

## **Return to Work after Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure**

### **Introduction**

This policy describes the procedure to follow when employees return to work after sickness absence.

Return to work programmes are recognised as one of the most effective ways for managers to help employees achieve an effective return. It is particularly important that the return to work of employees who have been absent for a long, continuous period is planned and co-ordinated.

### **Return to work interviews**

Managers must speak to employees after every sickness absence, irrespective of how long it is for. The Return to Work Form requires managers to sign confirming they have done this.

Managers must arrange an interview on the employee's first day back to:

- confirm they have fully recovered
  - allow them the chance to discuss any underlying problems at an early stage
  - emphasise the employee is valued
  - consider the need for risk assessments.

On most occasions, following a sickness absence of a few days, the interview will only be a few minutes and be informal. It need not be face to face.

### **Medical certificates**

Employees returning to work on a phased basis, using either sick leave or annual leave, must provide a medical certificate stating they are fit to return on that basis.

Employees returning to work:

- after more than 14 continuous calendar days sickness absence
- if more than one medical certificate has been issued
- after completing a phased return to work

must provide a medical certificate confirming they are fit to return to work.

### **Phased returns**

A phased return enables employees who are fit enough to return, but not initially able to carry out their full hours and/or range of duties, the opportunity for an earlier return to work.

A phased return programme is designed to gradually ease employees back to work, over a maximum of six weeks. As they progress through the phased return, they should gradually be

returning to their regular work and working pattern, for example, by increasing the number of hours.

It is important that employees are supported during their phased return and have the opportunity to discuss any concerns as early as possible. Review meetings should be planned so that managers and employees can assess progress.

Date of Review	Changes Made	Signatures	Date of Next Review
15/01/15	None	A. Ferguson	January 2016
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