



POLICY

ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

POLICY REVIEWED MARCH 2023

Wellhouse - The Place To Be

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1. Vision and values

Wellhouse – the Place to Be.

This simple statement is our vision of Wellhouse as an attractive place where people feel happy and safe, benefit from having a good home and an attractive environment and feel proud to be part of a vibrant community.

We believe that our values of Trust, Honesty and Integrity, Excellence, Accountability and Sustainability supported by a comprehensive policy framework will help make our vision a reality.

2. Governance

Wellhouse HA is a community controlled registered social landlord and is managed by a group of local people who are elected onto the Management Committee. Their role is to make sure that the Association is well run, meets the needs of the local area and is responsive to what is important to local people.

The Management Committee appoints senior staff, agrees all the Association's policies and takes all the key decisions. The Director and the senior team support the Committee in these responsibilities.

3. Policy Aims

- To manage attendance in a way that reflects genuine concern for staff, and to develop a positive attitude towards attendance.
- To set clear expectations for standards of attendance that we require from our staff
- To separate two processes: attendance and absence management and provide guidelines for staff and managers.
- To identify the causes of absence and, where possible, develop a programme of preventive measures.
- To ensure training and support is available to those involved in the process.

4. Equal Opportunities Statement

We aim to ensure that all services, including the delivery of this policy, provide equality of opportunity.

We will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals. We will not discriminate against any individual for any reason, including age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or other status.

5. Introduction

Wellhouse Housing Association recognises that on occasions it may be necessary for staff to be absent from work. However, we also have a duty to provide a reliable service to our customers and thus we need to ensure that we help you maintain the highest possible level of attendance.

This policy is designed to help all employees achieve good attendance, and to ensure that a consistent and fair approach in managing attendance is adopted throughout the organisation.

This policy and the guidelines it contains are not intended to replace other policies, such as discipline & grievance, dignity at work, health & safety, managing stress, etc.

6. Principles

- Wellhouse Housing Association requires good attendance from all staff in order to meet its objectives.
- If your level of attendance is unsatisfactory then you will be informed what improvement is required and possible consequences of failure to do so (which may include disciplinary action, including dismissal).
- The attendance management process is not concerned with reasons for absence but with number of periods of absence/ days absent.
- If you have an underlying medical condition causing absence(s), then we'll make efforts to put reasonable adjustments in place, where possible.
- Managers will conduct "return to work" interviews within the spirit of this policy.
- You need to adhere strictly to our absence reporting procedures. Failure to do so may result in a disciplinary action and withholding of the organisation sick pay.
- Managers will maintain accurate, up-to-date attendance records for all staff.

7. The Policy

Absence Monitoring

A fundamental feature of good attendance management is the accurate and timely recording of all absences. This is essential for processing the requirements of the statutory and occupational sick pay arrangements and the process of managing attendance and absence. Good information allows patterns to be identified and can be an early indication of underlying health problems. The sooner these problems are identified and acted upon – the more likely a successful conclusion for both you and us can be achieved.

Accurate recording is also an essential element in satisfying potential concerns over the fairness of any actions taken by the line managers.

Return to Work

A thorough return to work will be carried out after every period of unplanned absence. This will be done by your line manager (or another manager if he/she is not available) on the first day of your return to work. Completed forms will be kept in your personal file. The

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return to work interview forms contain confidential information and may only be viewed by authorised personnel, normally your line manager or any other manager who deals with the case.

Having maintained attendance records, managers will be expected to provide and discuss monthly aggregated statistics at management team meetings and at departmental meetings with staff. Your individual case will not be discussed as it forms your confidential record.

If a medical professional makes suggestions for any adjustments, these will be discussed at a return to work interview, along with any suggestions that you or we may also have made. Although we are not bound by the doctor's suggestions, we will make all possible efforts to accommodate your prompt return and a good attendance, if possible. If we agree any adjustments, we will also set time scales and reviews.

Absence Reporting Procedures

Reporting

If you cannot come to work, either due to illness or for any other reason, you must tell your line manager (or if not available, another manager) as soon as is reasonably possible. You should do this before you are due to start your shift and if not possible, within one hour of your starting time. You must fill in a self-certification form ([Appendix 2](#)), whether or not you are entitled to sickness allowances and whatever the length or reason for absence.

Every unplanned absence will be followed with a Return to Work Interview (RTWI).

Fit Notes

If you are off due to illness or injury for more than seven consecutive calendar days, you must provide a fit note as soon as possible.

If the Doctor ticks the 'may be fit for work' box you will meet with your line manager to discuss any adjustments suggested. Although employers are not obliged to follow the doctor's advice, we will do our best to help you return to work and keep a good attendance record. However if we cannot agree about the adjustments you will remain off sick.

If we agree a phased return to work, the days you are still off sick within the agreed period will count as one period of absence.

Keeping in Touch

You are responsible for letting your manager know the reasons for any absence and when you expect to return to work. If you cannot get to a phone on day one of your absence, you should make sure that someone else calls on your behalf. After this, you should contact your line manager in line with the staff guidelines in Appendix 1.

Where you fail to keep in contact as outlined above, we will initiate and maintain contact with you.

We expect that you let us know the following information: the reason for your absence, when you expect to return to work and your contact details. We are entitled to request this information and therefore, if you don't give us it, we will contact you to find it out.

Failure to Comply

Where you do not follow reporting, certification, or keeping-in-touch arrangements we may withhold the company sick pay. Failure to comply with these requirements may also lead

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to a disciplinary action against you in accordance with Wellhouse Housing Associations disciplinary procedure. Similarly if we suspect that you have falsified your absence or have deliberately misled us, we will take a disciplinary action against you. In serious and/or repeated cases, it may lead to a dismissal.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

You are entitled to SSP irrespective to your entitlement to company sick pay. The scale of entitlement to SSP is reviewed by the government, normally at the beginning of each tax year. It is not paid for the first three days of absence and runs for 28 weeks after that.

If you are no longer entitled to SSP, you may be entitled to an incapacity benefit. You can enquire about this at your local Department of Social Security. We will tell you if you are not entitled to SSP and send you the appropriate government form but it is then your responsibility to claim any other State Benefit which you may be entitled to.

Organisation Sick Pay (OSP)

Organisation sick pay is dependent on your length of service. Full details of OSP can be found in section A5 of the Associations terms and conditions.

Scale of allowances

In any one period of 52 weeks, we will pay a sickness allowance in line with the following scale.

Continuous service at the date sickness starts	Full allowance paid for:	Half allowance paid for:
Up to 1 year	5 weeks	5 weeks
Over 1 and under 2 years	9 weeks	9 weeks
Over 2 and under 3 years	18 weeks	18 weeks
Over 3 and under 5 years	22 weeks	22 weeks
Over 5 years	26 weeks	26 weeks

Attendance Management

This refers to dealing with unacceptable levels of attendance, with no reference to reasons for absence or medical condition.

We will aim to assist you in securing good attendance record. This will involve maintaining good records, ensuring return to work interview and helping investigate and address any identified underlying causes of absence.

Where this fails to secure a required improvement, we will invoke the terms of the disciplinary procedure. Unsatisfactory attendance reviews can result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

If at any stage during this process it becomes apparent that an underlying health issue is involved, medical information will be sought and an appropriate action will follow.

Absence periods related to pregnancy or underlying medical conditions classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 will not be counted for the purpose of attendance management process.

Attendance review triggers

Short Term Absence

Return to work interviews will be held between the employee and the line Manager following any short term absence from work due to illness.

Short Term Frequent Absences

Absences will be monitored closely and relevant interviews conducted with employees whose absence record falls into the following category:-

- 3 self-certificates or a total of 6 working days absence within 6 months.
- 5 absences (self-certificates or medical certificates) or 8 working days within 12 months.
- **Appendix 3** will be completed during the interview between the employee and the line manager.

OR

- **Any period of unauthorised absence**

Where this fails to secure an improvement, Wellhouse Housing Association will invoke the terms of the Disciplinary procedures. If at any stage during this process it becomes apparent that an underlying health issue is involved, then an alternative procedure for dealing with long term sickness absence will be used.

Absence Management

- Wellhouse Housing Association will adopt a sympathetic approach to staff suffering from a long-term and/or chronic health problem. If you find yourself in such a position you should be confident that your manager will react in a supportive fashion when approached.
- The following points will always be considered in relation to long-term absence:
 - The nature of the illness and any contributing factors
 - The likely duration and/or frequency of your absence(s)
 - Any actions that can be taken by you
 - Any adjustments that we could make
 - Any possible redeployment opportunities
 - The nature of the duties in relation to your health problems
 - Our business needs and the impact that your absence is having upon these
 - Your entitlement to sick pay

A capability dismissal is possible where all other options have been exhausted.

Dishonest Absence

If you are found to falsify or exaggerate your absence, this will be treated as gross misconduct. An investigation will be carried out in accordance with Wellhouse Housing Associations disciplinary procedure and disciplinary action may be instigated, including dismissal or future withdrawal of the company sick pay.

Other Provisions

Absence and holidays

If you are on annual leave and fall sick or have an accident, we may apply a sick leave instead if we believe that your illness/accident has stopped you from proceeding with your planned holidays. We will however require a medical certificate to confirm your illness.

If you are on sick leave and go on holiday, your line manager will investigate whether this is appropriate considering the reason for your absence. Depending on the outcome, the disciplinary procedure may be instigated.

Doctor/hospital/dental appointments

Doctor, hospital and dental appointments should be arranged outwith working hours. If it is not possible, you should request time off from your line manager. Arrangements could include using annual leave, flexi leave, TOIL or unpaid leave. In some circumstances managers could also use their discretion and consider giving paid time off.

Conduct whilst off sick

When on sick leave, you are still bound by your contract of employment with us and all our policies including the code of conduct and your duty of fidelity. We also expect that you do not participate in activities that would be at odds with your medical condition. Any breach in respect of this will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. This includes conduct on social networking sites and any other publicly made remarks regarding Wellhouse Housing Association, its customers, work colleagues, partners and anyone else who is connected with us.

Cosmetic procedures

Absence due to cosmetic procedures (whether carried out in the UK or abroad) will not fall under the sick leave or pay unless it is recommended by health professionals. Employees should therefore request time off and agree with their line manager how the absence will be processed, e.g. annual leave or unpaid leave.

IVF treatment

Absences relating to IVF treatment will not be processed as sick leave or pay. The same applies to a partner of a person that is undergoing such treatment. Instead, you should discuss with your 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.

Stress management

Stress is not an illness. It can result from an illness or lead to one but it is not an illness itself. The same relates to "nervous debility" or any other diagnosis of that type. If you go off sick with stress, your manager will endeavour to find out the underlying cause so that an appropriate action could be taken (if any) and in particular to determine whether conditions at work cause or contribute to stress and whether something could be done to

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help the situation. If the absence is certified by a doctor, your manager will ask your doctor to clarify the underlying cause for stress.

Data Protection

The organisation will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own GDPR Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Wellhouse HA's employee privacy notice.

APPENDIX 1

SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING – STAFF GUIDELINES

On the first day of absence from work

- Contact the Operations Manager or any other Senior Member of staff as soon as is practicable but as early as possible and preferably before 9am. If unavailable, leave message at Reception but ensure you call back to speak to appropriate person when they become available.
- Advise of reason for absence
- Advise of likely return to work date, if possible.
- Advise of any planned workload for that day and beyond if appropriate.

If Absence continues for 4 calendar days in a row (this includes Saturdays/ Sundays or days off if you work part-time)

- Contact relevant person as above with an update on your condition
- Advise if you have contacted your GP or intend to do so.
- Advise of likely return to work date , if possible.

If Absence continues for more than 5 working days (or 7 calendar days)

- Contact relevant person as above with an update on your condition
- Submit statement of fitness for work - “fit note” from your GP starting on the 6th working day of your absence .
- Continue to maintain contact every 7 calendar days to advise of position regarding your continued absence.
- Continue to submit medical certificates ensuring that every calendar day of your absence is covered.

On your return to work

- It is not necessary to be signed off as fit for work and employees can return to work with the employer’s permission before the date stated on the fit note.
- Complete a self-certificate form (even if medical certificates have been submitted)
- Attend meeting with Senior Officer.



APPENDIX 2

**EMPLOYEE SELF-CERTIFICATION FORM
STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

This form **must** be completed immediately on return to work **in the presence of your Manager** following all absences (whether for sickness or any other reason) which have not been planned for and authorised in advance. (See Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment A4)

Sections A & C are to be completed in all cases.
Section B to be completed where the absence is due to sickness or injury.

A . Name -----

Numbers of days absent-----

Reasons for Absence : - (tick box)

() Own Sickness/Illness – complete Sections B & C below.

() Other reason - give brief reason for absence then complete Section C below.

B. Sickness

1. Day and date sickness started -----(day)---/---/--- (date)
First day of absence from work------(day)---/---/--- (date)
Date of return to work------(day)---/---/--- (date)

2. Brief description of illness/sickness/reason for incapacity for work:
(illness/unwell/sick/pregnant are not sufficient)

3. What medical advice did you seek ?-----

4. If you visited the doctor /hospital ,please give date .-----Was a
medical certificate supplied ? YES / NO

5. Name and address of doctor/hospital attended-----

6. Was the sickness the result of an injury at work ? YES / NO

If yes , was the accident reported? (details when / to whom)

7. Did the sickness/injury arise out of or in the course of following another occupation or sport as a profession ? YES / NO.

8. Were you carrying out any other paid work during your spell of sickness? YES / NO.

9. Do you feel fully fit to carry out all aspects of your job ? YES/NO

C. **Declaration**

I declare that the information provided by me on this form is, to the best of my knowledge accurate. I understand that provision of false/misleading information or any abuse of the Sickness Benefit Scheme will be regarded as serious misconduct which could result in Disciplinary Action being taken against me.

Signed (employee) ----- Date -----

Signed (manager)----- Date-----



APPENDIX 3

**EMPLOYEE FORMAL/FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW
STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

1. NAME

2. ATTENDED BY

NAME-----

DESIGNATION----- -

DATE OF PREVIOUS INTERVIEWS-----

**3. EMPLOYEE ADVISED OF RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION
Y/N**

4. REASON FOR INTERVIEW

- a) 3 self-certificates or a total of 6 working days absence within 6 months
Y/N
- b) 5 absences (sc or mc) or a total of 8 working days absence within 12 months
Y/N
- c) Any period of unauthorised absence
Y/N
- d) Follow-up interview
Y/N

5. DETAILS OF ABSENCES OVER LAST ROLLING YEAR OR SINCE PREVIOUS INTERVIEW

Date From	Date To	No of days lost	Reason

**6. DIRECTOR/LINE MANAGER COMMENTS ON THE EFFECT OF THE ABOVE ABSENCE LEVEL (i.e. improvement, level maintained, deterioration ,etc) -----

-----**

**7. EMPLOYEES COMMENTS ON THE LEVEL OF ABSENCE, PATTERN OF ABSENCE AND REASONS (e.g. underlying health problem ,personal problem , job related issues)-----
-----**

8. WHERE APPROPRIATE , EMPLOYEE TO COMMENT ON ACTION FROM PREVIOUS INTERVIEW(S) (effectiveness of action , progress of referrals and medical reports) -----

9. DIRECTOR/LINE MANAGER RESPONSE TO EMPLOYEES COMMENTS-----
 -----a)Discuss a range of options to enable employee to improve attendance – counselling , review workload , referral to OHS-----b) and/or discuss and review the action from previous interviews.-----

10. INDICATE ACTION TO BE TAKEN (if necessary ,select more than one)

a)Refer/continue referral to OHS	Y/N
b) Ask for confirmation of underlying health problem from GP.	Y/N
c) Underlying health problem confirmed. Continue to monitor and/or arrange review medical.	Y/N
d) Underlying health confirmed. Consider lack of capability procedure.	Y/N
e) No further action required. Employee advised must make effort to sustain improved level of attendance.	Y/N
f) No assistance required. Review within 3 months, earlier if further absences occur.	Y/N
g) Monitor/continue to monitor absence level , review within 3 months and advise employee that substantial/further improvement required. If this is not achieved or the absence level deteriorates,it may result in a Disciplinary Hearing.	Y/N
h) Grounds to proceed to a Disciplinary Hearing. Meeting to be arranged in accordance with the Associations Disciplinary procedures.	Y/N

12. ANY OTHER COMMENTS-----

13 .REVIEW/REFERRAL ARRANGEMENTS ,INCLUDING DATE(S) (where appropriate)-----

14. OUTCOME OF INTERVIEW CONFIRMED IN WRITING (where appropriate)
Y/N

Director/Line Manager signature -----

Date-----

Employee signature -----

Date-----

THIS FORM TO BE RETAINED IN EMPLOYEE’S PERSONAL FILE.