

SecureCare

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

SecureCare (the “Company”) seek to ensure that procedures for reporting sickness absence and for the management of sickness absence are fair and consistent.

Sickness absence can vary from short intermittent periods of ill-health to a continuous period of long-term absence and have several different causes (for example, injuries, recurring conditions, or a serious illness requiring lengthy treatment).

The Company wish to ensure that the reasons for sickness absence are understood in each case and investigated where necessary. In addition, where needed and reasonably practicable, measures will be taken to assist those who have been absent by reason of sickness to return to work. The Company may vary the procedures set out in this policy, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

Disabilities

We are aware that sickness absence may result from a disability. At each stage of the sickness absence meetings procedure set out below, consideration will be given to whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of a job or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and/or assist a return to work.

If you consider that you are affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects your ability to undertake your work, you should inform Robert Stevenson.

Sickness Absence Reporting Procedure

Please ensure you refer to the [Sickness Absence Reporting Flowchart in the Employee’s Handbook](#).

If you are taken ill or injured while at work you should report to the Office in the first instance, who will plan for you to be accompanied home or to receive medical treatment where necessary.

If you cannot attend work because you are ill or injured, you should telephone Robert Stevenson in person (and not by email or text) on 07970661962 as soon as possible and no later than 7.30am.

The following details should be provided:

- The nature of your illness
- The expected length of your absence from work
- Contact details
- Any outstanding or urgent work that requires attention
- Any company tools or customer’s parts you have in your van

Failure to telephone (not text or email) before 7.30am is a disciplinary offence.

Evidence of Incapacity

For sickness absence of between four and seven calendar days you must complete a self-certification form which is available from the Office.

For absence of more than a week you must obtain a certificate from your doctor (a "Statement of Fitness for Work") stating that you are not fit for work and the reason(s) why. This should be forwarded to the Office as soon as possible. If your absence continues, further medical certificates must be provided to cover the whole period of absence.

If your doctor provides a certificate stating that you "may be fit for work" you should inform the Office immediately who will discuss with you any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate your return to work, taking account of your doctor's advice. This may take place at a return to work interview. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, you will remain on sick leave and we will set a date to review the situation.

Where we are concerned about the reason for absence, or the level of frequent short-term absence, we may require a medical certificate for each absence regardless of duration. In such circumstances, we will cover any costs incurred in obtaining such medical certificates, for absences of a week or less, on production of a doctor's invoice.

Unauthorised Absence

Cases of unauthorised absence will be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure. Absence that has not been notified according to the sickness absence reporting procedure or the holiday request procedure will be treated as unauthorised absence.

If you do not report for work and have not telephoned Robert Stevenson to explain the reason for your absence, she will try to contact you, by telephone and in writing if necessary. This should not be treated as a substitute for reporting sickness absence.

Sick Pay

If you are absent from work, you are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) provided the relevant requirements are satisfied. Qualifying days for SSP purposes are Monday to Friday.

If a period of sickness absence is or appears to be occasioned by actionable negligence, nuisance or breach of any statutory duty on the part of a third party, in respect of which damages are or may be recoverable, you must immediately notify the Office Manager of that fact and of any claim, compromise, settlement or judgment made or awarded in connection with it and all relevant particulars that we may reasonably require.

If we require you to do so, you must cooperate in any related legal proceedings and refund to us that part of any damages or compensation you recover that relates to lost earnings for the period of sickness absence as we may reasonably determine, less any costs you incurred in connection with the recovery of such damages or compensation, provided that the amount to be refunded to us shall not exceed the total amount we paid to you in respect of the period of sickness absence.

Keeping in Contact during Sickness Absence

If you are absent on sick leave you should expect to be contacted from time to time by Robert Stevenson to discuss your wellbeing, expected length of continued absence from work and any of your work that requires attention. Such contact is intended to provide reassurance and will be kept to a reasonable minimum.

If you have any concerns while absent on sick leave, whether about the reason for your absence or your ability to return to work, you should feel free to contact Robert Stevenson at any time.

Medical Examinations

The Company may, at any time in operating this policy, ask you to consent to a medical examination by a doctor nominated by us (at our expense).

You will be asked to agree that any report produced in connection with any such examination may be disclosed to us and that we may discuss the contents of the report with [our advisers and] the relevant doctor.

Return-to-Work Interviews

If you have been absent on sick leave for more than three days, we will arrange for you to have a return-to-work interview. A return-to-work interview enables us to confirm the details of your absence. It also gives you the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions you may have, and to bring any relevant matters to our attention.

Where your doctor has provided a certificate stating that you "may be fit for work" we will usually hold a return-to-work interview to discuss any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate your return to work, taking account of your doctor's advice. The Doctor's note should be presented at this meeting.

We are committed to helping staff return to work from long-term sickness absence. As part of our sickness absence meetings, we will, where appropriate and possible, support returns to work by:

- Obtaining medical advice
- Making reasonable adjustments to the workplace, working practices and working hours
- Considering redeployment
- Agreeing a return to work programme with everyone affected

Medical Advice

At various stages of managing an employee's sickness absence, a manager may wish to seek advice on the employee's fitness for work from occupational health advisers. Occupational health referrals may be in order to:

- seek a medical report on the employee
- establish when the employee might be able to return to work
- ask for guidance on the employee's condition, e.g. if there is a possibility that the employee is disabled

The Company will treat personal data collected during the absence management process in accordance with its Data Protection Policy.

When a report from the employee's medical practitioner is necessary, the employee will be fully informed of their rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 and their permission will be sought for the report to be obtained.

The employee has the right to access the report before the Company sees it.

If the employee wishes to see the report, they should inform the Company of this, so that it can inform the medical practitioner. The employee will then have 21 days from the date of making the application for the report to contact the medical practitioner to see the report.

When requesting a report, the Company will provide the medical practitioner with as much information as possible on the role of the employee and explain why the report is being sought. The Company will provide the medical practitioner with:

- a copy of the employee's signed form consenting to the request to seek a medical report
- confirmation that the employee is aware of their rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988
- details of the major features of the employee's job

The Company will ask the medical practitioner to identify:

- the nature of the employee's illness or injury
- when the employee is likely to be fully fit to resume their normal duties
- if the employee is unfit to resume their normal duties, what alternative duties they might be fit to undertake
- when the employee is likely to be fit to undertake any alternative duties
- what reasonable adjustments could be made to facilitate a return to work
- the likelihood of recurrence of the illness or injury once the employee has returned to work

Where the employee refuses permission for the Company to contact their medical practitioner, the Company will explain to the employee the reasons behind the request and inform the employee that a decision relating to their employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

Work Arrangements During Absence

Where an employee is to be absent from work for a long period of time, he or she is responsible for changing voice mail messages and calendars and for ensuring that a handover has been undertaken in relation to their work.

Where an employee is unable to do this for reasons of sickness, the employee's line manager may access the employee's voicemail or calendar to ensure that clients OR customers are aware of alternative contact details.

Frequent Sickness Absence

Frequent sickness absence is defined as when an employee is frequently absent from work for relatively short periods of unconnected illnesses.

Sickness Absence Meetings Procedure

We may apply this procedure whenever we consider it necessary, including, for example, if you:

- have been absent due to illness on a number of occasions
- have discussed matters at a return to work interview that require investigation
- have been absent for more than 7 working days

Unless it is impractical to do so, we will give you three days written notice of the date, time and place of a sickness absence meeting. We will put any concerns about your sickness absence and the basis for those concerns in writing or otherwise advise why the meeting is being called. A reasonable opportunity for you to consider this information before a meeting will be provided.

The meeting will be conducted by the Office Manager. You may bring a companion with you to the meeting.

You must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. Failure to do so without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If you or your companion are unable to attend at the time specified, you should immediately inform the Office Manager who will seek to agree an alternative time.

A meeting may be adjourned if we are awaiting receipt of information, need to gather any further information or give consideration to matters discussed at a previous meeting. You will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the meeting is reconvened.

Confirmation of any decision made at a meeting, the reasons for it, and of the right of appeal will be given to you in writing within three days of a sickness absence meeting (unless this time scale is not practicable, in which case it will be provided as soon as is practicable).

If, at any time, we consider that you have taken or are taking sickness absence when you are not unwell, they may refer matters to be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Right to be Accompanied at Meetings

You may bring a companion to any meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. Your companion may be either a trade union representative or a fellow member of staff. Their identity must be confirmed to the Office Manager who will be conducting the meeting, in good time before it takes place.

Members of staff are allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion. However, they are not obliged to act as a companion and may decline a request if they so wish.

We may at our discretion, permit a companion who is not a member of staff or union representative (for example, a family member) where this will help overcome difficulties caused by a disability, or difficulty understanding English.

A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up your position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on your behalf. You may confer privately with your companion at any time during a meeting.

Stage 1: First Sickness Absence Meeting

This will follow the procedure set out above on the arrangements for and right to be accompanied at sickness absence meetings.

The purposes of a first sickness absence meeting may include:

- discussing the reasons for absence
- where you are on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last
- where you have been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences
- considering whether medical advice is required
- considering what, if any, measures might improve your health and/or attendance
- agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a time-scale for review and/or a further meeting under the sickness absence procedure

Stage 2: Further Sickness Absence Meeting

Depending on the matters discussed at the first stage of the sickness absence procedure, a further meeting or meetings may be necessary. Arrangements for meetings under the second stage of the sickness absence procedure will follow the procedure set out above on the arrangements for and right to be accompanied at sickness absence meetings.

The purposes of further meeting(s) may include:

- discussing the reasons for and impact of your ongoing absence(s)

- where you are on long-term sickness absence, discussing how long your absence is likely to last
- where you have been absent on a number of occasions, discussing the likelihood of further absences
- if it has not been obtained, considering whether medical advice is required. If it has been obtained, considering the advice that has been given and whether further advice is required
- considering your ability to return to/remain in your job in view both of your capabilities and our business needs and any adjustments that can reasonably be made to your job to enable you to do so
- considering possible redeployment opportunities and whether any adjustments can reasonably be made to assist in redeploying you
- where you are able to return from long-term sick leave, whether to your job or a redeployed job, agreeing a return to work programme
- if it is considered that you are unlikely to be able to return to work from long-term absence, whether there are any benefits for which you should be considered
- agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a time-scale for review and/or a further meeting(s). This may, depending on steps we have already taken, include warning you that you are at risk of dismissal

Stage 3: Final Sickness Absence Meeting

Where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, we may invite you to a meeting under the third stage of the sickness absence procedure. Arrangements for this meeting will follow the procedure set out above on the arrangements for and right to be accompanied at sickness absence meetings.

The purposes of the meeting will be:

- to review the meetings that have taken place and matters discussed with you
- where you remain on long-term sickness absence, to consider whether there have been any changes since the last meeting under stage two of the procedure, either as regards your possible return to work or opportunities for return or redeployment
- to consider any further matters that you wish to raise
- to consider whether there is a reasonable likelihood of you returning to work or achieving the desired level of attendance in a reasonable time
- to consider the possible termination of your employment

Termination will normally be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Appeals

You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure and you may bring a companion to an appeal meeting.

An appeal should be made in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to Robert Stevenson within five days of the date on which the decision was sent to you.

Unless it is not practicable, you will be given written notice of an appeal meeting within one week of the meeting. In cases of dismissal the appeal will be held as soon as possible. Any new matters raised in an appeal may delay an appeal meeting if further investigation is required.

You will be provided with written details of any new information which comes to light before an appeal meeting. You will also be given a reasonable opportunity to consider this information before the meeting.

Where practicable, an appeal meeting will be conducted by a someone other than the individual who conducted the sickness absence meeting. Depending on the grounds of appeal, an appeal meeting may be a complete rehearing of the matter or a review of the original decision.

Following an appeal, the original decision may be confirmed, revoked or replaced with a different decision.

The final decision will be confirmed in writing, if possible within five days of the appeal meeting. There will be no further right of appeal.

The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.

This Policy will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. The management team endorses these Policies and is fully committed to their implementation.

This Sickness Absence Management Policy has been approved & authorised by:

Signature:

Signed by: ROBERT STEVENSON
Position: DIRECTOR

Date:

Review date: