



Sickness & Absence Policy

Aim of this policy

1. This policy is designed to assist Central in effectively managing sickness-related and other staff absence. Central Employment recognises the importance of ensuring that employees are supported through any periods of absence and their subsequent return to work. Through an effective Sickness and Absence Policy, Central Employment will be better positioned to identify any potentially unsafe work practices, any issues affecting employee morale and any other underlying problems employees may be facing.

Notification of sickness

- 2.1 If an employee is unable to come to work for any reason, they must inform the Central by contacting your manager by either 8am or 9am (depending on start time) on the first day of absence.
- 2.2 Employees should speak to the office personally i.e. calls on the employee's behalf from a friend/partner/parent and texting or emailing the manager will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.3 The employee should indicate the reason for their absence, its likely duration and when the illness started.
- 2.4 In the event that the employee's absence continues for a number of days or weeks, they must maintain regular contact with Central to keep the Central informed of the reasons for their ongoing absence and the date when they expect to be able to return to work. In such cases the employee should specify how Central can contact them if necessary, ideally leaving a landline number on which they can be contacted.

Certification of sickness

- 3.1 All periods of absence through sickness must be certified by Central's **Self-Certification of Absence & Return to Work Discussion/Interview Form**. The completed form should indicate actual days of sickness, even if they include days when the employee would not normally have worked (e.g. weekends and public holidays).
 - 3.1.1 For sickness absences of up to 7 calendar days, the return to work discussion/interview form will be completed by the manager and employee upon their return to work.
 - 3.1.2 For sickness absence of more than 7 calendar days, the employee must also provide a medical certificate also referred to as a 'fit note'. This will provide us with more information about your condition, and let us know whether your GP or medical provider considers that you are not 'fit for work', or 'may be fit for work taking account of the following advice'. Subsequent medical certificates must be produced as necessary to cover the total duration of the period of absence. As a minimum, employees should contact their manager on a weekly basis to provide an update on the injury or illness.



Long-term and persistent absence

- 4.1 Central Employment will treat as long-term absence any period of extensive absence due to serious or significant illness over a prolonged period. Persistent absence may consist of a series of unconnected short-term illnesses. Where Central is of the opinion that a period of absence is long-term, it will inform the employee of such and:
 - 4.1.1 require that the employee keep in regular contact with Central, at such intervals as agreed between Central and the employee; and
 - 4.1.2 ensure that the employee is kept informed as to any possible threat to their employment.
- 4.2 Central Employment will treat as persistent absence a series of unconnected short-term illnesses.
- 4.3 It may be necessary in incidences of long-term or persistent absence to treat the matter as an issue of capability or conduct. In such circumstances Central will:
 - 4.3.1 investigate the absence through "Return to Work Interviews" and the obtaining of medical reports;
 - 4.3.2 set time limits on the assessment of the employee and keep him or her informed of such;
 - 4.3.3 consider adjustments to the job in order to facilitate a return to work or to allow the employee to do their job more easily, for example the implementation of flexible working arrangements;
 - 4.3.4 consider whether the illness amounts to a disability. Where it is found to do so the employee shall fall under the scope of Central's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and Central shall make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary; and
 - 4.3.5 keep the employee informed in all the circumstance of any threat to their employment.
- 4.4 Where Central requires medical reports relating to an absence it will either obtain a report from the employee's doctor, subject to employee consent. In either case the employee may refuse to attend or refuse to consent to the release of a medical report, or request that corrections are made. Employees are reminded however that any decision regarding their future which could result in dismissal will be taken on the basis of the information available to Central.
- 4.5 Central will hold all medical reports and related information obtained under Clause 4.5 as private and confidential.
- 4.6 Central stresses that dismissal will only ever be taken as a last resort. Where however the absence is found to be a matter of misconduct, the employee will be subject to Central's Disciplinary Procedure.

Sickness which occurs whilst the employee is on holiday

- 5.1 Where an employee is incapacitated through sickness or injury during any period of pre-booked holiday (whether in whole or in part), Central will, subject to the correct notification and certification, allow the employee to transfer to sick leave and take replacement holiday at a later date. This policy is subject to the following conditions, which will be strictly applied:
 - 5.1.1 The total period of incapacity must be fully certificated by a qualified medical practitioner;



- 5.1.2 The employee must contact Central (in person and by telephone if possible) as soon as they know that there will be a period of incapacity during the holiday; and
- 5.1.3 The employee must confirm in writing to a Company director no later than 5 days after returning to work how much of the holiday period was affected by sickness or injury and the amount of leave that the employee wishes to take at another time.
- 5.2 Any requests for replacement holiday must be made in accordance with the Central's holiday policy and the employee should try to take the replacement holiday in the holiday year in which it was accrued. Where this is not possible, Central will allow the employee to carry forward the leave into the next holiday year.
- 5.3 Central may require the employee to take all or part of their replacement holiday on particular days to be specified by Central.

Return to Work Interviews

Central will require, after any absence due to sickness, the employee to attend a return to work interview with their Manager in order to:

- 6.1 ensure the employee's fitness to return to work;
- 6.2 agree any necessary actions required to facilitate the employee's return to work;
- 6.3 ensure the proper certificates have been completed/obtained in respect of the entire period of absence; and
- 6.4 discuss any problems that may exist.

At the return to work interview, employees may be set reasonable targets and time limits for an improvement in attendance. A failure to improve may result in disciplinary action.

Statutory Sick Pay ("SSP")

- 7.1 In order to be eligible for SSP, employees must be ill for four days or longer (this can include weekends and bank holidays) and must have average weekly earnings equal to or more than the lower earnings limit. Please see relevant government websites such as HMRC, Business Link and Directgov for details of the current lower earnings limit.
- 7.2 Employees must use Central's Return to Work Discussion/Interview Form to provide Central with details of their illness.
- 7.3 The present weekly SSP rate can be found on relevant government websites such as HMRC, Business Link and Directgov.
- 7.4 Central will record all details of SSP payments made to employees using Statutory Form SSP2 in conjunction with legal requirements.
- 7.5 Where Central is not required to pay SSP or SSP comes to an end, Central will provide the employee with Form SSP1 to support the employee's claim for Employment and Support Allowance.

Company Sick Pay ("CSP")

- 8.1 CSP will be paid at the discretion of Central. To qualify for CSP, the employee must have completed 6 months' continuous service with Central and have complied with Clauses 2 and 3 above. Full pay will be given to employees for up to 6 months for employees with 5 years' service or longer. In any event this shall not be paid for more than a total of 5 days in any calendar year. Entitlement to CSP is determined according to the employee's length of continuous service, as follows:



- 8.1.2 Where Central makes full payment in times of illness or injury, this includes any entitlement to statutory sick pay (SSP). Where Central pays half pay, SSP will be added but the total of company pay and SSP will not exceed normal full basic pay.
- 8.1.3 The employee will forfeit entitlement to CSP if:
 - 8.1.3.1 They fail to comply with notification and certification requirements.
 - 8.1.3.2 They make or produce any misleading or untrue statement or document concerning their fitness to work;
 - 8.1.3.3 Their incapacity has been caused by participation in dangerous sports or activities.

Jury Service

- 9.1 Any employee called for jury service should inform their Line Manager as soon as possible.
- 9.2 Employees called for jury service will not be paid by Central for the period of their absence. Employees should instead claim all available allowances from the Court.

Public Duties

- 10.1 Central is legally obliged to permit any employee time off to complete their public duties including, but not limited to, magistrate or school governor duties. The employee should inform their Line Manager of their duties, meetings or rotas as soon as possible in order to allow Central time to plan for their absence.
- 10.2 Employees carrying out public duties will not receive pay for time off taken to complete their duties.

Emergency, Maternity, Paternity, Parental and Adoption Leave

- 11.1 Emergency leave (time off for dependants), maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave are all dealt with in their respective policy documents contained in Central Employment's Policies and Procedures.
- 11.2 If employees are uncertain about any other type of absence, they must ask for advice from their Line Manager. Other types of absence may be covered by separate company policies and procedures and/or by statutory rights. Unauthorised absence is likely to be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Trade Union

Central is legally obliged to allow employees time off to carry out their trade union duties. Any time taken off will be paid unless the carrying out of such duties occurs outside working hours.

Monitoring

Central will monitor and record levels of absence and reasons for absence in order to help identify abuse of this policy, which places additional stress on colleagues. Any employee with 3 or more occasions of absence in a 6-month period will be placed on absence monitoring. Further Central will be better positioned to identify unsatisfactory work practices and to distinguish between different types of absence.

COVID-19 – For the duration of the Global Pandemic the below will apply



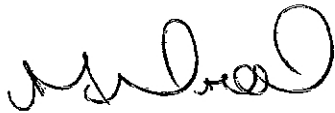
Should any employee feel unwell with any of the pre-determined Covid-19 symptoms they should take a Lateral Flow Test, if the result is negative then the employee can resume work as normal.

If the employee takes a Lateral Flow test and the result is positive, they should immediately report the result to their immediate line manager and inform the HR Manager.

Central Employment require either 2 back-to-back Negative Lateral Flow Tests or 5 days away from work should you continue to test positive before the employee is permitted to return to work.

Central will obtain consent from each employee, either in their Terms and Conditions of employment, or on a separate consent form to comply with the relevant Data Protection legislation.

All information gathered through absence monitoring under this Policy will be held and treated in confidence.

Signed		Director
Date		12 th October 2023
Review Date		12 th October 2024