



ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

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The information in this document is available in other languages or on tape/CD, in large print and also in Braille.

For details contact the Association on 0141 578 0200 or e-mail: admin@hillheadhousing.org

本文件所載資料備有中文(廣東話)版本，也可以製作成錄音帶/光碟，以及利用特大字體和凸字印製，以供索取。
欲知有關詳情，請聯絡本協會，電話：0141 578 0200，或向我們發送電郵，電郵地址：
admin@hillheadhousing.org

Tha am fiosrachadh anns an sgrìobhainn seo ri fhaotainn ann an Gàidhlig no air teip/CD, sa chlà mhòr agus cuideachd ann an Clò nan Dall.
Airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, cuiribh fios dhan Chomann air 0141 578 0200 no cuiribh post-dealain gu: admin@hillheadhousing.org

इस दस्तावेज़ में दी गई जानकारी हिन्दी में भी या टेप, सी डी, बड़ी छाप और ब्रैल में भी उपलब्ध है। विवरण के लिए एसोसिएशन को नम्बर 0141 578 0200 पर या ई-मेल के द्वारा सम्पर्क करें :
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ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਜਾਂ ਟੇਪ, ਸੀ ਡੀ, ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ 'ਤੇ ਵੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਵੇਰਵੇ ਲਈ ਐਸੋਸੀਏਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਨੰਬਰ 0141 578 0200 'ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਈ-ਮੇਲ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ :
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اس دستاویز میں درج معلومات اردو زبان یا آڈیو ٹیپ / سی ڈی، بڑی طباعت اور بریل میں بھی دستیاب ہیں۔
تفصیلات کے لئے ایسوسی ایشن سے ٹیلیفون نمبر 0141 578 0200 یا ای میل admin@hillheadhousing.org کے ذریعے رابطہ قائم کریں۔

INTRODUCTION

Hillhead Housing Association 2000 recognises that on occasions it may be necessary for employees to be absent from work. However we also have a duty to provide a reliable service to our customers and thus we need to ensure that we help you maintain the highest possible level of attendance.

This policy is therefore designed to help all employees achieve good attendance, and to ensure that a consistent and fair approach in managing attendance is adopted throughout the Association.

This policy and the guidelines it contains work in conjunction but is not limited to other policies such as discipline & grievance, dignity at work, health & safety and managing stress.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To manage attendance in a way that is centred around employee wellbeing and reflects genuine concern for employees.
- To develop a positive attitude towards attendance throughout the organisation.
- To set clear expectations for standards of attendance required from our employees.
- To separate two processes: attendance and absence management and provide guidelines for employees and managers in the implementation of these.
- To establish monitoring processes to look at the cause of absence and, where possible, develop a programme of preventive measures.
- To ensure training and support is available to both managers and employees.

DEFINITIONS

- **Absence**
Managing absence relates to managing an employee back to work by making reasonable adjustments, where possible, and dealing with the ability to carry out their work duties, taking into consideration any medical advice, the employee's comments and the business needs.
- **Attendance**
Managing attendance refers to dealing with unacceptable levels of short term, frequent absences, with no reference to any particular absence or medical condition. We will follow this route in line with this policy and, if necessary, our disciplinary procedure.

PRINCIPLES

- If your level of attendance is unsatisfactory you will be informed what improvement is required and possible consequences of failure to do so (which may include disciplinary action).

- The aim of the attendance management process is not to look at the specific reasons for absence but rather the number of periods of absence / days absent (excluding underlying health conditions protected under the Equality Act 2010 and pregnancy related absences, including employees undergoing fertility treatment, who have had an embryo transfer and may be pregnant).
- If you have an underlying health condition causing absence(s), then we will consider reasonable adjustments.
- Managers will conduct “return to work” interviews for every period of sickness absence within the spirit of this policy.
- All staff will strictly adhere to absence reporting procedures. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.
- Managers will maintain accurate, up to date attendance records for all staff.

ABSENCE MONITORING

A fundamental feature of good attendance management is the accurate and timely recording of all absences. This is essential both in terms of the requirements of the Statutory Sick Pay arrangements and the Association’s Sickness Benefit scheme. Accurate information also allows patterns to be identified and can be an early indication of underlying problems. The sooner these problems are identified and acted upon – the more likely a successful conclusion for both you and the organisation can be achieved.

Accurate recording is also an essential element in satisfying any concerns over the fairness of any actions taken by line managers. The responsibility for maintaining such records rests with the Head of Corporate Services.

Keeping good quality, up to date records also means that: -

- Concise data is available for each employee during the year
- Problems are identified at an early stage
- Employees are treated fairly and consistently
- Trends and underlying causes can be more easily identified
- Relevant Health & Safety issues can be identified
- Departmental and Corporate attendance rates can be improved
- Managers are better able to explain decisions where continued poor attendance results in counselling and/or disciplinary action

The Association monitors absence in order to help identify absenteeism trends. Monitoring can be a useful tool when trying to establish what the best interventions are to help an individual in terms of support and a successful return to work. Each individual’s absence should be taken on its own merits.

Quarterly absence reports are provided to the Human Resources Sub Committee and are measured by using the “Lost Time Rate”. This is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Total Absence (hours) in the period}}{\text{Total Possible working time (hours) in the period}} \times 100 = \text{lost time rate}$$

Individual cases will not be discussed as they form a confidential record of each employee.

ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURES

Reporting

If you cannot come to work, either due to illness or for any other reason not already authorised, you must telephone your line manager (or, if not available, another member of the Management Team) as soon as is reasonably possible, and no later than one hour after the normal starting time. Messages should not be left on the answer machine or with other colleagues, nor should sickness absence be reported by text, WhatsApp or e-mail. In the event of an emergency where you cannot make contact on day one of your absence, you should ensure that someone else makes contact on your behalf. The reasons for absence and the likely duration should be intimated.

Working from home should not be seen as a substitute for sickness absence. Any working from home outside normal agreed arrangements should be authorised by your line manager or another member of the Management Team.

Certification

For every period of absence you are required to complete a self-certification form generated by the attendance management system.

If you continue to be absent for more than seven consecutive days, you must provide a fit note (which can be obtained from identified healthcare professionals) to your line manager as soon as possible.

The fit note will indicate whether you are “not fit for work” or “may be fit for work”. If the “may be fit for work” box is selected, your line manager will contact you to discuss any adjustments suggested. Although we are not obliged to follow the suggested adjustments, we will do our best to help you return to work. If the suggested adjustments are discussed and are not possible, you will be treated as not fit for work. If appropriate, clarification may be sought from occupational health or the health professional that issued the fit note.

If we agree a phased return to work, the days you are still off sick within the agreed period will count as one period of absence.

You are permitted to return to work on or before the expiry of your fit note (as long as the fit note does not state that a further assessment of your health is required before returning to work. If you request to return to work before the expiry of your fit note, we will carry out a risk assessment which may involve seeking professional advice.

Keeping in Touch

It is important that you and your line manager agree the best method and frequency of keeping in touch during periods of sickness absence. During contact, you will be expected to keep your line manager up to date about the following points:

- the reason for your absence
- the predicted recovery and/or treatment
- when you expect to return to work

Keeping in touch is an important part of us ensuring your wellbeing while on sickness absence. Therefore, if contact is not maintained as agreed, a manager will make all efforts to contact you.

Failure to comply

Where you do not follow reporting, certification, or keeping-in-touch arrangements we may withhold company sick pay. Failure to comply with these requirements may also lead to disciplinary action against you in accordance with the disciplinary procedures. Similarly, if we suspect that you have falsified your absence or have deliberately misled us, we will investigate this, and it may also result in disciplinary action being taken against you. In serious and/or repeated cases, it may lead to dismissal.

Return to Work

A return to work meeting will be carried out after every period of unplanned sickness absence. The purpose of this is to establish if you are fit to return to work and to discuss any wellbeing concerns. This meeting will be conducted by your line manager (or another member of the management team if he/she is not available) on the first day of your return to work. Should any notes be taken at the meeting, they will be stored in your confidential personnel records.

STATUTORY SICK PAY (SSP)

If you meet the eligibility criteria for SSP you will receive this. The scale of entitlement to SSP is reviewed by the government and details of this can be found at www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay.

If you are no longer entitled to SSP, you may be entitled to relevant benefits. You can enquire about this at your nearest job centre or via www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus.

You will be informed if you are not entitled to SSP and provided with the appropriate government form. It is your own responsibility to claim any Government benefit(s) that you may be entitled to.

COMPANY SICK PAY

Please refer to Section A5 in the Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment.

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

This refers to dealing with unacceptable levels of attendance, with no reference to reasons for absence or medical condition.

We will aim to assist you in maintaining a good attendance record. This will involve maintaining good records, ensuring return to work interviews take place and investigating and addressing any identified underlying causes of absence.

Where this fails to secure an improvement, we will invoke the terms of the disciplinary procedure. Unsatisfactory attendance reviews may result in a disciplinary action, including dismissal.

If at any stage during this process it becomes apparent that an underlying health issue is involved, medical information will be sought and further discussion will take place prior to deciding on any appropriate action, if any.

Absence periods related to pregnancy, including employees undergoing IVF, who have had an embryo transfer and may be pregnant, or underlying medical conditions classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 will not be considered for the purpose of the attendance management process.

Attendance Review Triggers

Attendance review meetings will be arranged when an absence record falls into the following categories of “rolling” absence :

- 3 separate occasions of absence in any rolling 6 month period
- 5 separate occasions of absence in any rolling 12 month period

Attendance review meetings may result in your line manager deciding to monitor your attendance for a reasonable and specified period. You will be advised in advance of the purpose of the meeting. At the meeting, your line manager will seek to obtain as much information as possible from you with regard to your health and any other relevant issues which may be impacting on your attendance level. The manager should consider, where appropriate, any forms of assistance which would improve your attendance record.

There will be a requirement to conduct a follow-up attendance review meeting, which should take place no later than 3 months from the date of the first review meeting, or earlier if appropriate.

At the follow-up attendance review meeting, when an acceptable level of attendance has been achieved, you will be encouraged to maintain that level. If no acceptable improvement has been made then further advice/help may be offered and another interview arranged for a future date, which will include further close monitoring of your attendance record.

Notes of all attendance review meetings will be taken and stored in your personnel records.

The manager may consider disciplinary action if, at any stage in the management of the absence procedure (including the return to work process), your absence record is deemed to be unacceptable and/or where the following has been identified:

- A particular pattern of absence can be identified
- No sustained improvement has taken place
- You are unable to offer any mitigating reasons for the absences
- There are no identifiable underlying health problems

An investigation should be arranged in the first instance to determine the facts. Where appropriate, a disciplinary hearing should be arranged and you will be informed of your rights under the disciplinary procedure.

LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

Any absence longer than four weeks will be viewed as a long-term absence.

We will adopt a sympathetic and understanding approach to employees with a long-term and/or underlying health condition. If you find yourself in such a position you should be confident that your manager will be supportive in such circumstances.

The following points will always be considered in relation to long term absence: -

- The nature of the illness and any contributing factors
- The likely duration and/or frequency of your absence(s)
- Any actions that can be taken by you
- Any reasonable adjustments that we could make
- Any possible redeployment opportunities
- The nature of your duties in relation to your health conditions
- Our business needs and the impact that your absence may have upon these
- Your entitlement to statutory and/or occupational sick pay
- Any external advice provided in relation to the case

Throughout the duration of your absence it will be expected that you will keep in touch and advise of progress. In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, we may also seek to obtain medical reports and assessments at appropriate junctures during the absence and will arrange to discuss these with you when received. Medical reports may also be requested where you are suffering from an underlying medical condition even though you have not been off sick for a prolonged period. We may also ask you for consent to obtain a medical report from your GP or other medical professional, and/or refer you to an occupational health provider for a medical assessment. Where you disagree with the nature of any medical reports, you will be free to seek and offer alternative medical evidence. Where you refuse access to medical records or do not turn up at an independent medical assessment, the process will be managed and decisions made based on the information available at the time.

Reasonable adjustments

If a medical professional makes suggestions for any reasonable adjustments, your line manager will discuss these with you prior to your return to work. The purpose of this discussion will be to determine if adjustments can be accommodated, and to consider any suggestions made by the employee or health professional. While we are not obliged to follow suggested adjustments, they will be given thorough consideration. If reasonable adjustments are agreed they will be accompanied by set time scales to assess if they are still required and suitable.

When managing a long-term absence, it is possible that termination of employment for the reason of ill health capability may be considered. Prior to this any possible redeployment opportunities will be considered. This decision will only be taken where all other options have been exhausted and we can no longer sustain the absence. We will ensure that we seek the appropriate advice if and when necessary.

DISHONEST ABSENCE

If you are found to be falsifying or exaggerating your absence, this will be treated as gross misconduct. An investigation will be carried out in accordance with the disciplinary procedure and disciplinary action may be imposed, including dismissal or future withdrawal of any organisational sickness benefit.

OTHER PROVISIONS

Absence and holidays

If you are on annual leave and fall ill, and submit a self certificate or fit note, we may count the period as sick leave and not annual leave. You must speak to your line manager on the first day of your return to work, or earlier if possible and provide them with the necessary certification.

If there is a public or general holiday during your period of sickness, and you submit a self-certificate or fit note, this will be counted as sick leave and the holiday will not be deducted from your overall allowance.

You continue to accrue your full holiday entitlement when on sickness absence. If you are unable to take your full holiday entitlement due to long term sickness, any remainder will be carried over to the next holiday year.

We recognise that, in some cases, a holiday may aid in your recovery. If you intend to go on holiday while on sickness absence, you must inform your line manager as soon as is reasonably practical. Your line manager will decide whether this is appropriate, considering your reason for absence. Appropriate medical advice may be sought in such circumstances. Where you go on holiday without authorisation, a full investigation will be initiated and, depending on the outcome, disciplinary action may be invoked.

Medical and dental appointments

Doctor, hospital and dental appointments should be arranged outwith working hours. If it is not possible, you should request time off your line manager. Arrangements could include

using annual leave, TOIL/flexi or unpaid leave. Paid time off will be given for hospital appointments, for which proof of the appointment must be provided.

Home Visits

Where an employee is off long term sick it may be necessary to visit them in their own home. The visit will discuss the ongoing absence from work and what if any support can be given to facilitate a return to work. The meeting may also take place within Hillhead Housing Association's offices or another mutually agreed venue.

Conduct whilst off sick

When on sick leave, you are still bound by your contract of employment with us and all our policies including Code of Conduct and your duty of fidelity. We also expect that you do not participate in activities that would be at odds with the reason for your absence. Any breach in respect of this will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. This includes conduct on social networking sites and any other publicly made remarks regarding our customers, work colleagues, partners and anyone else who is connected with us.

Cosmetic procedures

Absence due to cosmetic procedures (whether carried out in the UK or abroad) will not fall under the sick leave or pay unless it is recommended by health professionals. You should discuss this with your line manager and provide the relevant evidence of this. If the treatment is not recommended by a health professional, you should therefore request time off and agree with your line manager how the absence will be processed, e.g. annual leave or unpaid leave.

Fertility treatment

There are a wide range of fertility treatments available, and absences relating to these will be processed as sickness absence or leave for medical appointment.

Stress related absences

If you are on sickness absence due to stress, your line manager will endeavour to find out the underlying cause so that appropriate actions, if any, can be taken, and in particular to determine if any work factors are contributing to the stressors. Your line manager will consider whether steps can be taken to support you to return to work. Your line manager will follow procedures as outlined in the Stress Management Policy.

Special Leave

We recognise that time off may be required off to deal with situations involving their dependants including care for them when they fall ill or are injured. (such situations are described in more detail in Section A10 1.3 and 4 of the EVH Terms and Conditions of Employment) Paid leave will be granted for the first day of absence. Should the absence extend beyond 1 day, you can use your own annual leave or flexi/toil. Alternatively, unpaid leave will be granted.

No more than 2 periods of special leave within a 12 month period will be granted in relation to the circumstances above. Further periods will be unpaid unless you wish to use your own leave.

General Data Protection Regulations

We will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current General Data Protection Regulation and our own Privacy Statement. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing data is provided in the employee privacy notice.