

SPTA Sickness Absence Policy**Key points**

- Everyone is responsible for ensuring that good attendance is maintained and employees have a responsibility in managing their own attendance
- Sickness absence from work is always assumed to be genuine
- This policy is designed to ensure all employees are dealt with compassionately and equitably, without discrimination
- Provision must be made for any reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of individuals attending any meetings / hearing throughout this policy
- Specialist advice may be used (e.g. occupational health) in order to support employees and advise on complex cases
- This policy aims to ensure the effective management of sickness absence and support of employees suffering from ill health; improve and maintain the health of employees; treat sickness absence in a fair, consistent, sensitive and constructive manner; monitor sickness absence to identify any job related issues; manage and deal with absence related to a disability positively as part of the support and management of the employee and develop a culture which encourages a high attendance level
- Employees must contact the appropriate person by telephone on the first day of absence (local procedures should be provided to all employees)
- Text messages are not an acceptable form of communication
- During sickness absence, contact should be maintained with the employee to provide support, demonstrate concern, ensure reporting policies are followed to avoid loss of pay and to assess the likely duration of absence
- Return to work discussions must be completed as soon as possible on the employee's return to work
- The employee will have the right to appeal any formal sanction
- The employee has the right to be accompanied to any meeting within this policy by a trade union representative or work colleague
- Ensuring confidentiality throughout the process is vital

Process overview

- Absence Triggers
 - 4 separate absences in rolling 12 months; 12 days certified absence in rolling 12 months or unacceptable trend/pattern of absence
- Short Term Absence
 - Stage 1 absence meeting to discuss concerns, work related issues and support / action required
 - Stage 1 review meeting (if no improvement escalate to stage 2)
 - Stage 2 absence meeting for further discussion / consideration
 - Stage 2 review meeting (if no improvement escalate to capability hearing – speak to SPTA HR first)
- Long Term Absence
 - Continuous absence of 4 consecutive weeks or more
 - Welfare meetings to take place throughout absence period
 - Referral to Occupational Health where relevant
- Occupational Health Services
 - Advice and guidance on employee health issues and work related health concerns
- Capability Hearing
 - Hearing Officer (Principal / Senior Leader or delegate) reviews the evidence
 - Employee has the opportunity to present their case and any mitigating factors which should be considered
 - Adjournment for the Hearing Officer to consider the information presented
 - Reconvene for the decision
- Appeal
 - Ten working days from hearing date to lodge an appeal
 - Appeal panel consists of 2 SPTA Directors supported by SPTA HR

C14a – Appendix 1

- Outcome can be to confirm the original decision; uphold the appeal and take no further action; uphold any dismissal appeal and take alternative action or take another course of action as appropriate but without increasing the penalty