



MANAGING ATTENDANCE

1 POLICY

Northwards Housing aims to deliver excellent services to customers. This is achieved through a committed, motivated, and well-trained workforce. Through its managing attendance policy and procedure it will create a culture within which all employees work to maximise attendance so that service delivery is optimised. The Company will take a balanced approach towards maintaining the health, safety and welfare of the workforce, and the needs of its customers.

Managers are responsible for the implementation of the policy and for ensuring that all employees are aware of their health and safety responsibilities. Each individual is responsible for co-operating with management in health and safety matters, and must take reasonable care for his/her own health and safety and those of others.

This policy covers the management of short-term absence and long-term sickness absence

This policy will not apply to those employees in their probationary period of service (covered by the Procedure for Managing Employees During Probation).

Failure on the part of an individual employee to comply with any aspect of the Managing Attendance Policy and procedure may result in action being taken in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.

2 PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

Northwards Housing will:

- Require employees to comply with procedures for reporting absence to their manager, and for claiming sick pay
- Require managers to conduct a Return to Work interview with the employee on his/her return to work following absence
- Ensure a fair consistent treatment of employees who are absent from work

- Ensure that early contact is made with an employee experiencing ill health and that contact is maintained throughout the period of illness.
- Treat fairly, sympathetically and confidentially, all cases of intermittent or long-term absence due to ill-health in consultation with relevant parties
- Resolve long-term absence through phased return to work, alternative duties, ill-health retirement, or where appropriate, dismissal on grounds of ill-health or capability

3 RECORDS

Each period of absence will be formally recorded and the employee will meet with his/her line manager on return to work for this purpose

The employee's absence records may be used as part of any review of absence or in any decisions regarding the employee
The absence records are confidential and will be retained in accordance with the Managing Attendance Policy, and the Data Protection Act.

4 SHORT TERM ABSENCE PROCEDURE

This procedure is based on best practice and forms part of an overall framework to support a culture of productive attendance.

Sickness Reporting Procedure

The employee must:

- notify their line manager of the inability to attend work and the reason for this on the first day of absence before 10 am (or by the time they are due to commence work). If their line manager is not available they must contact another designated manager and leave a contact number. The manager will then telephone him/her at home later.
- specify the length of time they expect to be absent – if this is not possible they should notify their line manager (as above) on each day of absence.
- Provide a Medical Certificate (sick note) from the doctor to the manager **if the absence continues for more than seven days.** This should be provided to the manager no later than four days after the expiry of the self-certified period
- Provide a signing-off note from the doctor before returning to work. This applies where the first medical certificate covers a period exceeding 14 days, or where more than one medical Certificate is necessary

NB Failure to follow the reporting procedure may result in the employee losing pay

Return to Work

Following each absence from work due to sickness the employee must report to and meet with his/her line manager.

The manager **must**:

- Carry out a Return to Work (RTW) interview as soon as the employee returns to work, and no later than **two** days after the employee's return
- Discuss the reasons relating to absence, update them on work issues, express concerns regarding their absence at the RTW
- Hold the RTW in a confidential, one-to-one, private meeting.

Attendance Monitoring interview (AMI)

A formal review of absence will be conducted if the following trigger points occur:

- 5 days absence or more in a 3 month period
- 3 occasions of absence in a 3 month period
- a pattern of absence that causes concerns

Sanctions

Persistent, recurring short-term absence that fail to improve despite management intervention will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure through a system of graduated warnings and could eventually lead to dismissal.

5 LONG-TERM ABSENCE PROCEDURE

Long-term absence is defined as absence for more than 20 consecutive days, and can usually be traced to an underlying medical condition.

The employee will be invited into the workplace for regular review meetings with their manager. If the individual is not fit enough to travel, the manager will arrange to conduct a home visit to undertake the review meeting. The employee has the right to be represented by their trade union representative or friend.

The employees must be warned about the possibility of dismissal if their attendance does not reach a satisfactory standard.

The manager will take into consideration anything said by or on behalf of the employee (including a written statement where the employee does not attend in person) before making a decision.

Following review meetings, the Manager may decide to:

- take no further action
- keep the matter under review (including any further medical referrals) for a stated period of time
- caution the employee about the possible consequences, including dismissal, if on grounds of ill-health the employee should prove unable to improve his/her attendance to an acceptable extent with the matter being kept under review
- give consideration to alternative types of employment (temporary or permanent)
- inform the employee that, in the light of the available information, the matter be considered at a formal capability hearing. The employee should be given advanced notice of the proposed date of the hearing and be informed that a trade union representative or friend may accompany him/her. The Manager should caution the employee that the hearing might result in a decision to dismiss on notice.

The manager will, on making their decision, inform the employee, and confirm this in writing.

The employee will be referred to an Occupational Health Physician appointed by Northwards for an opinion on suitability for medical retirement. If all attempts to facilitate a return to work, including the provision of reasonable adjustments, have proved unsuccessful, and there is no prospect of medical redeployment, medical retirement or a return to work in the short term, the following procedure will apply:

6 FORMAL CAPABILITY HEARING

This will be arranged as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The employee receive a letter which

- gives details of the date, time and venue of the hearing
- cautions that the hearing might result in a decision to dismiss on notice
- includes copies of any documentation that management intend to refer to at the hearing.

The Hearing Officer will consider the management case, including documents relevant to the employee's health and attendance, any

representation made by (or on behalf of) the employee or any written submission made in the employee's absence.

Following a Forman Capability Hearing, the Hearing Officer may decide to:

- take no further action
- keep the matter under review (including any further medical referrals) for a stated period of time
- caution the employee about the possible consequences, including dismissal, if on grounds of ill-health the employee should prove unable to improve his/her attendance to an acceptable extent with the matter being kept under review
- give consideration to alternative types of employment (temporary or permanent)
- dismiss on notice.

7 APPEAL

An employee dismissed under this procedure has the right of appeal against the dismissal. This should be made in writing within **ten** working days of receipt of written notification of the dismissal to the relevant Director. There is a further right of appeal to the Chief Executive.