

Absence Policy

PAVS' policy and procedural documents have been developed to meet the specific needs of the Association and are periodically reviewed in line with any changes in the law or statutory provision. They are provided as an example for information purposes only.

Other Information Sheets in this series:

PS1– Absence Policy

PS3– Maternity, Adoption and Parental Leave Policy





ABSENCE POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services recognises the importance of the health, safety, welfare and well-being of its employees and is committed to those practices which promote and assist these objectives.

It is the policy of PAVS to ensure and encourage regular attendance at work of all its staff and to introduce fair and consistent procedures for dealing with non-attendance due to sickness. PAVS recognises that staff may be away from work due to sickness or injury and have the right to be treated fairly and sensitively in relation to absence due to ill health. PAVS also has the right to take appropriate action, when necessary, to deal with problems caused by non-attendance.

SICKNESS AND ABSENCE PROCEDURE

a) Notification of Absence

Employees unable to attend work through illness or injury must inform Line Managers by 10.00am on the first day of absence, or earlier if possible, giving the reason for absence and its likely duration. If the employee is unable to telephone the Line Manager in person, a relative or friend may do so on their behalf. It is important to speak with the Line Manager, in order to ensure that all work commitments are discussed.

Any unauthorised absence must be properly explained and in the case of uncertainty about the duration of absence, Line Managers must be informed of the expected duration.

In the absence of the Line Manager it is appropriate to inform the Senior Administrative Officer.

b) Medical Certification

Absences lasting less than 7 days require completion of a Self Certification of Sickness form (SSP1) on the first day of returning to work and this must be submitted to the Administrative Officer.

Absences that continue for more than 7 days must be covered by a doctor's Medical Certificate (Form MED 3 or similar) which must be sent to the Administrative Officer or Line Manager without delay to cover all further absence.

In addition to submission of medical certificates, employees must also keep Line Managers regularly informed about their progress and answer all reasonable questions concerning the illness. In certain circumstances, the employee's written consent will be requested by PAVS to make enquiries from the employee's doctor about the illness or condition, or for consent to a medical examination arranged and paid for by PAVS.

NB: Failure to complete the required Self Certification of Sickness form or to produce a doctor's certificate may result in the payment of Statutory Sick Pay and/or contractual sick pay being withheld and may result in disciplinary action.

2 PAYMENT DURING SICKNESS

PAVS operates a sick pay scheme, details of which are supplied on commencement of employment (further copies are available on request). When sickness occurs during annual leave you will be credited

with the equivalent number of days' holidays to be taken at a later date. This will be agreed on receipt of a doctor's certificate. This applies to annual leave entitlement only and not to statutory leave days or 'time off in lieu' (TOIL).

3 FREQUENT SHORT TERM ABSENCE

It is understood that illness cannot always be avoided and staff may be absent from time to time. However, absence is disruptive and costly to both the employer and staff concerned and where an individual's attendance record is a cause of concern the matter will be investigated.

The following guidelines are, therefore, designed to ensure that standards of attendance can be monitored and absence is controlled in a fair and consistent way.

Informal Counselling

Irrespective of the length of absence, every individual will be seen by his or her Line Manager as soon as possible on the first day of return.

The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that the employee is fully recovered and fit to return to work and to establish the reason for the absence (and any pattern of absence) and what action can be taken by PAVS and/or employee to ensure that the Association's standard of attendance is achieved.

The meeting is not part of the Association's disciplinary procedure but one of **counselling**, and will be confidential, with the aim of trying to assist the employee to avoid a reoccurrence. The required standard of attendance and the time scale for improvement will also be discussed together with what further action may be taken if the required improvement is not achieved.

The employee should sign and the Manager complete the Return to Work Record Form (See Appendix A) to evidence what action has been taken.

Formal Procedure

When considering an employee's absence the following need to be taken into account:

- Reason(s) for the absence and its duration
- Frequency and/or pattern
- Effect/implications of the absence
- Employee's length of service
- Adherence with the notification procedures

Stage 1

If following informal counselling, there is a failure to achieve the required standard of attendance, a formal interview will be arranged with the line manager. As it is a formal interview the employee will be reminded in evidence of the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union representative. Where the required improvement has not been achieved a formal **VERBAL/ORAL CAUTION** may be issued by the Director and designated Trustee. This caution will be disregarded after a period of 6 months from the date of issue unless there are further absences during the period.

Stage 2

If following a verbal caution, the required improvement still has not been achieved during the current caution period, a **FIRST WRITTEN CAUTION** may be issued by the Director and designated Trustee. This caution will be disregarded after a period of 6 months from the date of issue unless there are further absences during the period.

Stage 3

If following a first written caution, the required improvement has not been achieved during the current caution period, a **FINAL WRITTEN CAUTION** may be issued by the Director and designated Trustee this warning will be disregarded after a period of 12 months from the date of issue unless there is a further absence during the period.

Stage 4

If following a final written caution, the required improvement has not been achieved during the caution period, the employee may be **DISMISSED**. The Director and designated Trustee will conduct the interview and before making the decision to dismiss will take into account:

- The employee's attendance record
- The extent of counselling
- Employee's length of employment
- Any medical evidence
- The chances of any improvement
- The needs of the organisation.

4 LONG TERM ABSENCE

Where an employee is absent through ill-health for 4 weeks or more the following procedure will apply:

- a) Through an employee's absence he/she is required to keep the company informed of progress. The line manager will also keep in touch with the employee and arrange a home visit, if necessary, by prior arrangement. The Association will also arrange a meeting to discuss progress and arrange to obtain the employee's medical practitioner, for a medical assessment. This will enable the nature of the illness to be established and the prospects for a return to work.
- b) Under the Access to Medical Records Act 1988, the employee has the right to:
 - i) Withhold consent to the request for medical information
 - ii) Have access to the report before it is given to the company
 - iii) Withhold consent to the report being sent to the company
 - iv) Request amendments to be made to the report
- c) Where an employee refuses to co-operate by providing written consent for a medical report or to attend a medical examination arranged by the company, any decision regarding the individual's employment will be based on the information available to the company at the time.
- d) Depending on the medical report, the Association will consider suitable alternative employment, if appropriate and available, and any reasonable adjustment as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 for an employee who is disabled under the Act.
- e) In considering whether or not an employee's job can be kept open the Association will take into account:
 - The nature of the illness
 - Length of service of the employee
 - The prospects of a return to work.

The employee will be kept informed if his/her job is at risk and a meeting arranged to discuss any options prior to any decision to determine the employment. If the decision is made to terminate the employee's employment contractual or statutory notice will be given whichever is the greater. The employee will also be reminded of his or her right to appeal.

5 UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Employees who are absent from work due to reasons other than sickness or injury are required to obtain prior permission from their Line Manager. Where such absence appears to be unreasonable or unwarranted or is unauthorised, it will result in disciplinary action and could lead to dismissal.

6 APPEALS

Any member of staff who has had disciplinary action taken against him/her under the above procedures has the right of appeal against each level. The appeal should be submitted in writing, giving the reason for the appeal, to the Director within five days of the decision being notified. The appeal will be heard by two Trustees not previously involved with the case.

Any employee whose employment is terminated on grounds of incapacity as a result of long-term absence may also submit an appeal against the decision.