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 **Sickness & Absence Policy**

**Original - January 2023**

**Updated - September 2024**

**Reviewed Annually**

At Tree of Life Educational and Holistics Services CIC we understand from time to time that there may be occasions where you will not be fit for work due to illness or another substantial reason. If this is the case, please adhere to the following policy, failure to do so may render you liable for disciplinary action.

**Notifying your Manager**

If you are absent due to sickness on a normal working day, you must notify your line manager, in the first instance, if you are unable to contact your line manager, then contact Catherine Widdrington or Laura Frain.:

* by telephone, and no later than 7:30am on the first day of sickness.
* stating the reason for your absence; and
* the expected duration of your sickness absence where known.

If we do not hear from you within an hour of your normal start time your manager may endeavor to contact you at home.

If you are unable to call yourself you may ask someone to make contact on your behalf. However, you must ensure you speak with your manager later the same day or as soon as practicable thereafter.

If you are off for more than one day, you must contact your manager everyday of your absence, unless you have a doctor’s fit note covering you for this period, on the first day of the absence, you would advise your manager how long the fit note is for, or whenever you receive your fit note, upon expiry, you will either return to work, supply Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC with another fit note, informing us of the duration or advise us your intended return to work.

You are responsible for notifying Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC of your sickness absence and providing the appropriate certification statements as required. In order to qualify for statutory sick pay, you must meet the statutory conditions. These are detailed on the HMRC website at:[www.hmrc.gov.uk/payerti/employee/statutory-pay/ssp-overview.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/payerti/employee/statutory-pay/ssp-overview.htm)

We acknowledge that there may be exceptional circumstances which prevent the member of staff from meeting the reporting and certification requirements, for example, in the case of a severe injury / hospitalisation.

**Certification for Sickness Absence Days 1 – 7**

**Days 1-7 of sickness absence**

For the first 7 calendar days of continuous sickness absence (i.e. including non-working days), you do not need to obtain a note from your G.P. to cover your absence. When you contact your manager to inform them about your absence and the reasons for this, your manager will record this and inform HR.

If you leave work due to sickness absence before you have completed 2 hours work (pro rata for part time staff), your absence is recorded as a full day’s absence.

**Sickness absence that exceeds 7 days**

For absences that exceed 7 continuous calendar days (including non working days) you must provide a Med 3 form which is a ‘Statement of fitness for work’ (Statement). Known as the 'fit note', this was introduced in 2010.

You are responsible for ensuring your medical statements reach your manager promptly. Periods of absence that are not covered by a statement will not qualify for statutory sick pay, however, each case will be considered on its merits before sick pay is withheld.

If your G.P. provides advice that you may be fit for work you should notify your manager as soon as practicable.

You should send your statements to your manager who will arrange for this to be logged electronically and passed to the payroll team for processing. If the statement is not received in time for processing, you may be delayed being paid SSP.

**Statement of Fitness for Work Certificate (Fit Note)**

Your G.P. will either give you a statement confirming that you are unfit for work for a specific period / until a specific date or your G.P. may advise that you are able to return to work and, in these circumstances, your G.P. will suggest options that may help you to return to work.

The purpose of the statement or ‘fit note’ is to facilitate a return to work and may be more likely to be used in longer term sickness cases or those with an ongoing medical condition. The suggestions your G.P. may advise include:

* **Amended duties** – this involves changes to your job and duties, if you are unable to complete all your normal duties, and these may be amended in discussion with your manager.

**Workplace adaptations** – this involves changes to your work environment that may relate to, for example, use of equipment, accommodating mobility issues or other changes that may facilitate a return to work. A health and safety risk assessment and occupational health advice may be sought depending upon the nature of the changes suggested.

* **A phased return** – this allows you, initially, to work a reduced number of hours upon your return to work and increase the hours you work gradually until you return to your normal full time hours. This arrangement is normally agreed for a short period, normally of up to 2 weeks.
* **Altered hour**s – this may be recommending a different work pattern and using forms of flexible working; for example, allowing a later start time or changing work patterns to accommodate treatment sessions.

In some cases your G.P. may recommend that occupational health advice is sought.

**Returning to work**

When completing the Statement of Fitness for Work, your G.P. will say whether you need to be reassessed before you return to work. If your absence continues you will need to ensure that all absence is covered by a statement.

If you do not need a further assessment, your return date will be your next normal working day after the end of the sickness period stated.

**Managing Absence**

In order to manage sickness absence effectively and consistently we will seek to support staff during periods of illness and use the following interventions and procedures to facilitate a return to work, retain staff in employment and improve attendance:

* Return to work discussions and/or interviews
* Keeping in touch during absence
* Monitoring and recording absence
* Carrying out sickness review meetings
* Providing management support
* Seeking medical reports and OH advice
* Managing absence through the procedures detailed below or through the disciplinary procedure where appropriate

**Return to Work Discussions**

All staff will have a return to work discussion with their manager, normally on their first day back at work. If you work outside normal office hours it may not be practicable to have a face to face conversation, for example, if you work during the evenings or work remotely. In such cases the conversation may be by telephone or email.

The purpose of a return to work discussion is to ensure that your manager is aware of issues which affect your attendance at work and your state of health so that the appropriate support and action may be taken. For example, your manager should be made aware of whether:

* you have an underlying medical condition;
* any adjustments are needed if you have a disability;
* you are suffering from stress which may relate to personal issues or to issues at work;
* there are personal issues outside work which are affecting your attendance.

Return to work discussions and sickness review meetings may help to improve attendance and resolve absence issues, as health and other associated problems are discussed openly in a supportive way with a view to addressing issues at an early stage.

Absence is monitored over a 12 month rolling period. The current absence will be calculated from the date of review for the previous 12 month period. In order to ensure a consistent and fair approach when calculating absences the Bradford Factor will be adopted.

The content of return to work discussions will vary depending upon the length, type of absence and concerns in relation to your sickness record. It is likely to be a brief conversation about your health and offer of support, however, it may be a more detailed discussion or meeting depending upon the issues. Your manager should;

* acknowledge and welcome you back to work;
* find out the reason and cause of absence if this is not known;
* make sure you are well and fully fit to return to work, taking into account any recommendations from your G.P. where relevant;
* identify whether there is any additional support Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC may provide; and
* bring you up to date with any changes or news.

A copy of the notes of your return to work meeting will be filed.

In some cases an employee may not feel able to discuss their medical condition with their line manager. In these circumstances, the employee may request to speak to another manager about the reasons for their absence.

Sickness information will be held confidentially and access restricted to authorised personnel within Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC. Under the Data Protection Act, sickness information is considered sensitive data and Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services CIC is committed to ensuring that such data is treated confidentially and not shared more widely than is necessary, in accordance with the Act.

The Bradford Factor is made up of a unique score relating direct to your absence:

S x S x D = BFS

Spells x Spells x Duration = Bradford Factor Score or simply put – The amount of times you are absent x The amount of times you are absent x The Actual amount of days off.

We have set fair and realistic triggers up to ensure consistency across Tree of Life Educational and Holistic Services.

**The Triggers**

Over 49 but less than 120 – Consider Verbal Warning 121 – 249 – Consider Written Warning

250 – 450 – Consider Final Written Warning 450+ Consider Dismissal

Examples of how the Bradford Factor is calculated.

James has taken 7 days off in a row – his Bradford factor will be (**1 x 1) x 7 = 7**

Phil has taken 7 days off but on 3 separate occasions his Bradford Factor will be ( **3 x 3) x 7 = 63**

Jenny has taken 7 days off but on 6 separate occasions her Bradford Factor will be (**6 x 6) x 7 = 252**