

Annex 1 - Managing Absence

“The manager's responsibility is to concentrate on what effect absence has on the individual's ability to fulfil their contractual obligations, NOT to have a discussion with the individual about the validity of the illness”.

It will sometimes be necessary to intervene when someone is off for a long time, when their absence is causing operational difficulties, when they need support, or when they are regularly off and a pattern is emerging. There are many things you can consider when thinking about offering support.

- From time to time we may experience difficulties in balancing work and home pressures, leading to absenteeism. If you become aware that such factors may be causing sickness absence, the Trust's flexible working policies, e.g. career break, leave for parents, job share etc. should be consulted and considered carefully.
- You also need to be aware of the Trust's policy in relation to alcohol and/or drug abuse. If you suspect someone may be suffering from either of these illnesses, please consult the appropriate policy.
- Obtaining an opinion from Occupational Health.

However it may be that you do need to put in place formal measures to address the level and/or nature of absence(s) and the effect upon our services. We have a range of standards or “trigger points” which provide a prompt for you to take action.

- No more than 3.5% sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period
- No more than 3 episodes of sickness absence in a rolling 6 month period
- An identifiable pattern of absence
- A Bradford Factor Score of 80 or above over a 12 month period
- Long-term absence of 4 weeks or more

FORMAL ACTION ON GROUNDS OF ILL HEALTH CAPABILITY

As a first step an informal meeting to set a new target will be carried out. Hopefully there will be no reoccurrence. If there is then a second meeting will occur and it is likely a series of formal warnings will be issued. If there is no improvement it may be that it is impossible for the person to carry out the duties expected of them and we may need to dismiss them.

The decision to terminate employment on the grounds of ill health/capability will be made after all other options have been considered. This will involve consultation with the employee, obtaining health and wellbeing advice and reviewing whether or not there are any other jobs the employee could reasonably undertake.

Managers do not have to wait until the employee's sick pay provision has been exhausted before making the decision to terminate, however before making the decision to terminate an employee on the grounds of ill health and it is important to consult People and Organisational Development before any decisions are taken to dismiss or to issue formal warnings for sick absence.