to the member of staff's job, offering alternative employment or a shorter working week, if this would enable the member of staff to return to work any sooner.

Consideration of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, to make reasonable adjustments to the member of staff's job or to offer redeployment to an alternative job, to accommodate his/her short term or long-term requirements, if the member of staff could be considered disabled within the requirements of the act.

Whether a follow up meeting is necessary, and if it is, whether a further Occupational Health Assessment is appropriate. (If such a meeting is required, at this meeting management will discuss the member of staff's current condition and the likelihood of a return to work in the foreseeable future. Again any reasonable adjustments altered working arrangements and working hours will be considered to assist a return to work. If work adjustments are impracticable, inappropriate or unreasonable, and/or the employee remains absent from work, with no indication that a return to work will be achieved in the foreseeable future, the member of staff will be informed that long-term absence due to ill-health, may put his/her employment at risk (bearing in mind the needs of the company at that time. The member of staff will be advised of a timescale by which dismissal will be considered if they are still unable to return to work).

At each stage of this procedure a letter will be sent to the member of staff confirming the facts and the action to be taken.

Unacceptable levels of absence as a result of medically certified conditions.

Where a member of staff has breached the absence management guidelines, as outlined above, as a result of medically certified conditions, the formal interview process will be applied. Thereafter, if attendance continues to cause concern, the process for managing long term absence will be applied.

Long Term Absence and unacceptable levels of attendance as a result of medically certified conditions.

If the member of staff remains absent from work or levels of attendance remain unacceptable, a final meeting will be arranged.

At this point, unless there are reasonable grounds to believe that there will be an imminent return to work and/or a sustained improvement in attendance, the company's decision to dismiss the member of staff by reason of incapability will be explained.

APPEALS.

Appeals can be lodged in line with the process as detailed in the company's appeals procedure.

NOTES.

The member of staff will be invited to all formal meetings by letter. The letter will set out the reason for the meeting and the arrangements for attendance.

Outcomes of formal meetings will be confirmed to the member of staff in writing.

The company reserves the right to refer members of staff to Occupational Health, including Physiotherapy, and the Employee Assistance Resource at any stage, in the interests of seeking a satisfactory outcome for all concerned.

The company will take the individual circumstances of every case into account, particularly in relation to the timing of decisions (including a decision to dismiss) although other factors (eg the nature of the work) will also be taken into account.

Information obtained about a member of staff's medical condition and personal circumstances will be kept confidential at all times and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

APPENDIX 1.

GUIDELINES ON HOLDING AN INFORMAL RETURN TO WORK DISCUSSION.

Purpose.

Return to work discussions are an essential part of the company's Wellbeing Policy. They are informal and enable the immediate manager/supervisor (the 'manager') to:

- better understand the nature and cause of absence.
- check that the member of staff is fit to return to work.
- determine whether there are any work-related factors which have contributed to the absence.
- if necessary, agree a plan of action with the member of staff aimed at facilitating the return to work and preventing or minimising future absences.

Although the meeting is informal it should be born in mind that, for some members of staff, meeting their manager can be quite a daunting experience – particularly in an office. Discussions should therefore take place in an appropriate environment and be in private. They should be conversational (rather than formal) in style and managers should not make any judgement on cause and/or action at too early a stage.

Managers should also ensure that these discussion are, and are seen to be separate from other company procedures such as attendance, capability or disciplinary. These processes may run in parallel but should not contradict each other.

Preparation.

Before speaking with the member of staff, the manager should :

- have the attendance record of the member of staff (and, where available, the average attendance record for similar staff).
- have any documentation relating to previous RTW interviews
- know whether the person is currently being dealt with under other company procedures such as attendance, capability or disciplinary.

The duration of the meeting will vary depending on the length of the absence, the attendance record, the medical condition, etc..

Structure.

- Welcome the person back to work.
- Discuss whether he or she is fit enough to return to work.
- Check that relevant documentation such as a self-certification note has been provided and is correctly completed.

Ask questions on the following, where applicable :

- the nature of the health problem.
- the cause of the absence including any work related factors.
- whether appropriate medical help has been/is being sought and whether the company can assist in this, eg via a referral to occupational health experts.
- any concerns that the member of staff has regarding his or her return to work.
- any help that he or she needs for a transitional period to effect a successful return to work, eg changes to working hours, a reduction in the workload, transport arrangements, special equipment.

Supply information on the following, where applicable :

- the effect that the absence has had on the department or section.
- the rules on sick pay entitlement.
- the link to the company's capability and other procedures and the consequences of future absences.
- any changes in the working environment that have occurred during the absence and the reasons for them.

Agree a plan of action with the member of staff, if necessary, covering issues such as :

- referrals to occupational health experts and/or external specialists.
- the member of staff's commitment to reducing the likelihood of future absences by seeking proper medical attention, by making lifestyle changes, etc..
- any transitional arrangements (as above) and their duration.

Conclude by :

- by thanking the member of staff for being open and honest and wishing him or her a happy return to work.
- Write up a file note of the discussion.
- Implement/organise any actions required of the member of staff/manager

Notes.

Managers should ensure that these discussion are, and seen to be separate from other company procedures such as attendance, capability or disciplinary. These processes may run in parallel but should not contradict each other.

Managers are not medically qualified and should resist the temptation to make assumptions or reach conclusions on a member of staff's state of health without first seeking medical advice and opinion.

Staff are entitled to decline to discuss their medical condition with their managers. In such cases outside help from occupational health may be necessary.

Information obtained about a member of staff's medical condition and personal circumstances should be kept confidential at all times and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.