

City of York Council Absence Line



Manager's Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the CYC Day One Absence Service?

It is a professional service operated by Absentia, part of Medigold Health, which will log all unplanned absences of Sickness, Compassionate and Dependant Care Leave on behalf of City of York Council and report this back to the business for absence reporting and payroll purposes. The service will be managed by both trained professionals and medically-qualified personnel, who are able to support employees get back to health and work quicker.

The number for all CYC staff to call with any unplanned absence is **01904 809584**. Calls cost no more than local calls, as if you were calling your manager to report your absence and are included in inclusive minutes and discount schemes in the same way. Calls from landlines and mobiles are included in free call packages.

2. What do my team and I have to do now if we are absent?

Every CYC employee has to call the CYC Absence Line with any unplanned absence. This is so the absence can be formally logged and if appropriate, advice on medical conditions can be provided.

The employee must make the call rather than getting someone to do it for them. If they are incapacitated and unable to do so, the absence call advisor will accept a call from someone else, i.e. a family member, however they will record in the notes that they didn't speak to the individual and who they did speak to, so you as a manager will be aware of this, and where inappropriate, address this as part of the Return To Work (RTW) interview.

3. When do they have to call the service?

Employees must call the CYC Absence line in line with CYC's Attendance Management Policy. They must continue to call the CYC Absence Line if any details change on the absence i.e. expected return to work date or the reason for absence.

Employees must also call the service when returning to work to close down the absence and confirm that they have returned to work.

4. How will I know about the absence?

You will receive an immediate email which will provide you with details of the absence. You can also log onto the MedigoldOne system which is a web based portal, at any time to see all of your employees' absence history.

If you are on annual leave or absent yourself you can nominate another manager to be made aware of the absence so they can make the necessary arrangements. This can be done through the above portal by checking the 'Away' tab in the top right of the home screen. Further details can be found in the Manager User manual.

5. What will the email say?

It will state the absence period, expected return to work date and the reason of absence. It will contain any further information the call advisor gathers on the call.

On the initial notification email the name of the trigger which may have been met will be displayed under the colour banner.

If the absence has hit a trigger within the system, either a CYC policy trigger or an early intervention trigger, you will receive a further email once the Occupational Health Nurse has been in touch with the employee.

6. Do I still need to input and close the absence details on to iTrent People Manager?

No, the details recorded by the CYC Absence Line will be notified to the CYC HR Business Centre on a daily basis and they will open and close all absences on iTrent.

7. Does that mean that my team do not need to call me as their line manager?

It is important to note that this process does not replace your role as a manager in handling absence. An additional call to yourself or someone other than the CYC Absence Line is only necessary in areas that are faced with specific operational work pressures. Remember that the CYC Absence Line will be sending you an email as soon as the employee contacts them, so you will know straight away about absences in your team. However, you may want to check on the person's wellbeing or talk to them about a work matter, then this is encouraged. You will need to tell your team if you want them to call you also, as the CYC Absence Line will not do this.

If an absence is longer than a few days and certainly, when an employee is on long-term absence, it is good practice for the manager to stay in regular contact with the employee. This is so that the employee can be updated on both work and their team, and still feels a part of things. Further advice and guidance is available in the Attendance Management Policy and Toolkit.

8. What should I do if I get an email about someone who isn't in my team?

Hopefully this should not happen, as you have all reviewed and updated your direct reports on iTrent. However, if this does happen, you should contact the HR Business Centre to let them know so the data can be amended with the CYC Absence Line.

It is very important that any changes in post or line management are notified to the iTrentsystemadm@york.gov.uk mailbox as soon as possible, as this will drive the information on the CYC Absence Line. Correct manager details are essential to making this new service work effectively. New starters, leavers and changes will be sent to Medigold Health in a weekly update by Business Support. **Please ensure that iTrent is kept up to date.**

9. If a member of my team doesn't call the CYC Absence Line when they are absent, what should I do?

It is your responsibility as the manager to make sure that your team know to report their absence correctly by phoning the absence service. If an employee phones you directly in the first instance to report their absence, please ask them to call the CYC Absence line. If you discover that someone in your team hasn't called the service, you must get them to call in as soon as possible. If for some reason they cannot (or in sensitive cases), you should contact the absence service team and record the absence at support@medigold-health.com. This may be the case when dealing with a bereavement for instance.

You will be able to tell if an employee has not called the service, as you will not have received an email from the CYC absence line advising you of the absence details. Likewise, if someone other than the employee calls the service, there will be a record of this placed on the manager notification for you, as a manager, to pick up with the employee during the Return to Work interview.

10. What if one of my team doesn't turn up for work and I haven't received a notification?

In the first instance you should contact the CYC Absence Line at support@medigold-health.com and double check whether the employee has called the absence service but the notification was not sent for some reason. If the employee hasn't called the service, it is then your responsibility to contact the employee.

The first priority is to establish that the employee is OK. If contact is established with the employee, you should ascertain the reason for their absence and, if possible, you should ask them to call the absence service straight away. If the employee is unable to do so, you as the manager can email support@medigold-health.com and log this, on these rare occasions.

If you cannot make contact after a number of attempts, the HR team can advise you on the process to be followed.

11. What if an employee is expected to return to work on a specific day but doesn't turn up?

Similar to above you should contact the CYC Absence Line at support@medigold-health.com and double check whether the employee has called the absence service team to extend their absence. If the employee hasn't called the service, follow the process above.

12. What if someone in my team is sick and they phone to tell me that they will work from home instead of coming to work?

You need to determine and be absolutely clear whether the employee is presenting themselves as fit for work or unable to work and reporting as sick. However, if you believe that a day's work can be completed from home and you are not concerned about any impact on their health, the employee can work from home without having to call the CYC Absence Line.

If you have concerns that the employee shouldn't be working because of their illness you should advise the employee that they must take the day as sickness absence and call the CYC Absence Line. Ask, why they believe they can work from home but cannot attend for work? If you are unsure, contact HR for advice.

13. What happens to the Fit note?

A Fit note is required for all absences that last for more than 7 calendar days. It will remain your responsibility to make sure that the employee gets a Fit Note from their GP and you should advise the employee to send this to you. When you receive this, you should send this to the HR Business Centre as per the current arrangement.

If you have reminded the employee and they have still not provided a Fit note, you should speak to your HR team.

Employees will always be reminded by the CYC absence service that they need to get a Fit note when their absence is expected to exceed 7 days. You will need to record that you received a Fit Note when you complete the RTW form.

14. Should employees phone the service for other types of leave, e.g. annual, special leave for bereavement?

The employee should only contact the CYC Absence Line for any **unplanned** absence regarding Dependant Care leave, Compassionate Leave and sickness absence. They can do this the day before the planned absence. They don't need to contact the service for annual leave, paternity/maternity leave. This should be recorded as per the current process.

15. What happens if the employee is on annual leave and then goes sick?

If you are contacted by the employee whilst they are on leave to inform you that they are sick, you should tell them to contact the CYC Absence Line. If you are told about the absence following the employee's return from leave, the employee will have to call the CYC Absence Line and report the absence retrospectively.

If the employee subsequently produces a Fit Note or certificate from a doctor (Statement of fitness to work or fit note) to cover the entire period of sickness, their annual leave will be reimbursed.

16. What if the employee works half a day and then goes off absent?

If an employee is absent for half a day it should still be recorded through the CYC absence line. You can log the absence as a manager by contacting support@medigold-health.com if it is not appropriate for the employee to call the absence line themselves.

17. Do I still need to do a Return to Work (RTW) interview?

Yes. This remains very important for the manager to do as it is the best way to find out how the employee is doing and whether there are any underlying issues.

A return to work form will be e-mailed to the manager in the form of a link by the CYC Absence Line as soon as the employee contacts the service to inform them they are back at work. The form will contain the information that the employee has given to the CYC Absence Line. You need to check this carefully to make sure that the details of the absence are correct. There are a number of other questions you need to ask the employee which are contained in the form. When you have conducted the interview and checked the details, you complete the form online and this is stored against the employee's record on the system. At this point the RTW Interview will also be automatically sent to the HR Business Centre to be stored on the employee's personal file.

If the RTW Interview cannot be completed at a computer, you are able to print a blank RTW Interview form and this button is at the top of the electronic RTW form. You can then take this away to conduct the RTW interview with the employee. Following this you must ensure you go back into the MedigoldOne portal and complete the online form with these details. You may want to consider printing or emailing a copy of the completed RTW form to the employee as a record of your agreed discussions and actions.

18. What happens if I don't do the return to work interview?

If you do not complete the on-line RTW form, the absence remains live on the system and will continue to flag as an incomplete RTW. You have 3 working days from the time the employee closes their absence to complete the interview, as per current policy. Return to work interview compliance will be monitored centrally.

If a RTW interview is completed outside of the 3 day compliance period, an additional question will appear on the form asking why this is the case. This is to help us gain an understanding as to why the interview is taking place outside of the 3-day compliance period. We of course understand that shift patterns, annual leave commitments etc can all be valid reasons as to why a RTW interview takes place outside of the expected 3 days but you should make every effort to ensure compliance with the policy even if that means delegating the responsibility to a suitable manager or doing the RTW over the phone.

19. What are trigger points?

The predetermined trigger points are split into two categories, 'policy' triggers and 'early intervention' triggers:

Early Intervention Triggers

- a. Psychological/ Mental Health absence reasons
- b. Musculoskeletal absence reasons
- c. Injury at work absence reasons

Policy Triggers

- d. 3 instances of absence in 3 months
- e. 4 instances of absence in 6 months
- f. 10 days absence in a rolling 12 months (pro rata)
- g. 4 weeks continuous absence
- h. A regular pattern of absence

Once any of these predetermined triggers have been hit an Occupational Health Nurse will contact the employee to discuss their absence. This may include a recommendation to refer the employee to Occupational Health, the Osteopath or the EAP Service. See below for more details. You can discuss this recommendation with the HR team.

20. What absence information will I get as a manager?

You will get access to an online portal – MedigoldOne, which will have live absence data available for you on your team's absence. The portal shows a list of your direct reports, what absences are live, what RTW forms need completing and you can access all the absence history for each employee and their completed RTW forms. If you are a manager who manages managers, you will also be able to view their team's absence information.

You have to log into the portal using a username and password which will be emailed to you at the start of the service. You will not be able to access any data which is not relevant to your responsibilities as a manager.

Should you have any issues logging onto the portal please contact support@medigold-health.com

21. I am concerned about personal absence information being made available. What GDPR safeguards are in place with this service?

The provider fully complies with GDPR rules in the processing of all employee related data. If a medical condition is sensitive, the employee does have the right to refuse the absence reason being passed to the manager. At this point it is crucial that the absence is logged to ensure the manager is aware and can make any necessary cover arrangements. Employees are encouraged to share the reason of absence so that appropriate support can be provided to them. The employee will be given a further opportunity to disclose the reason for absence as part of the Return to Work Interview, which managers can record. Managers will only receive absence information, which is relevant to them.

22. What happens if someone wants to make a complaint about or identify an issue with the absence service team?

Complaints and issues with the service can be raised through the HR team who will pass these directly to Medigold Health. Those raising a complaint or issue will always be advised of the outcome.

23. Is this replacing the OH service currently being provided by HML?

No, HML will continue to provide our OH service and all OH referrals will continue as per the current procedure.

24. I have an employee that is currently off sick, what do I need to do?

As we don't hold expected return to work dates in iTrent, all employees currently off as sick with have an expected RTW date of the day after the system goes live. This means the Day One process will kick in straight away. If you have any long term sick cases please update the estimated RTW date through the MedigoldOne portal based on the return date on the most recent fit note. Any employees returning to work after the day the system goes live will need their absence closing down. On this occasion managers can close this absence by contacting support@medigold-health.com. This will then remove the employee from the live cases list and send through a Return to Work Interview form to be completed.

25. I have WWY or other agency workers in my team, do they also need to phone this number?

Only CYC staff will need to use this process. Any WWY staff should follow the absence process set out through WWY which is to notify their CYC placement manager and their WWY contact for all absences.

26. There are WWY Managers in our team, what do they need to do?

Any WWY employees who have supervisory or line management responsibilities will need to be set up on iTrent. This is to ensure that they receive any notifications from CYC employees using the Day One service. They will then continue to manage the absence in line with the City of York Council's attendance management procedure.

27. How do I log Phased Returns with this system?

Firstly, you should complete the RTW interview as part of that employee's return to work. During the RTW interview you can discuss whether a phased return is appropriate in this instance and record it on the electronic RTW interview form. After this, as a manager, you would then be able to email the xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xma mailbox detailing which shifts the employee will miss as part of that phased return, with the reason as phased return. This will ensure that the employee will not have to phone into the Absence Line on every shift they are scheduled to miss. It will also make sure that a new RTW interview is not generated during their phased return. And it will ensure that the employee is paid correctly. If the employee is taking annual leave for the hours they are not at work, you do not need to notify the Absence Line.

28. I need to ensure that more than one person is made aware of an employee's absence.

If you are off sick your notifications will automatically be passed to your line manager. If you set yourself as 'away' on the MedigoldOne portal you can nominate a manager(s) to assume full control for your direct reports. You will also receive the notification whilst you are set as 'away' for full visibility. **Please be careful when nominating another manager in this way as they will have full access to their absence history including any sensitive data.**

The system will also notice when a manager is absent themselves. In these cases any notifications will automatically be sent to their manager to ensure that someone in the organisation is made aware of the absence.

At launch, unless any of the above has been actioned, the absence notifications will only be sent to the line manager currently recorded in iTrent. We are working on building in the appropriate notifications to allow managers to nominate a shared email inbox to receive a basic notification (which will only include name and dates of absence) to ensure service delivery is uninterrupted.

29. My team includes people who have various accessibility requirements.

Should an employee have a condition that prevents them from phoning into the service then someone can ring the service on their behalf. The call handler will note who they have spoken to and pass this onto the manager. There are also the option to use a text relay service should that also be required.

Should you or any of your reports need any other assistance with regards to accessibility either for the CYC Absence Line or the MedigoldOne portal please contact support@medigold-health.com

30. Are there instances where I as a manager can report an absence on behalf of the employee?

There could be instances, for example a bereavement, or ongoing cancer treatment, where an employee would rather speak to their manager than the CYC Absence Line. In such circumstances a manager can take the call from the employee and log the absence through the support@medigold-health.com mailbox. To check that this has been logged you should receive an email notification in the usual way.

31. Do I need to record Hospital Appointments through this process?

Hospital appointments are generally planned in advance and are covered in the Council's Flexi-time policy. Therefore these would be agreed with your line manager and are not required to go through the CYC Absence Line. The same applies to GP appointments, as these are generally not periods of sickness absence and should where possible be taken outside of normal working hours.

If you are planned in for an operation, this would be classed as sickness and can be reported in advance. If the operation does not go ahead as planned please contact the absence line to amend any details.