Sickness Absence Policy

[Company Name]

Effective date: [Date] Review date: [Date] Policy owner: [Name / role]

How to use: replace everything in [square brackets], choose one option where options are shown, and delete this note. Check the finished policy against your employment contracts. Acas (acas.org.uk) gives free guidance.

1. Purpose and scope

1.1 This policy explains what employees of [Company Name] must do when they are too ill to work, what evidence we need, what they will be paid and how we support them back to work.

1.2 It applies to all employees [and workers]. It does not form part of any contract of employment and we may change it after consulting staff.

1.3 We will apply this policy fairly and consistently. Absence linked to a disability or to pregnancy will be handled separately from other absence (see section 7).

2. Reporting sickness

2.1 If you are too ill to work, contact **[line manager / name / absence line]** by **[phone call]** before **[time / your normal start time / 30 minutes before your shift]** on your first day of absence.

2.2 Make the contact yourself unless you are too unwell to do so. A text or message to a colleague is not notification.

2.3 Tell us, in general terms, why you are off, how long you expect to be away and any urgent work that needs covering. You do not have to give detailed medical information.

2.4 Keep in touch [each day / every [X] days / as agreed with your manager] until you return or send a fit note that covers your absence.

2.5 If you do not report your absence as set out here without good reason, it may be treated as unauthorised absence and may affect sick pay.

3. Evidence of sickness

Length of absence	Evidence needed	Notes
1 to 7 calendar days	Self-certification ([absence form / TimeTally / return-to-work form])	Weekends and bank holidays count. If we ask for medical evidence in this period, we pay any fee.
8 calendar days or more	Fit note	Issued by a doctor, registered nurse, occupational therapist, pharmacist or physiotherapist. Send it to [name / role] [within X days].
Continuing absence	Further fit notes with no gaps	Each fit note should start when the last one ends.

3.1 If a fit note says you "may be fit for work", we will talk to you about the changes it suggests. If we cannot agree the changes, the fit note will be treated as evidence that you are not fit for work for sick pay purposes.

Template from TimeTally (timetally.uk). General guidance, not legal advice. Checked against GOV.UK and Acas, October 2026. Review each April.

3.2 You can return to work before your fit note ends. You do not need to be "signed back" by a healthcare professional.

4. Sick pay

4.1 Employees who are sick for at least one full working day are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if they meet the conditions set by HMRC. Since 6 April 2026 there is no minimum earnings requirement and no unpaid "waiting days": SSP is paid from the first full day of sickness absence.

4.2 SSP is **£123.25 a week or 80% of the employee's average weekly earnings, whichever is lower** (rate from 6 April 2026). It is paid for the days the employee normally works ("qualifying days") for up to 28 weeks.

4.3 Example: an employee who works 5 days a week and earns £500 a week gets the full £123.25 a week (80% of £500 is £400, which is higher), or £24.65 for each qualifying day. An employee earning £120 a week gets £96 a week (80% of £120), or £19.20 a day over 5 days.

4.4 [Company Name] [does not pay company sick pay / pays company sick pay as follows: [e.g. full pay for [X] weeks then half pay for [X] weeks, after [X] months' service]]. Company sick pay includes any SSP due; it is not paid on top of it.

4.5 If an employee is not entitled to SSP, we will send them form SSP1 within 7 days of their first day off sick. If SSP is expected to end before their sickness does, we will send form SSP1 on or before the beginning of the 23rd week, so they can claim other support.

4.6 SSP rates change each April. [Name / role] will update this policy when they do.

5. Returning to work

5.1 Your manager will hold a short return-to-work meeting with you as soon as possible after every absence, usually on your first day back.

5.2 The meeting will check you are ready to return, update you on anything you missed, agree any support or adjustments, and record the absence. It is a supportive conversation, not a disciplinary meeting.

5.3 The meeting is recorded on our return-to-work form. You will get a copy.

5.4 After a longer absence we may agree a phased return (for example reduced hours or duties for an agreed period) with a date to review it.

6. Absence review points

6.1 We review absence when any of these review points is reached in a rolling [12-month] period: **[3]** separate absences; **[8]** working days absent; a pattern of absence (for example regular Mondays or Fridays); [a Bradford Factor score of [X] or more].

6.2 Reaching a review point leads to a meeting to understand the reasons and agree support. It does not automatically lead to disciplinary action.

6.3 If absence continues to be a concern after support has been offered, we may follow our [capability / attendance] procedure. You may bring a colleague or trade union representative to any formal meeting.

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7. Disability, pregnancy and reasonable adjustments

7.1 If you have a disability under the Equality Act 2010, we will consider reasonable adjustments to support your attendance, for example changed hours, duties, equipment, extra breaks or time off for treatment.

7.2 We will [adjust review points for / not count] disability-related absence and pregnancy-related absence when applying section 6.

8. Long-term sickness

8.1 Absence of [4] weeks or more in a row is long-term sickness. We will agree with you how often we keep in touch, respecting your need to recover.

8.2 With your consent, we may ask for an occupational health assessment or a report from your doctor so we can understand how to support you back to work.

8.3 We will consider a phased return, reasonable adjustments and alternative work. Ending employment on grounds of ill health is a last resort and will only follow a fair process, including medical advice and meetings with you.

9. Sickness and holiday

9.1 You continue to build up holiday while off sick.

9.2 If sickness stops you taking holiday in the leave year, you may carry over up to 4 weeks of unused holiday, to be used within 18 months.

9.3 If you are ill during booked holiday, report it under section 2 and provide evidence under section 3. You may then take that time as sick leave and use the holiday at another time.

10. Medical appointments

10.1 Please arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside working hours where you can. Where that is not possible, [time off is [paid / unpaid / made up / taken as holiday]]. Statutory rights, such as paid time off for antenatal appointments, still apply.

11. Records and confidentiality

11.1 We keep records of sickness absence, evidence received and sick pay paid. HMRC may ask to see sickness records if there is a dispute about SSP.

11.2 Health information is special category data under UK GDPR. It is stored securely, seen only by people who need it, and kept for [6 years] after employment ends, then deleted.

12. Responsibilities

Who	Responsibilities
Employees	Report absence on time; keep in touch; provide evidence; attend return-to-work meetings.
Line managers	Record absence; hold return-to-work meetings; apply review points consistently; consider adjustments.
[HR / owner]	Keep records; process sick pay; send SSP1 forms; review this policy each April.

This policy was last reviewed on [Date].

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