

Attendance and Absence Management Policy

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ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Cube Housing Association Ltd recognises that staff may on occasions be necessarily absent from work. However, Cube also has a duty to provide reliable service to its customers and it needs to ensure that sickness levels are monitored to ensure that the highest possible level of attendance is maintained.

This policy is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain good attendance, and to ensure that a consistent and fair approach to managing attendance is adopted throughout the Association. The policy is also designed to provide reasonable support to those absent with the aim of assisting their return to work at the earliest opportunity.

This policy and the procedures on how the policy will be implemented are intended to ensure that each situation is effectively, fairly and consistently managed. The policy and procedures are not intended to replace the Association's Disciplinary & Grievance Policy nor the relevant Procedures applying to that policy. The right of an employee to raise a grievance under the Grievance & Dignity at Work Procedures or appeal on an appropriate issue is retained at all stages and trade union or fellow employee representation obtained.

2. AIMS OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 To manage attendance in a way that reflects genuine concern for staff and to develop a positive attitude towards attendance. This will include supporting an employee's return to work on a phased basis after a period of extended sick leave, details which are contained in the Attendance Management Procedures.
- 2.2 To set clear expectations for standards of attendance required by the Association and to ensure all staff are aware of Cube's standards in relation to attendance and to comply with the requirements and guidelines contained in the Procedures.
- 2.3 To ensure the managers work with our occupational health partners to manage, monitor and review sickness absence procedures to ensure consistency and fairness is applied to all staff to improve attendance and reduce absence.
- 2.4 To ensure that managers and staff are aware of the differences between managing attendance and absence management through the provision of training, detailed guidelines and robust procedures.
- 2.5 To ensure that managers provide staff with a safe working environment and treat all staff in a responsible and caring manner and be supportive to all employees suffering any ill-health.
- 2.6 To encourage staff to adopt a healthy lifestyle to achieve the highest standards of attendance.
- 2.7 To ensure training and support is available to those involved in the process.
- 2.8 To ensure that the Association will comply with the legislative requirements of the Medical Records Act 1988 regarding obtaining employee consents to request medical information.

3. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 All members of staff are made aware of the importance of good attendance, the reasons why the Association focuses on good attendance and all policies and procedures concerning absence are communicated clearly to them.
- 3.2 In the first instance, employees with unsatisfactory attendance levels will be given time and encouragement to improve and informed of what improvement is required and possible consequences of failure to do so (which may include disciplinary action, including dismissal).

- 3.3** Any disciplinary action will only be considered following appropriate contacts with the employee and relevant medical advisors, including the employee's GP and the Association's Occupational Health Advisers. The employee retains the right to trade union or fellow employee representation should disciplinary action be forthcoming.
- 3.4** The Association will seek, where possible, to find suitable alternative employment for any employee who is medically incapable of fully discharging their role. If there is an underlying medical condition causing absence(s), then efforts will be made to put reasonable adjustments in place.
- 3.5** Managers will conduct "return to work" interviews after every absence and within the spirit of this policy, no matter the duration of the absence.
- 3.6** All staff will adhere strictly to the absence reporting procedure. Failure to do so may result in withholding of Association sick pay and/or disciplinary action being taken.
- 3.7** Managers will maintain accurate and up-to-date attendance records for all staff.

4. OCCUPATIONAL/STATUTORY SICK PAY

4.1 Occupational Sick Pay

Providing that the employee has followed the Association's procedure in relation to the Absence Rules and Procedures, payment for sickness/absence/injury will be as set out in the table below as per the Staff Handbook.

Service with Association	At Full Normal Pay	Plus	At Half Normal Pay
Up to 1 year	5 weeks	+	5 weeks
Over 1 year & under 2	9 weeks	+	9 weeks
Over 2 years & under 3	18 weeks	+	18 weeks
Over 3 years & under 5	22 weeks	+	22 weeks
Over 5 years	26 weeks	+	26 weeks

Any member of staff on a temporary contract of less than one year will be eligible to receive a pro rata entitlement of the table detailed above, subject to the duration of the contract.

Any new member of staff on a probationary period or an extended probationary period will be eligible to receive a pro rata entitlement of the Association's Occupational Sick Pay as detailed in the table above, until confirmation of a permanent position has been established. Once confirmation has been received, the new staff member will revert to the permanent member of staff allowances.

In any one rolling 12-month period the Association will pay a Sickness Allowance in accordance with the above table.

When sick pay entitlement has been reduced to half pay/or exhausted, the employee will be advised in advance in writing by the HR Team.

4.2 Statutory Sick Pay

Employees are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) irrespective to their entitlement to Association sick pay. It is administered on behalf of staff by the Association. SSP is reviewed by the Government every October. It is not paid for the first three days of absence and runs for 28 weeks after that. An employee who is no longer entitled to SSP may be entitled to an incapacity benefit and they would need to visit their local Department of Social Security to find out their rights as this agency governs an employee's entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay.

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5. PROCEDURES

- 5.1** The Attendance Management Guidelines & Procedures for implementing this policy have been agreed.
- 5.2** It is important that the policy and procedures relevant to the management of this policy are regularly and clearly communicated to employees so they are aware of the Association's standards regarding attendance. Managers must be clear that it is their responsibility to implement this policy and to take immediate corrective action to meet the standards required through effective use of the Attendance Management Procedures.
- 5.3** The procedures are explained to all new employees on the commencement of their employment and are included as an appendix in the Staff Handbook, which they will receive as part of their induction programme.
- 5.4** It is the responsibility of all employees of Cube Housing Association Ltd to ensure that their attendance meets acceptable standards.
- 5.5** The Association will ensure that all absences are fully recorded and that comprehensive absence information is documented in individual personal files held at Head Office.
- 5.6** All records will be stored and retained in accordance with Data Protection requirements and as detailed in the Attendance Management Procedures.
- 5.7** The HR Team will produce absence statistics on a cyclical basis to assist Managers to manage and the Board/Committee to monitor performance.
- 5.8** Any alteration, falsification or intentional attempt to mislead or to otherwise misrepresent the true position with regard to absence will normally result in disciplinary action. Any such misconduct will be regarded as gross misconduct and may, following investigation, result in the employee's dismissal.

6. PENSION/SUPERANNUATION ARRANGEMENTS (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Returning to Work from Long Term Sick Leave

Where an employee has been on long term sick leave, which has included a period of half pay being received by the employee, the Association will elect to pay the cost of the employer and the shortfall of the employee contributions to the Pensions Trust for the period of the reduced sick pay.

6.2 Ill Health Retirement

The Association will assist any employees who are members of the SFHA Pension Scheme who find it necessary to retire as a consequence of ill health or those with terminal ill health. The HR Team will liaise with the Finance Team in the first instance, in any such cases and the Finance Team will liaise directly with the Pension Trust on behalf of the staff member.

7. OTHER PROVISIONS

7.1 Absence and Holidays

If the employee is on annual leave and falls sick, it is possible to override the annual leave and process sick leave and pay instead on the production of a doctor's certificate to confirm the illness/injury and the annual leave reimbursed. If the employee is on sick leave and goes on holidays, he/she must produce a doctor's certificate to cover this absence. If a certificate is not forthcoming, the manager will investigate the employee's reason for absence. Depending on the outcome, a disciplinary action may be instigated.

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7.2 Doctor/hospital/dental appointments

Doctor and dental appointments should be arranged outwith working hours or by using flexi time to cover appointments if during core hours. Staff will be given up to a maximum of 2 hours for hospital consultations and appointment cards must be shown to managers for authorising time off.

7.3 Conduct Whilst Off Sick

When on sick leave, employees are still expected not to breach any points of their contract of employment. They are still bound by the duties of fidelity and it is expected not to participate in activities that would be at odds with their medical condition, whilst off sick. Any breach in respect of this will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

7.4 Cosmetic Procedures

Absence due to cosmetic procedures (whether carried out in the UK or abroad) will not fall under the sick leave or pay. In these cases, the employee should request time off and agree with their line manager how the absence will be processed, e.g. annual leave or unpaid leave.

7.5 IVF Treatment

Absences resulting from IVF treatment will not be processed as sick leave or pay. The same relates to a partner of a person that is undergoing such treatment. Instead, employees should discuss with their line manager how time off for the treatment could be accommodated, e.g. annual leave, flexi time or unpaid leave. Absences relating to IVF treatment will also not be treated as relating to pregnancy unless the employee actually falls pregnant.

7.6 Stress Management

Stress is not an illness but a state. It can result from an illness or lead to one but it is not an illness itself. The same relates to "nervous debility". If an employee goes off sick with stress, the manager will endeavour to find out the underlying cause so that it could be determined whether conditions at work cause or contribute to stress and whether something could be done to help the situation. If the absence is certified by a doctor, the manager may ask the employee's doctor to clarify the underlying cause for stress through the Association's occupational health adviser.

8. POLICY REVIEW

The Association's Audit & General Purposes Committee will review the Attendance Management Policy every 3 years, but reserve the right to make any additions or alterations considered necessary in the intervening period as a result of changes in legislation or best practice. The procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure their effectiveness.