

Medical guidance notes and information

Sickness

Illness/Sickness Absence

For any illness or absence from work caused by medical conditions, or symptoms that could impair the employee's ability to perform his/her job safely, the manager **MUST** contact OH, either by phone or written memo.

Not all requests for advice will necessarily require a medical examination but advice will always be given.

Some examples:

- after industrial injuries - work related accidents and injuries affecting ability to perform their job;
- any heart disease;
- raised blood pressure (hypertension);
- chest pain;
- palpitations;
- heart attack (myocardial infarction);
- angina;
- shortness of breath;
- diabetes;
- after operations;
- any eye problem;
- stress, anxiety, depression;
- symptoms of concern;
- dizziness;
- fainting;
- vertigo;
- blackout;
- fit;
- collapse;
- loss of consciousness;
- drowsiness;
- long term absence where manager requires advice.

Where medical conditions are present that necessitate work restrictions the Medical Advisory Team will make every effort to clarify the exact restriction(s) and timescale involved.

Checklist for Sickness Absence Referral to Medical Advisory Service
Please forward as much information as you can. This will help us deal with your case as quickly as possible and avoid delays in entering into correspondence to obtain background information from you.

Please enclose any other (not listed) information, concerns etc. that you feel may be relevant or useful.

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- Employee's name and employee number;
- Occupation and work location;
- Dates of current sickness (from – to);
- Diagnosis or cause of sickness;
- (If diagnosis not known) copy of GP's certificate and outcome of discussions with GP regarding treatment plan, and indication when may return to some work;
- Details of medication (name, dose, when started). Details of any other treatment. Length of course prescribed;
- Interview notes; home visits etc;
- Details of previous sickness/absence with dates and reasons, if relevant (e.g. repeated sickness/absence due to the same reason);
- Return to work date if one has been indicated;
- Signed consent form if one has been provided already;
- Your own (managers) observations, comments, problems;
- Questions you would like addressed;
- Any other information which may be relevant;
- Confirmation that manager's concerns have been fully discussed with employee.

For guidelines for interviewing staff who are off sick and may be off long term – go back to the Home Page. It helps if you ask the Medical Advisory Team specific questions to assist you in the management of the case. For examples of these questions - go to the Home Page.

We aim to respond to advice regarding requests for long term sickness absence within 10 working days.

If a manager considers that an increased risk to safety exists following sickness, accident or incapacity, the manager must refer that person to Occupational Health immediately.

Further information on illness/sickness absence

For all advice requested from the Medical Advisory Team, in order to give the optimum and most comprehensive advice to help you manage the case, we require as much background information as possible.

Background information may include:

- for sickness absence cases, the 'checklist';
- interview notes;
- copies of GP certification/letters;
- medications – refer to checklist for details;
- sickness absence record.

Managers should always discuss the reason for referral to OH with the employee, particularly where there is a safety-related, drug or alcohol, or behaviour issue, and provide written confirmation of this. The medical adviser can immediately address the manager's concern in the consultation and there is no ambiguity about why the employee is being seen.

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