



Absence Management

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FACTSHEET – Absence Management

Ways to manage sickness absence

Whether you're trying to tackle short or long-term absence, the best starting point is to start monitoring your absences, if you don't already - unless you know what you're dealing with, it's pretty impossible to manage them.

The good news is that this doesn't have to be difficult; if you're a smaller company, it could be something as simple as setting up an Excel spreadsheet or taking advantage of the many HR management systems that are available to monitor staff absence.

If your employee is off work sick for more than 7 days in a row (including non-working days), they must give you a Fit Note. When doctors fill in a Fit Note, they can indicate whether the employee is not fit for work or may be fit for work. The first 7 days of absence are covered by a self-certificate.

Some points to be considered when dealing with short and long term sick leave are:

- Expert Human Resources Support;
- Return to work interviews;
- Attendance incentives;
- Flexible working;
- Promoting healthy lifestyles;
- Employee Assistance Programmes;



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- Welfare Meetings
- Phased return to work;
- Amended duties;
- Altered hours;
- Workplace adaptations; and
- Additional training.

How sickness absence affects companies.

According to the Centre of Economic and Business Research (CEBR) and First Care, sickness absence accounts for a whopping £18 billion a year¹ in lost productivity.

Most companies are all too aware of the direct cost of sickness absence:

- statutory sick pay;
- occupational sick pay;
- paying overtime; and
- for temporary cover.

But there are also the knock-on (indirect) effects:

- Lowers morale;
- Leads to mistakes; and
- Lower productivity.

¹ Centre of Economic and Business Research and FirstCare - Change at Work: How Absence, Attitudes and Demographics are impacting UK employers – Mar 2017



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The top causes of sickness absence.:

- Minor illnesses;
- Back pain and other musculoskeletal injuries;
- Stress;
- Recurring medical conditions;
- Home/family responsibilities; and
- Mental ill-health.

It is advisable that you have a separate Absence Management Policy in place that clearly outlines your procedures to cover how you will deal with both short and long-term absences from work.