



SASS - Absence Policy

Policy Statement

SASS is committed to improving the health, wellbeing and attendance of all employees. We value the contribution our employees make to our success and when any employee is unable to be at work for any reason, we miss that contribution.

This absence policy explains what we expect from committee members and employees when handling absence

Key principles

The organisation's absence policy is based on the following principles:

1. As a responsible employer we undertake to provide payments to employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness, in line with our Sick Pay scheme.
2. Regular, punctual attendance is an implied term of every employee's contract of employment – we ask each employee to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance.
3. We will support employees who have genuine grounds for absence for whatever reason. This support includes 'special leave' for necessary absences not caused by sickness. We will also consider phased return to work following cases of long-term sickness absence.
4. We will consider any advice given by the employee's GP on the 'Statement of Fitness for Work'. If the GP advises that an employee 'may be fit for work' we will discuss with the employee how we can help them get back to work – for example, on flexible hours, or altered duties where that is practical whilst achieving the objectives of the post.
5. SASS' disciplinary procedures will be used if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or is not thought to be satisfactory.
6. We respect the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness. This policy will be implemented in line with all data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

Notification of absence

If an employee is going to be absent from work they should **speak**, to the supervisor (or another member of the committee when the supervisor is away) within an hour of their normal start time. They should give a clear indication of the nature of the illness and a likely return date.

Return to work discussions

When an employee returns to work they will have a return to work interview with their supervisor. This is a standard procedure, and in most cases the discussion will be informal and brief. The purpose of the chat is to:

- welcome the employee back
- the reason for, and cause of absence
- anything the supervisor or SASS can do to help
- that the employee is fit to return to work
- let them know any news.

If an employee has been absent from work often, SASS may also wish to find out if there are any underlying problems causing the absence. If an employee's GP has advised that they 'may be fit for work' the return to work discussion can also be used to agree in detail how their return to work might work best in practice.

Evidence of incapacity

Employees can use the SASS self-certification arrangements for the first seven days absence. Thereafter a 'Statement of Fitness for Work' is required to cover every subsequent day.

If absence is likely to be protracted, i.e. more than four weeks continuously, there is a shared responsibility for the company and the employee to maintain contact at agreed intervals.

'May be fit for some work'

If the GP advises on the Statement of Fitness for Work that an employee 'may be fit for work' we will discuss with the employee ways of helping them get back to work. This might mean talking about a phased return to work or amended duties. If it is not possible to provide the support an employee needs to return to work – for example, by making the necessary workplace adjustments – or an employee feels unable to return then the Statement will be used in the same way as if the GP advised that the employee was 'not fit for work'.

A more formal review will be triggered by:

- frequent short-term absences (four instances of absence in a rolling 12 month period).
- long-term absence (absence of more than 20 days).

This review will look at any further action required to improve the employee's attendance and wellbeing.

Such further action may in the last resort involve dismissal. This will only be done after taking relevant advice, and if other avenues to enable the post holder to fulfil the requirements of the job have been exhausted. SASS' disciplinary procedures will be used.

Statutory/Contractual Sick Pay

Employees need to qualify for statutory sick pay (SSP), and must have been off work sick for 4 or more days in a row (including non-working days).

Employees can't get less than the statutory amount, but some employers pay more through a company sick pay scheme (or 'occupational scheme'), check your employment contract terms and conditions.

Updated March 2020