

## **ABSENCE AND SICKNESS POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Employ My Ability (EMA) recognises that sickness and absence can have a big impact on the productivity of our business and the life of our employees, therefore, EMA aims is to balance the need for maximum employee attendance with the health and wellbeing of employees.

This policy sets out, how EMA will support employees during sickness absence, and what action it will take, if an employee has frequent short-term sickness absences, or a prolonged period of ill health.

### **Policy**

Should any employee consider they are affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects their ability to undertake their work, they should inform their manager.

EMA also reserves the right to require employees not to report for work, if it considers an employee is unfit to attend work due to sickness / injury.

In the event an employee does not comply with this policy, they may be dealt with under EMA Disciplinary Procedure and sick pay be withheld.

### **Notification**

Should an employee be unable to work, they must inform the on-call manager as soon as reasonably practical, ideally on the first day of absence within 3 hours of their normal start time, stating the reason and the likely length of absence. Staff should ring the on-call manager and not text or ring the service.

### **Short-term Absence**

When an employee returns to work from any absence (excluding holidays), a manager will formally review the employees absence record and complete a back to work meeting, if in any 3 month period there are 3 separate periods of absence (whether certificated or not), or if there is an unacceptable pattern of absence, for example regular time off on Mondays or Fridays. Should absence reach unacceptable levels, EMA may take disciplinary action that could include dismissal.

### **Long-term Absences**

Long-term absence is a period of sickness which lasts longer than 2 weeks. EMA will take a sympathetic view about genuine health problems, and will be supportive in its approach to all employees in this situation. Such absence will be monitored using telephone or home visits in the event of the absence being more than 4 weeks. Any home visits will not be made without employee's consent.

If absence reaches problematic levels, EMA may have no choice but to dismiss the employee. The point at which this action will be taken, will depend on the nature of work and the difficulties

employee absence causes to the Company. EMA would regard dismissal as a last resort, following evaluation of medical information, alternative working options and employee views.

### **Holiday Sickness**

Where an employee is laid up through sickness or injury during a period of pre-booked holiday, EMA will, subject to notification and certification, allow the employee to transfer to sick leave and take replacement holiday at a later date.

### **Certification**

All employees must provide EMA with a completed self-certification form for the first seven calendar days of sickness absences. The form can be completed on return to work (if the absence lasts less than seven days), or completed and posted as soon as possible.

Should the absence extend to the eighth day (including weekends), the employee must send a fit note, issued by their GP, to the company. This note must also cover any subsequent periods of absence.

### **Fit Notes**

Should a GP indicate “may be fit for work” on the fit note and identifies potential amendments, EMA will contact the employee, and arrange for a meeting to discuss the suggested amendments, before they return to work.

If amendments are possible, the employee will return to work, with regular reviews to ensure the amendments are satisfactory. (Amendments will not be a permanent change). In the event that amendments are impractical, the employee will remain on sick leave.

### **Return to Work**

Employees will not be allowed to return to work, until their GP deems that they are fit to do so. Any requests for temporary adjustments to working conditions will be considered and accommodated, where possible.

### **Pay**

There is no entitlement to paid sickness absence (over and above statutory sick pay), which is granted at the discretion of the Company.

### **Medical Examinations**

EMA may in the case of extended periods of absence, require employees to be examined by a medical consultant of its choice in order to seek a medical opinion. If an employee refuses to be examined, they may be dealt with under EMA disciplinary procedure.

### **Medical Reports**

In order to gather information about an employee's medical condition, EMA may request permission to contact the employees' doctor and ask for a medical report (the employee may request a report copy).

### **Return of the Organisation's Equipment**

If an employee is off sick for a period of more than one month, EMA may require them to return equipment until they are well enough to return to work.

If the employee does not return to work following a period of absence, they will be required to return all equipment on the date of termination of employment.

### **Non Compliance**

All employees have a role to play in enforcing the policy and are required to deal with any observed or reported breaches. Should employees feel apprehensive about their own safety in regard to addressing any breach, they should seek senior management support.

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to a lack of clarity over job role, learning needs or expected standards of performance, resulting in reduced effectiveness or efficiency, underperformance and putting service delivery at risk.

Any member of staff refusing to observe the policy will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Policy up to and including dismissal.

### **Implementation of the Policy**

Overall responsibility for policy implementation and review rests with EMA senior management. However, all employees are required to adhere to and support the implementation of the policy. EMA will inform all existing employees about this policy and their role in the implementation of the policy. They will also give all new employees notice of the policy on induction to the Company.

This policy will be implemented through the development and maintenance of procedures for appraisals and one-to-one meetings, using template forms, and guidance given to both managers and employees on the process.

### **Monitoring Policy**

The policy will be monitored on an on-going basis, monitoring of the policy is essential to assess how effective EMA has been.

### **Reviewing Policy**

This policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised in the light of legislative or codes of practice and organisational changes. Improvements will be made to the management by learning from experience and the use of established reviews.

### **Policy Amendments**

Should any amendments, revisions, or updates be made to this policy it is the responsibility of EMA senior management to see that all relevant employees receive notice. Written notice and/or training will be considered.

**Additional Information**

If you require any additional information or clarification regarding this policy, please contact your manager. In the unlikely event where you are unhappy with any decision made, you should use the Company's formal Grievance Procedure.

To the extent that the requirements of this policy reflect statutory provisions, they will alter automatically when and if those requirements are changed.