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1. OBJECTIVE

We encourage everyone to maximise their attendance at work and recognise that however hard we all strive to be fit and healthy, from time to time illness occurs. We want to make sure all absence is managed in a fair and consistent way across the business so it's important that everyone knows and understands what they have to do and what will happen when they are absent.

As a company we are committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of our people and encourage this through proactive wellbeing initiatives and supporting benefits. However, long term or frequent bouts of absence have a detrimental effect on our clients and the service we deliver and to your colleagues who have to cover workloads and substantially reduce our efficiency as a business.

Please read the information below to find out more about how we handle sickness absence.

2. SCOPE

This Sick Absence Policy and Procedure applies to all employees of Lodge Service. As all absence cases are different, we may vary the procedures set out in this procedure to reflect specific circumstances.

This policy is formulated on the assumption that, if the company suspects there to be misconduct, its separate disciplinary procedure will apply. For example, the company may take disciplinary action if there is evidence that:

- Absence is not genuine or not for the reason provided.
- If an employee is undertaking inappropriate activities while off sick, such as carrying out work for another organisation.
- The correct sickness absence notification and evidence procedure has not been followed.

3. ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE

In the event that you are unable to come to work due to sickness or injury, you must ensure that you have informed the Control Room on 0333 0037679 or your Manager based on the instructions your manager has given you as soon as possible this should be a minimum of 2 hours before the start of your shift.

We ask you to phone, rather than by text or e-mail, so we have a clear picture of your illness and likely date of return.

You need to tell the company:

- When you became ill
- The nature of your illness
- If the illness was due to an incident at work
- If you are seeking medical attention
- Your likely date of return

It's really important that you keep in touch with your manager while you're off. If you fail to attend work or contact your manager to explain why you can't attend, your absence becomes unauthorised, and you may not be paid for it. You could also face disciplinary action. If, due to your medical condition you're not able to keep in contact, you should either get someone to call in on your behalf or make specific arrangements with your manager to contact them at certain times.

If you are not going to be able to return to work on the day you suggested in your original contact with your manager, then you must phone at least 24 hours in advance and keep them informed of your progress so they can schedule and ensure appropriate cover for our clients.

It is your responsibility to make sure that you have your Manager's contact number as well as to ensure that your personal contact details are accurate and that you keep the company updated of any changes. Your contact details can be updated via your Timegate App.

4. RETURNING TO WORK

On return to work you may be asked to attend a return to work discussion (this may be in person or by phone), to help us understand your situation, to inform you about anything that has happened while you were away that you need to be aware of and to ensure you really are fit for work.

Please note that if a doctor has certified your absence for a specified period and you wish to return early, you are required to contact your manager so that we can discuss with you whether it is appropriate and safe for you to do, please note that we may require further medical advice to help us ensure your health and wellbeing. Advance notice is also required to enable your manager to review scheduling.

A return to work discussion will be held for any absences over 7 calendar days or related to any injury or accident at work.

For absences over 7 calendar days you will need a Fit for Work note from your GP. Please email a copy of your sick note to your manager and HR at hadmin@lodgeservice.com as soon as this is issued. We need these to ensure you are paid correctly.

Depending on the nature of the illness we may offer you a referral to our Occupational Health Provider.

4.1. PHASED RETURN

In some circumstances, following a period of absence you might need a phased return. This means you'll return to work gradually, helping you get back up to speed and to check that any adjustments we've made are working.

Phased returns can include returning on reduced hours, or doing amended duties. They usually last for 4-6 weeks, but can be for up to 12 weeks in some circumstances. Any phased return will be based on the advice from Occupational Health or your GP.

During phased return payment will be made for hours worked only.

5. TIME OFF SICK

If you're off work, then we expect you to do everything you can to recover so you can return to work as soon as possible. We recognise that your needs may differ depending on the nature of your illness; however, we do expect you to always follow medical advice and do everything you can to recover as quickly as possible.

6. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM ILL AT WORK

If you become ill at work, then you should speak to your manager if available or the control room. If you need to go home or go and seek medical attention you must have permission. Your Manager will confirm with you the specific instructions for your role.

If you're too ill to travel home by yourself then speak to your manager regarding this, so that suitable arrangements can be made.

Your absence will be recorded for absence monitoring purposes.

7. SHORT TERM FREQUENT ABSENCE

If you have had numerous occasions of 1 or 2 days sickness, this constitutes short term frequent absence and will be managed in line with the short term absence process.

The trigger for this is defined as:

- 3 or more absences (instances) in the previous three months
- 6 or more absences (instances) in a rolling 12-month period
- or more than 12 days absence in a rolling 12-month period (over more than 2 instances)

The trigger points for part timers will be worked out pro rata to the number of days worked.

8. LONG TERM ABSENCE

Long-term absence is defined as absence in excess of four consecutive weeks.

During your absence it is required that you and company keep in regular contact with one another to keep everyone up to date with your progress and any changes in your anticipated return to work date.

As an employee, it is your responsibility to respond in a timely manner to any communication from the company regarding your health and provide any updates when requested.

Long term absence will be managed in line with long term absence process

9. MEDICAL REPORTS

Medical reports help us to support you in the best way possible and with your permission, the company may request a doctors /occupational health report regarding your health and any ongoing medical conditions that are impacting your ability to be at work and any possible adjustments that need to be made to your working environment. This report would be treated in strict confidence and the outcome discussed confidentially with you.

10. SPECIAL CASES

10.1. PREGNANCY-RELATED ABSENCES

Pregnant employees who are off work because of pregnancy-related ill health must abide by the company's absence reporting procedure and attend a return-to-work interview if appropriate. However, any sickness absence for a pregnancy-related reason will not be included as a trigger in the company's absence management process.

10.2. UNDERLYING MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND DISABILITY-RELATED ABSENCES

Where the reason for absence is related to underlying health issue that could amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010, the company is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments. You may be referred to Occupational Health to find out more about your condition, how it may affect you at work and whether there are any adjustments we could make to help.

If you're off sick due to a disability-related illness, your manager will try to support you to return to work. These absences might count towards the absence triggers in some circumstances. But it might be a reasonable adjustment to agree a revised absence trigger with you for absences related to a disability or to not include them when calculating absences triggers. If you have any questions or concerns about absence related to underlying health conditions please speak to HR.

11. SICK PAY

You may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) during your period of absence, please see <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay> for details).

SSP will only be paid where the correct absence reporting procedure has been followed and appropriate evidence of illness supplied.

The company can withhold or suspend SSP if it is not satisfied that the employee is ill, or no evidence of sickness is provided.

12. SICKNESS DURING ANNUAL LEAVE

If you're sick before your holiday and the time you were going to take as holiday becomes covered by a fit note, then with your managers approval, your holiday can be changed to sick leave and your entitlement reinstated. If you're sick but are still well enough to go away, then this will remain as holiday.

If you're ill while you're on holiday you need to let your manager know straight away. They'll then make the decision as to whether or not to reinstate your holiday allowance as long as you've provided a fit note/medical certificate to cover the whole period of sickness.

Just so it's clear, if your annual leave is changed to sickness, this absence will count towards any absence triggers.

If you haven't been able to take your annual leave during the holiday year because you've been off sick for a prolonged period, you can carry forward holiday into the next holiday year.

If you're off sick for a prolonged period, you can choose to take holidays during your absence – contact HR to discuss.

13. THE ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS – SHORT TERM ABSENCE

If your sickness absence reaches one of the companies **sickness absence trigger points**, your manager will begin to follow the absence management process.

Everyone's situation is different and therefore the process will vary, however the aim of the absence management policy and this process is to help and support you to enable you be at work as much as possible.

13.1. TRIGGER POINTS

The trigger points which will prompt an absence management meeting are:

- 3 or more absences (instances) in the previous three months
- 6 or more absences (instances) in a rolling 12-month period
- or more than 12 days absence in a rolling 12-month period (over more than 2 instances)

The trigger points for part timers (under 40 hours per week) will be worked out pro rata to the number of days worked

Whilst the company will endeavour to support you through your sickness absence, you should be aware that continued absence due to ill health might put your employment at risk.

13.2. INFORMAL STAGE

Most instances of sickness absence will be dealt with in an informal way.

You may be asked to attend a return to work meeting following your return. This meeting will be held with your Manager.

The meeting will cover the following:

- Supporting your return to work and updating you about what has happened in your absence
- Monitoring and raising your attention to any imminent trigger points (as part of the absence management process)
- Collecting outstanding Fit for Work notes
- Considering any reasonable adjustments / phased returns that you may require as indicated on your Fit for Work Note
- Identify any ongoing issues – Your manager will also notify HR where appropriate

13.3. STAGE 1: MEETING ON REACHING A SICKNESS ABSENCE TRIGGER POINT

If after a period of time your sickness absence reaches one of the trigger points shown above, you will be invited to a stage 1 absence management meeting with your manager to review your overall absence record and the reasons for absence.

You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague or recognised trade union representative.

At this meeting we may ask for your permission to refer you to our Occupational Health Provider or write to your GP for a medical report to further understand what we can do to support you and to help to improve your attendance at work.

Your manager will talk you through the absence management process and will set a review period for improvement (Typically this will be between 2 - 4 months)

They will also discuss if appropriate, any reasonable adjustments that need to be made to help and support you.

As a result of the meeting you may be issued with a Stage 1 absence warning, this constitutes a first absence written warning. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing. Any absence warnings remain valid for a 12 month period.

For most people no further action will be taken, however if at the end of the review period there has been no improvement your line manager may decide to extend the review period or invite you to a further formal meeting under the absence meeting (stage 1 or stage 2 depending on whether a stage 1 absence warning has been issued previously). You will be advised in writing of the decision.

13.4. STAGE 2: MEETING

You will be invited by your manager to attend a stage 2 absence management meeting if your absence does not reach the required improvements based on all of the information available following the issue of a stage 1 – absence warning.

This meeting will be held by your manager, who will work with you to agree the way forward. You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague or recognised trade union representative.

Your line manager will discuss your absence with you and will explore any progress or improvements made and/or why things may not have improved.

At this meeting they will set another improvement target and may before doing this ask for your consent to refer you for a doctors /occupational health report

As a result of the meeting you may be issued with a stage 2 absence warning, this constitutes a final absence written warning. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing. Any absence warnings remain valid for a 12 month period.

At the end of the review period your line manager will decide the next steps based on all of the available information. You will be contacted to inform you of the outcome. This could lead to a further extension to the review period or alternatively to a further formal meeting under the absence meeting (stage 2 meeting / stage 3 hearing depending on whether a stage 2 absence warning has been issued previously). You will be advised in writing of the decision.

13.5. STAGE 3: ABSENCE MANAGEMENT HEARING

You will be invited to a stage 3 management hearing if your attendance has not improved to an acceptable level following the issue of a stage 2 – absence warning. The stage 3 meeting will be with a member of the HR team and a Store Manager/General Manager/Director not previously involved who will discuss the way forward with you. You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague or recognised trade union representative.

The purpose of this meeting is to explore your situation to date and make future decisions based on all of the information available. After your discussions a short break will be taken for a decision to be made.

The possible outcomes

- If your absence has improved this must continue, as failure to do so within a 12 month period will result in escalation to another stage 3 hearing.
- A further extension of the review period may be given to allow for an improvement
- If all other interventions have failed, you could be dismissed on the grounds of ‘Some other Substantial Reason ‘ or ‘Capability’

The outcome will be discussed and confirmed in writing

13.6. RIGHT TO APPEAL

You have the right to appeal against the outcome of any formal review stage of the absence short term absence management process.

If you wish to appeal you must do so in writing, outlining your grounds for appeal within 5 working days of the date the dismissal was confirmed in writing.

The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:

- new information or evidence is available that wasn't considered before
- the process wasn't followed correctly, or
- you feel the outcome wasn't fair and reasonable

An appeal will be held as soon as possible following receipt of appeal and will be dealt with by an appropriate manager.

You have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague at an appeal hearing.

The decision of an appeal hearing is final, the decision will be confirmed in writing and there is no further right to appeal.

14. THE ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS – LONG TERMS ABSENCE

If you off for a period of more than 4 weeks your absence will be treated as long term.

During a period of long term absence you are expected to maintain regular contact with you manager, this may include attending scheduled welfare meetings. You are required to submit sick notes in a timely manner. The failure to provide sick notes or to stay in contact may be treated as unauthorised absence and may lead to the suspension of any statutory sick pay or action under the disciplinary process.

14.1. STAGE 1: HEALTH REVIEW MEETING

Depending on individual circumstances you may be invited to a health review meeting.

The health review is to understand more about the reasons for your absence, whether your waiting for any medical appointments or test results, and to talk about when you think you'll be likely to return to work and any adjustments which can be made to help. The meeting will usually be held at the work place, but if you are not well enough to come into work the meeting may take place at an alternative location or via phone.

You have the right to be accompanied to the health review meeting by a colleague or trade union representative.

Depending on the reason for the absence you may be referred to our occupational health provider.

14.2. STAGE 2: REARRANGING FURTHER HEALTH REVIEW MEETINGS

If you continue to be off sick, we will hold further health review meetings with you, as well as keeping in regular contact by phone. There are no specific timescales for these meetings or set number of meetings that we'll hold - it depends on your individual circumstances. You have the right to be accompanied to the all health review meeting by a colleague or trade union representative.

During these meetings we will continue to discuss:

- the reasons for the absence and how they're progressing towards recovery
- how long the absence is likely to last
- any medical information, including any appointments they have scheduled or test results they've received, as well as information gained from Occupational Health
- any adjustments which can be made to enable them to return to their role
- whether it's likely that they'll be able to return to, or remain in, their role
- provide company updates
- discuss and agree next steps with you

As a result of a health review we may consider

- Occupational Health - You may be re-referred to Occupational Health again for further information on your prognosis and how we can best support you as your absence period progresses.
- Phased return - If you are able to return to work, a phased return might be needed with reduced duties or hours.
- Reasonable adjustments- Depending on your condition and role, we might be able to adjust your role or working arrangements to help you return to work. We will discuss possible adjustments with you, referring to any recommendations made in the Occupational Health report.

14.3. FINAL HEALTH REVIEW MEETING

If you have been off sick for a prolonged period and it looks unlikely that you will be able to return to work in a reasonable timeframe, we may need to invite you to final absence review meeting. We'll only do this if we have;

- gathered all relevant medical information;
- considered reasonable adjustments, phased return and redeployment

You have the right to be accompanied to the health review meeting by a colleague or trade union representative.

At the meeting we'll consider ending your employment on the grounds of capability. This will have already been mentioned as a possibility at previous absence review meetings, and will also be confirmed to you in writing prior to the meeting.

14.4. OUTCOME OF FINAL HEALTH REVIEW MEETING

If the manager considers all of the information and decides that you are unlikely to return to work in the foreseeable future, then they may decide to dismiss them on the grounds of capability due to ill-health.

Any dismissal will be with contractual notice, or pay in lieu of notice, even if you've run out of sick pay. You'll also get paid in lieu for any accrued but untaken holidays during the previous holiday year. This information will be confirmed in a letter.

14.5. APPEALS

If you are dismissed you have a right to appeal against this.

If you wish to appeal you must do so in writing, outlining your grounds for appeal within 5 working days of the date the dismissal was confirmed in writing.

If you wish to appeal you must do so in writing, outlining your grounds for appeal within 5 working days of the date the dismissal was confirmed in writing.

The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:

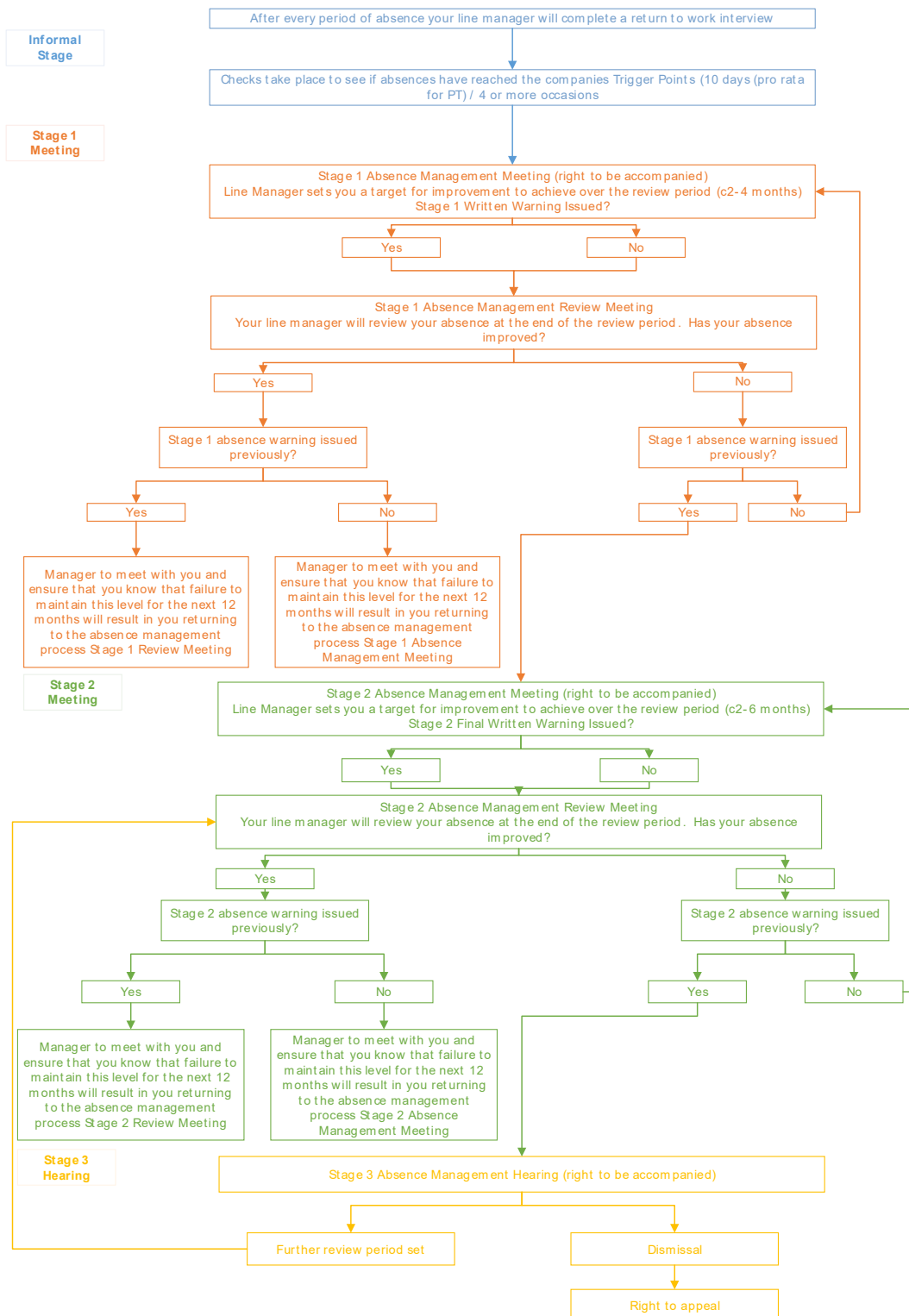
- new information or evidence is available that wasn't considered before
- the process wasn't followed correctly, or
- you feel the outcome wasn't fair and reasonable

An appeal will be held as soon as possible following receipt of appeal and will be dealt with by an appropriate manager.

You have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague at an appeal hearing.

The decision of an appeal hearing is final, the decision will be confirmed in writing and there is no further right to appeal.

15. Short Term Absence Management Process Flow Chart



16. Long Term Absence Management Process Flow Chart

