


POLICY DOCUMENT

Policy Title:	Sickness Absence and Benefits
Policy Group:	Human Resources
Policy Owner:	S. O'Rourke
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Review Period:	24 months
Next Review Due	2 nd June 2022
Author:	S. O'Rourke
Cross References:	Staff Handbook
Evidence:	Delafield Consulting, ACAS, Department for Work and Pensions
How implementation will be monitored:	Annual External Financial Audit
Sanctions to apply for breach:	Retraining, Disciplinary Action
Computer File Ref.	O:newpolicybook/humanresources/sickness
Policy Accepted by MT	2 nd June 2020
Sign-off by CEO	

Statement of Purpose:

The Hospital operates a discretionary sickness benefit scheme, as detailed in the Main Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment, which entitles employees, who meet certain conditions, to be paid when they are absent from work through genuine sickness or injury preventing them from undertaking their duties. This policy sets out the basic conditions to be met, gives information on how this benefit is calculated and describes what steps employees must take to claim Benefit. The hospital reserves the right to withdraw or amend this benefit.

Policy Statement:

Statutory Sick Pay is paid by the Hospital according to DWP rules and is paid to all employees except for a few excluded groups. Statutory Sick Pay is usually referred to as SSP. It is paid like hospital sick pay with your normal weekly or monthly payment. Entitlement to SSP is calculated according to prevailing DWP rates, and in most cases the hospital sick pay an employee receives will cover or exceed this minimum entitlement. Since SSP is not an additional payment, an employee's weekly or monthly payment will be unchanged.

If an employee is absent due to injury/accident, they are required to notify the Hospital of any claim made against a third party. The Hospital reserves the right to expect repayment of any Hospital sick pay (or part thereof), which is the subject of a payment received from such a claim. This will not affect payments of SSP. The repayment should be made either as a lump sum or by deduction from wages by agreement. This continues to apply the employee has left the hospital.

Employees must have been employed by the Hospital for at least six months to be eligible under the discretionary sickness benefit scheme. Regardless of their length

of service, all sickness absence must be reported using the procedure as detailed in the staff handbook.

SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE

1. Reporting sickness absence

- 1.1 You must notify your manager (or the Nurse in Charge of the Hospital outside of their hours) and Human Resources as soon as possible of your absence from work on the first day and at least 2 hours before the start of your shift, where possible. You must also keep in daily contact if the duration of your absence is uncertain.
- 1.2 Individual employees must contact the Human Resources Department in person during the following hours: 8.00am – 5.00pm Monday – Friday at the earliest opportunity at the beginning of your absence that you will be off work. Outside of these hours, a message can left on the H.R. voicemail service – providing you have notified your manager/nurse in charge. **Only in exceptional circumstances** will calls reporting sickness, or any other type of absence be taken from a third party.
- 1.3 You are required to give the reason for your absence and how long you expect to be off. The absence from work notification (usually a telephone call) will be recorded in the Human Resources Department and a Declaration of Incapacity to Work (self-certificate) Form will be completed in the case of sickness absence. The Human Resources Department will be responsible for notifying your department head and arranging cover as necessary. Outside of the Human Resources department hours, the hospital Bleep Holder (day or night) will be responsible.
- 1.4 If your absence lasts more than eight days, you must provide a doctor's certificate (fit note) from the eighth (calendar) day. Thereafter, further Certificates must be submitted covering all the absence until you resume work. Do not delay seeing your doctor if you need medical advice or treatment, whether or not you need a G.P. certificate.

2. Reporting sickness absence outside of the HR department hours.

- 2.1 You must contact the hospital bleep holder (senior nurse in charge of the hospital) to report your absence following the same procedure as detailed in 1.1 – 1.3.
- 2.2 Outside of the HR department hours, you must also telephone the HR department before 10am on the following working day to confirm that you have contacted the Hospital Bleep Holder to report your absence. If the following working day is a Saturday, Sunday or Public Holiday, a message may be left on the HR voicemail service - in addition to notifying the Bleep Holder of your absence – together with the expected duration of the absence and/or return to work date.

3. Return to work

- 3.1 If the period of absence, due to sickness or injury is for 7 continuous days or less you must report to the HR Office immediately on return to work and complete a Self-Certification Form during the return to work interview.
- 3.2 You must contact the human resources department/or senior nurse in charge, following the same procedure as above to notify your intention to return to work at least one day before the date of return.
- 3.3 On your return to work, you must collect and complete a Declaration of Incapacity to Work (self-certificate) Form from the HR Department. If your absence has been for less than eight days, you do not need a medical

certificate. The HR Department will notify the Payroll Department of all dates of sickness absence and whether they were self or GP certified.

3.4 Any entitlement to Hospital Sickness Benefit is discretionary and subject to Management approval.

3.5 You must not have lost eligibility to Hospital Sickness Benefit because of unsatisfactory conduct or performance.

Failure to notify the Hospital on the first day of absence and to satisfactorily complete a Self-Certification Form could result in non-payment from the Hospital's Sick Pay Scheme, if relevant, and the Statutory Sick Pay Scheme, being withheld.

Failure to notify the Hospital of absence and the reason for that absence, in accordance with the above rules, will be regarded as unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence may be considered to be misconduct and could result in disciplinary action.

Failure to complete the Hospital's Self-Certification Form, or provide false information, or failure to supply Medical Certificates for any absence exceeding 7 continuous days, could result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

If the reason for your absence is of a highly confidential nature and you do not wish to state this in writing to your Manager, you may request to see HR Manager.

Should you be absent for more than four weeks for any reason, the hospital reserves the right to suspend accrual of any holiday in excess of the minimum four weeks conferred by the Working Time Regulations (this clause will not apply to the Ordinary Maternity Leave period).

Compulsory Sickness Absence

Any member of staff who is absent from work with any contagious medical conditions for example Diarrhoea and/or Vomiting, must refrain from attending for work for at least 48 hours after the last symptoms. Catering staff must refrain from work for 72 hours after the last symptoms. Further information about specific, contagious medical conditions and length of absence from work can be obtained from the Director of Nursing Services in the first instance.

Sickness absence whilst on Annual Leave

An employee can choose to change a period of annual leave during which they are sick to sick leave. This would occur if:

- they become sick while on annual leave
- have a period of sick leave that continues into a pre-arranged period of annual leave

The employee can make arrangements to take the annual leave they 'have 'missed' at a later date providing they inform the Hospital as soon as reasonably possible that they are sick and provide medical evidence of the sickness, if requested.

General

Sickness absence is monitored by the Human Resources department and the levels are regularly reported to the Management Team.

All employees will have a “return to work” interview following a period of sickness absence regardless of the duration, to ensure they are fit to return to work and to try to identify any underlying problems that may have caused the sickness absence, where applicable. Employees with high levels of sickness absence, frequent short term or any patterns of sickness absence will be seen by a senior manager to agree how these can be reduced. The Hospital reserves the right to refer an individual to Occupational Health if they have concerns about their level or frequency of sickness. Please refer to the Occupational Health section below

The Hospital reserves the right to obtain a medical report from your GP in order to ensure that you are fit to continue to undertake your job, subject to the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988, or to require you to undergo a medical examination by an independent Medical Examiner. The Hospital will pay for any medical examination or report.

Occupational Health

The hospital has access to an Occupational Health service and may refer an employee who is causing a concern with excessive absence, (long or short-term), or a concern over work issues that may be health related. Other reasons for a management referral to the Occupational Health department may include:

- employees who have been off sick for more than four weeks;
- staff considering early retirement on ill health grounds
- an employee who may after an injury or serious illness require rehabilitation advice back into work role or deployment.

An employee will be requested to agree to such a referral, however they may choose to refuse. The HR department will be responsible for contacting the occupational health provider and arranging for further advice or a referral to an occupational health physician.

SICK PAY SCHEME

In addition to the Statutory Sick Pay Scheme for which the qualifying days will be Monday to Sunday the Hospital operates a discretionary Sick Pay Scheme for employees, details of which are as follows. Sickness payment is calculated using the basic rate of pay.

If your period of continuous service is:	Period of Full Pay	Period of Half Pay
Up to 6 months'	SSP only	
After 6 months' but less than 1 year	1 month	Nil
After 1 year but less than 2 years'	1 month	1 months
After 2 years' but less than 3 years'	2 months	2 months
After 3 years' but less than 4 years'	4 months	4 months
After 4 years' but less than 5 years	5 months	5 months
After 5 years' continuous service	6 months	6 months

The 'Rolling' year

The rolling year, for sick pay purposes, is calculated by going back 1 calendar year from the 1st day of the current period of sickness. Hospital sick pay entitlement will be calculated by reference to this rolling year.

A letter of notification will be sent with details of the dates when entitlement to full, half or zero sick pay changes.

Review

This policy has been reviewed for overt or implied discrimination within the scope of the Hospital's policies on equality and diversity and none was found.

The policy will be reviewed bi-annually to ensure that the system described continues to provide an effective framework for sickness absence.