



Forgewood
Housing Co-operative Ltd

Attendance & Absence Management Policy

March 2024

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST	
Policy Guardian:	PAUL MURPHY
Author:	EVH
Approved by Director:	19 March 2024
Effective From:	27 March 2024
Date of Next Review:	March 2029
Diversity compliant:	YES
Equality Impact Assessment:	LOW
Data Protection compliant:	YES
Health & Safety compliant:	YES
Procedure implemented:	YES
SDM system changes made:	N/A
Training Completed:	
Posted on Sharepoint:	
Posted on website:	

Introduction

Forgewood Housing Co-operative 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.

Aims of the Policy

- 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.

Principles

The organisation 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.

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 and 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 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 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, 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 as soon as you can and maintain regular contact by calling daily during the first week of your absence (unless otherwise agreed with your line manager) and weekly thereafter.

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 to a disciplinary action against you in accordance with Forgewood Housing Co-operative's 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.

Company Sick Pay

Scale of allowances

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

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

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 will not be counted for the purpose of attendance management process.

Attendance review triggers

The Co-op's review triggers have been set at 3 separate periods of unplanned absence or a period of 4 weeks unplanned absence within the 'financial' year which runs from April to March, after which a return to work interview will normally be conducted by the line manager or Operations Director

Absence Management

Forgewood Housing Co-operative 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 Forgewood Housing Co-operative's 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, 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 Forgewood Housing Co-operative, 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 help the situation. If the absence is certified by a doctor, your manager will ask your doctor to clarify the underlying cause for stress.

Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed in March 2029 and every 5 years or sooner if required. It may be updated in line with legislative change or guidance/good practice. Any amendments to the policy will be presented to management committee.