**Ability Shetland Sickness Absence Policy**

Wherever possible, we want to provide support for our employees when they are unable to work due to sickness. We recognise a need for a consistent approach for managing absence across the organisation so that we can ensure we fulfil our duty of care to our employees and deal with any issues that arise in a fair way.

**Reporting Procedure**

In the event that you are unable to attend work through sickness, or any other reason, it is your personal responsibility to report your absence from work. When you call in, the Team Leader will talk to you about your absence, when you expect to return to work and if there is anything to pick up in your absence.

* You are required to contact and speak to the Team Leader
* Sending a text message or an email are not acceptable methods of reporting absence
* You must make contact yourself unless you are incapacitated and unable to do so, in which case a call from a relative is acceptable
* You need to call in each day of your absence unless you have received a medical certificate. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in your absence being treated as unauthorised, with potential deductions of pay and / or disciplinary action.

**Certification of Sickness Absence**

If you receive a medical certificate, please call the Team Leader and let them know when it runs until and then send it in to the Ability Shetland office as soon as possible (within 48hrs of receipt). If any subsequent certificates are required, these should be sent to the Ability Shetland Office no later than 24 hours after the expiry of the previous certificate.

If your sickness absence from work is for 7 calendar days or longer, you must provide a medical certificate to cover your absence.

**Return to work interviews**

When you return from a period of unplanned absence, you will have a return to work interview. This is to ensure:

* You are fit to be at work
* You are updated with any changes that have occurred in your absence
* You have an understanding of the impact of your absence and understand the expectations of your attendance going forwards
* You have the opportunity to discuss any underlying issues or concerns you may have
* You have the opportunity to let us know if there is any support you need from the Organisation

**Management through Disciplinary Procedures**

There will be some occasions when an employee’s short term sickness absence is at an unacceptable level which the Organisation is not able to support. In those cases it may be necessary to deal with the situation through the Organisation’s disciplinary procedure.

In all cases, the employee will be given the chance to give their explanations of the situation and any mitigating circumstances will be taken into account before a decision is made. At any stage if it is not felt that a disciplinary sanction is appropriate then it will not be issued.

For employees who have completed their probationary period, the following 7 step system will apply:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Absence level**  **(in rolling 12 months)** | **Action** |
| 1st absence | Return to work interview |
| 2nd absence | Return to work, attendance review meeting and mini action plan. (on attendance review document) |
| 3rd absence | Return to work interview  Investigation meeting  Action plan – no more absence in subsequent 6 months or potential disciplinary – Letter of Concern issued. |
| 4th absence | Investigation meeting – refer to disciplinary hearing – potential verbal warning |
| 5th absence | Investigation meeting – refer to disciplinary hearing – potential written warning |
| 6th absence | Investigation meeting – refer to disciplinary hearing – potential final written warning |
| 7th absence | Investigation meeting – refer to disciplinary hearing – potential dismissal |

The Organisation reserves the right to issue the next level of warning if an employee is already in receipt of a warning for conduct, i.e. if an employee has a current verbal warning for lateness and then hits the trigger for 4 sickness absences, this may result in a written warning being issued.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this policy please contact the Team Leader in the first instance.

**Gradual return to work**

Where advised by an Occupational Health professional or a G.P. the Organisation may agree to individuals who have been on long term sick (4 weeks +) returning to work on a gradual basis.

The aim of the gradual return to work is to support individuals in their rehabilitation back into their job role. We would, however, expect that individuals would be back to full time work within 4 weeks unless otherwise advised by Occupational Health or their G.P.

During the period where the individual is on reduced hours, the organisation will pay only for hours worked.