

## Live Active Leisure

### SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

The Company recognises the importance of ensuring **Our People** are supported through any periods of absence and their subsequent return to work.

Through an effective Sickness Absence Policy Live Active Leisure [the Company] will be better positioned to identify any potentially unsafe work practices, any issues affecting **Our People's** morale and any other underlying problems **Our People** may be facing.

This policy is designed to assist the Company in effectively managing sickness related absence.

The Company is committed to the health, safety and welfare of **Our People**.

Absence due to sickness is inevitable in any workplace. However, this policy and procedure is aimed at minimising such absences.

This policy aims to provide a fair and consistent framework for handling absence, and ensuring that any employee, genuinely absent from work due to ill health, receives all the necessary and reasonable support that the Company can provide.

It is recognised that the loss of working days through repeated sickness absence can be a significant cost to the Company; a reduction in service delivery, impacting income and the costs of arranging absence cover. Repeated sickness absence also places additional pressure on colleagues.

Therefore it is essential that both employees and management co-operate fully and act responsibly in all aspects relating to the procedures for the reporting, recording, monitoring and evaluation of sickness absence

Any information gained concerning the medical condition of an employee will be regarded as confidential.

The Company also recognises that in addition to this formal procedure, it is good management practice to maintain contact with an employee during a period of absence and to conduct a return to work interview with an employee upon that employee's return to work after each sickness absence.

#### Managers' Responsibilities

- To maintain effective procedures for sickness absence reporting, monitoring and control, and to ensure employees are aware of procedures adopted
- To ensure that working methods, procedures and workload do not cause employee sickness, injury or undue stress

The HR & Administration Manager/Officer will assist in this process by providing managers with advice and guidance. Supervisors and managers will also receive appropriate training in relation to their roles in the procedures adopted.

#### Employees' Responsibilities

- To be responsible in ensuring that so far as is reasonably possible, they protect both themselves and other employees from the risk of infection, injury or undue stress whilst at work
- To co-operate with measures to ensure promotion of good health and the minimization of sickness and absence levels

- To report their inability to attend work in accordance with the sickness absence reporting procedure. Local arrangements are in place in all sites details of which will be communicated to new employees during the induction process or updated accordingly to all employees if changes are made. Failure to report in accordance with the sickness absence reporting arrangements will result in the absence being treated as unexplained and no payment of the hours scheduled to work will be made.

## PROCEDURE

- 1 The sickness absence record of all employees will be monitored and assessed on a continuous basis.
- 2 An employee will be liable to be called in to an interview to discuss their absence record:

- 2.1 when the employee has 2 periods of short term absence within a 6 month rolling period
- 2.2 when the absence record is significantly worse than those of comparable employees
- 2.3 when the absence record creates a particular operational difficulty
- 2.4 when the employee is about to go onto half-pay or no pay in accordance with their sickness allowance entitlement

The decision of whether or not to interview will be made following an initial assessment of the absence record, although all employees falling within 2.4 above will be contacted as a matter of course

- 3 The initial assessment will determine whether the employee's absence record can be classified under one of two categories - persistent short-term absences or long-term absence. Paragraphs 4 - 6 below outline general guidelines to be followed for each category. In operating this procedure, it should be noted:

- 3.1 each employee must be treated in accordance with their own individual circumstances which may require a variation from these guidelines
- 3.2 interviews should be arranged only after discussion with the HR and Administration Manager/Officer. The HR & Administration Manager or nominated Officer will be present at any interview which may lead to the dismissal of an employee and may be present at any other interviews
- 3.3 an employee will be given five days' notice in writing of an interview and informed of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow employee during the interview
- 3.4 following the completing of each interview, a letter will be issued to the employee within 10 working days confirming the outcome of that interview
- 3.5 if an employee is referred to the Company's Medical Advisor, the employee will be asked to sign a consent form to enable the Advisor to contact the employee's own doctor and will be advised of his/her rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988. The details of the information being sought from the Company's Medical Advisor will be communicated to them prior to the appointment.
- 3.6 a failure by an employee to attend an interview and/or agree to be referred to the Company's Medical Advisor may result in a suspension of entitlement to sickness allowance and disciplinary action being taken against the employee

- 4 Where the initial assessment highlights **PERSISTENT SHORT-TERM ABSENCE**, the interview will aim to:

- 4.1 establish any underlying trends, the frequency of and reason(s) for absence
- 4.2 inform the employee the absence record is unacceptable and impacts upon the efficient and effective operation of the service

4.3 inform the employee that if there are any further absences within the improvement period they will receive no payment for the first 3 days of those absences\*, and that reinstatement of OSP will be reviewed in line with the policy and payment status will be communicated at future sickness absence meetings. Explain that if absences continue, payment will also be deducted for any hours absent where the employee has left the workplace due to illness prior to the end of their shift

\*the absences are classed as the first 3 days of work absence and will be calculated based on the next 3 days of rostered hours due to work

4.4 provide the opportunity for improvement in the absence record over a reasonable period of time (either a 3 or 6 month period) during which the record will continue to be assessed

4.5 explain what course of action may follow if the improvement sought is not achieved

As an alternative, and based upon any information which may arise during 4.1 above, the interview may be adjourned to enable the employee to be referred to the Company's Medical Advisor to determine whether there is an underlying medical condition. Following receipt of the Medical Advisor's report, the interview will be reconvened and should there be no underlying condition, steps 4.2-4.5 above will be completed. Should there be an underlying condition, reference should be made to paragraph 8.3 below.

5 Should the absence record not improve to a satisfactory level within the predetermined time period, a second interview will be arranged. This interview will follow the same format as the first interview and may result in:

5.1 the employee being issued a written warning

5.2 the employee being granted a further period for the absence record to improve to a satisfactory level and being advised that if no such improvement is forthcoming, a final written warning will be issued.

6 Should the absence record not improve to a satisfactory level within the predetermined time period, a third interview will be arranged. This interview will follow the same format as the second interview and may result in:

6.1 the employee being issued a final written warning

6.2 the employee being granted a further and final period for the absence record to improve to a satisfactory level and being advised that if no such improvement is forthcoming, the employee may be dismissed.

7 Should the absence record not improve to a satisfactory level within the predetermined time period, a fourth interview will be arranged. This interview will follow the same format as the third interview and may result in:

the dismissal of the employee - the employee will have the right of appeal against such a decision

Prior to any decision to dismiss, consideration will be given, if it has not already occurred earlier within the procedure, to refer the employee to the Company's Medical Advisor to determine whether there is an underlying medical reason for the absence record. (If so, please refer to paragraph 8.3 below).

Any improvement in attendance should be continued for a sustained period and will be subject to ongoing monitoring.

8 Where the initial assessment highlights **LONG-TERM ABSENCE** the interview will aim to:

8.1 seek to establish/confirm the reason(s) for absence and its likely duration

8.2 inform the employee:

that such absence impacts upon the efficient and effective operation of the service

of the employer's responsibility to ensure the employee is capable of doing the job and/or that the work is not detrimental to the employee's health

8.3 refer the employee to the Company's Medical Advisor in order to establish the likely length of absence and the long-term effect on capability in relation to job performance and attendance at work. Following receipt of the Medical Advisor's report, the interview will be reconvened and may result in:

- consideration of a phased return to work; including reduced hours or duties for an agreed time scale
  - any reduction in duties will be considered only where operational requirements allow
- Phased return to work of 4 weeks or more in duration will be at pro-rata pay to reflect reduction in hours
- consideration of increased frequency and or length of breaks for an agreed time scale
- reasonable adjustments to work station
- consideration of seeking alternative employment
- the ill-health retiral of the employee
- the dismissal of the employee - the employee will have the right of appeal against such a decision
- deferral of a decision for a period of time. Following the expiry of this period, and where the employee's absence record does not show significant improvement, or the employee is still unable to return to work, one of the courses outlined above will be followed.

### **Sickness Absence and Holidays**

The Company will not normally permit an employee to designate a period of sickness absence as holiday. However, in the case of employees who are absent because of ill-health on a long-term basis, the Company may at its discretion permit the employee to take accrued holiday while sick. This discretion will normally be exercised to permit employees to take accrued holiday entitlement by the end of the holiday year. Any employee in this position must make a specific request to this effect. Where an employee fails to make such a request, the employee will forfeit any untaken holiday at the end of the holiday year.

### **MONITORING**

The Company will monitor and record levels of absence and reasons for absence in order to help identify areas of the policy and related procedures requiring review. Furthermore the Company will be better positioned to identify any unsatisfactory work practices and to distinguish between different types of absence.

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