Sickness absence policy

1. Purpose and scope

This policy explains how *[organisation name]* supports people who are unwell, records absence and handles attendance concerns fairly. It applies to *[employees / workers covered]*.

Policy owner: *[name or role]*
Reporting contact: *[name, role or route]*

2. Reporting sickness

Tell *[contact]* by *[time]* on the first day you are unable to work. If you cannot make contact yourself, ask someone to do so where possible.

Give the expected length of absence, a way to stay in touch and enough information to understand any immediate work or safety issue. You do not need to share more medical detail than the organisation reasonably needs.

If you are off sick for 7 calendar days or less, use *[self-certification route]*. For more than 7 calendar days, provide a fit note as soon as reasonably possible. A fit note that says you may be fit for work starts a discussion about possible changes; it does not guarantee that every suggested change can be made.

3. Contact during absence

You and *[manager / contact]* will agree useful, proportionate contact. For longer absence, this may include an agreed date for an update and a discussion about support or a return to work. Contact should not become pressure to work while unwell.

4. Sick pay

Contractual sick pay: *[set out the rule or state that none is offered]*.

For sickness beginning on or after 6 April 2026, eligible employees receive Statutory Sick Pay from the first full qualifying day. There is no lower earnings threshold. The weekly amount is the lower of 80% of average weekly earnings or the current statutory flat rate.

Payroll will use current HMRC guidance for eligibility, linked absences, qualifying days, average weekly earnings and the 28-week maximum. Payroll will use the current rate rather than a figure written into this policy.

5. Recurring or long-term absence

The organisation reviews patterns in context rather than treating a numerical trigger as an automatic outcome. A review may consider the reason and timing of absence, support already offered, impact on the role and whether medical or occupational-health advice would help.

Pregnancy-related absence is recorded separately from ordinary attendance action. Disability-related absence and any disadvantage caused by the process will be considered alongside the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

6. Review points

A review may be arranged when *[describe fair, non-automatic review points]*. Before the meeting, the employee will be told the purpose and the information being considered.

The meeting is an opportunity to understand the absence, check support, consider adjustments and agree next steps. No review point creates an automatic warning or dismissal.

7. Returning to work

After absence, *[manager / contact]* will hold a proportionate return-to-work conversation. This can confirm the dates, check whether support or adjustments are needed and correct the absence record.

A phased return or temporary change should state the duties, hours, pay treatment, review date and what happens next.

8. Capability and conduct

Ill health, inability to perform a role and deliberate failure to follow a reasonable reporting process are different issues. The organisation will identify which process applies and investigate fairly before taking formal action.

Dismissal for capability is a separate formal decision and a last resort after support, adjustments, medical evidence and alternatives have been considered where relevant.

9. Health information

Sickness and health information is handled as sensitive personal information. Access is limited to roles that need it for a stated purpose. Managers receive only the detail they need to support the person and manage work.

Health records are kept in *[approved location]*, separate from general access where practical, for *[reviewed retention period]*. Medical information will not be requested or shared without a lawful basis and the required process.

10. Questions and review

Raise questions with *[name or role]*. We review this policy after a relevant legal or working-practice change and at least every *[period]*.

Policy version: *[version]*
Approved by: *[name or role]*
Approval date: *[date]*
Next review: *[date]*