

Absence Management

How to 2: Notification and certification procedure

Advice for all staff

Contents:	Page
Introduction	1
Roles and responsibilities	1
Table of contact and certification requirements	2
Manager contact	4
Staff support services	4

Introduction

This guide sets out the procedures for staff if they are unable to attend their place of work through sickness or illness.

Roles and responsibilities

- Responsibility for notifying a period of absence sits clearly with employees. Failure to follow these procedures without good reason will be challenged and may result in disciplinary action and in all cases will be considered as unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence may result in the suspension of pay.
- The line manager has direct responsibility for recording and monitoring employee absence periods on Business World. For further guidance please [click here](#).
- All periods of sickness must be covered by either a fit note (self-certification and/or medical certificate). Employees are responsible in ensuring these are passed to managers within 2 working days of issue (or in exceptional circumstances an alternative arrangement can be agreed with line manager).

Table of contact and certification requirements

	<p>Where an employee is unwell and unable to attend work, it is their responsibility to telephone their line manager or equivalent as soon as possible but no later than two hours after their expected start time and explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why they are unable to attend work • How long they anticipate the sickness absence might last • Any handover of work required e.g. pre-planned meeting, case notes, deadlines 	<p>Self- Certification</p> <p>Employees are no longer required to complete the self-certification form, the employee is expected to liaise with their line manager during the period of self-certification and the line manager is responsible for entering the absence into ERP.</p> <p>Once the employee returns to work, the line manager should complete the return to work form within ERP where any self-certification period can be noted.</p>
	<p>If incapacity lasts for 2 days or more, employees are required to telephone every other day to keep their manager informed of their progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What action they are taking to mitigate the effects of the illness e.g. visiting the doctor • Where they can be contacted, should the organisation need to get in touch with them. 	<p>If a line manager wishes to continue to use the self-certification form locally they can continue to do so, but there is no requirement to forward this form to HR.</p>
	<p>Where absence exceeds 8 calendar days or is likely to result in long-term absence, a reasonable contact agreement should be reached between manager and employee.</p> <p>It is expected contact will be maintained at least twice a month.</p>	<p>Fit notes (medical certificate)</p> <p>Employees absent for more than seven calendar days (consecutive days including weekends and public holidays), are required to submit a medical certificate from their doctor/consultant. This should explain the nature of their illness and confirm when employees will be fit to return to work.</p> <p>Employees should contact their manager, prior to returning to work, where a medical certificate stating employees "may be fit for work".</p>

		<p>Managers should refer staff to Occupational health for advice on reasonable adjustments and fitness to return to work.</p> <p>Managers will discuss with their employee any reasonable adjustments that may be needed to facilitate a return to work, taking into account the medical advice.</p> <p>Where reasonable adjustments cannot be taken, employees will remain on sick leave but will need to be covered by appropriate certification and a date to review the situation will be agreed between the employee and manager.</p>
<p>Serious illness – Contact requirements</p> <p>In cases of a sudden/serious illness and/or hospitalisation, employees who are unable to maintain contact themselves, should ask their next of kin to maintain contact on their behalf. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that their next of kin's details are kept updated via Business World.</p>		<p>Certification requirements</p> <p>The certification requirements above would still apply.</p>

Manager contact – keeping in touch during long term absence

- Managers are expected to maintain contact with employees during long term absence and notify them of changes within the workplace and essential information which may affect their employment.
- Managers should apply sensitivity when maintaining contact with absent employees, however it is essential that contact is maintained. Employees who are absent for some weeks can start to feel increasingly out of touch and undervalued; maintaining contact can support the return to work process once recovered.
- Due care should be applied in cases where the cause of absence is attributed to work. Managers should seek advice from Human Resources or Occupational Health in these circumstances.

Staff Support Services

Shropshire Council is committed to a positive approach to protect, and where possible, improve the health and welfare of our employees.

Counselling

Shropshire Council offers a confidential counselling service for all employees, including education staff. This is currently operated by Network of Staff Supporters (NOSS) who can be contacted directly on 01978 78 0479 to arrange an appointment. For qualified teaching staff who require more specialist interventions there is a Specialist Counsellor that can be contacted directly for support – Sheri Wright on 01952 385216, however there may be costs associated with this support.

Occupational Health Service

Occupational Health Services will provide medical advice, reports for consideration on various health, safety and wellbeing initiatives.

Occupational Health also provide a number of support leaflets for employees and managers.

Managers can contact the Occupational Health (OH) Team at any point, during or after an employee's absence for advice on any reasonable adjustments as a way of supporting employees. This includes seeking advice during the early stages of any stress related absence or as a preventative measure.

Advice can be sought from the OH Team at any stage if a medical opinion is required by completing an OH Referral Form.

You can contact Occupational Health on 01743 253993 or e-mail Occupationalhealth@shropshire.gov.uk

Additional services

Additional services are offered by Shropshire Council in order to prevent, where possible, absence from work. Occupational Health also offer other services which can be tailor made to meet the needs of the manager and employee. Here is a list of the additional services available:

- Stress audits
- Pre-employment health assessments
- Ill-health retirement
- Statutory health surveillance
- Hand arm vibration
- First Aid courses
- Audiometry
- Spirometry
- Working at heights
- Night-shift working
- Immunisations
- Hepatitis B
- Seasonal flu

Physiotherapy

If musculoskeletal issues are causing pain and affecting your ability to carry out your role then the option for physiotherapy can be considered. This is actioned with a management referral to Occupational Health. An appointment for the individual is arranged in Occupational Health so an assessment to ensure the suitability of this treatment can be carried out. The Occupational Health Advisor then organises the referral for physiotherapy.

Further advice

A number of Shropshire Council Teams offer advice on Health Safety and Wellbeing at work.

- Human Resources ask.HR@Shropshire.gov.uk
- Health and Safety health.safety@shropshire.gov.uk or 01743 252819
- Occupational Health Occupationalhealth@shropshire.gov.uk or 01743 253993
- Health and Wellbeing [Your Health & Wellbeing Intranet pages](#)