

# Absence Management Policy



<b>Policy Manual Section:</b>	Governance
<b>Policy Number:</b>	HR01
<b>Scottish Social Housing Charter Reference:</b>	1. Equalities 2. Participation 3. Communication
<b>Date Approved by Management Committee:</b>	April 2019
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	April 2024

Govan Housing Association can provide this document on request, in different languages and formats, including Braille and audio formats.



## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Govan Housing Association recognises that on occasions it may be necessary for employees to be absent from work. However, we also have a duty to provide a reliable service to our customers and thus we need to ensure that we help you maintain the highest possible level of attendance.
- 1.2 This policy is designed to help all employees achieve good attendance, and to ensure that a consistent and fair approach in managing attendance is adopted throughout the organisation.
- 1.3 This policy, and the guidelines it contains, work in conjunction with but are not limited to other policies such as discipline & grievance, dignity at work, health & safety, etc.

## **2.0 Aims of the Policy**

- 2.1 To manage attendance in a way that reflects genuine concern for employees and to develop a positive attitude towards attendance.
- 2.2 To set clear expectations for standards of attendance that we require from our employees.
- 2.3 To separate two processes: attendance and absence management and provide guidelines for employees and managers in how to manage these.
- 2.4 To identify the causes of absence and, where possible, develop a programme of supportive and preventive measures.
- 2.5 To ensure training and support is available to both managers and employees.

## **3.0 Principles**

- 3.1 If your level of attendance is unsatisfactory you will be informed of the improvements required and the possible consequences of failure to do so (which may include disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal).

- 3.2 The attendance management process is not concerned with reasons for absence but with number of periods of absence/ days absent (excluding underlying health conditions protected under the Equality Act 2010).
- 3.3 If you have an underlying health condition causing absence(s), then we will consider reasonable adjustments.
- 3.4 Managers will conduct return to work interviews for every period of sickness absence within the spirit of this policy.
- 3.5 You need to adhere strictly to our absence reporting procedures. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and organisation sick pay being withheld.
- 3.6 Managers will maintain accurate, up-to-date attendance records for all staff to manage absence effectively with support from Corporate Services.

#### **4.0 Absence Monitoring**

- 4.1 A fundamental feature of good attendance management is the accurate and timely recording of all absences. This is essential for processing the requirements of statutory and occupational sick pay arrangements and the process of managing attendance and absence.
- 4.2 Good information allows patterns to be identified and can be an early indication of underlying health conditions. The sooner these issues are identified and acted upon – the more likely a successful conclusion for both you and the organisation can be achieved.

#### **5.0 Failure to Comply**

- 5.1 Where you do not follow reporting, certification, or keeping-in-touch arrangements we may withhold company sick pay. Failure to comply with these requirements may also lead to disciplinary action against you in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.
- 5.2 Similarly, if we suspect that you have falsified your absence or have deliberately misled us, we will take disciplinary action against you. In serious and/or repeated cases, it may lead to a dismissal.

## **6.0 Return to Work**

- 6.1 A return to work meeting will be carried out after every period of unplanned sickness absence. The purpose of a return to work interview is to establish if you are fit to return to work. This will be done by your line manager (or another manager if your line manager is not available) on the first day of your return to work.
- 6.2 Completed forms will be passed to Corporate Services and kept in your personnel file. The return to work interview forms contain confidential information and may only be viewed by authorised personnel, normally your line manager or staff member who deals with the case.
- 6.3 Where your line manager is concerned about the level or pattern of absence, your line manager will discuss this with you and monitor your attendance.

## **7.0 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)**

- 7.1 If eligible to SSP this is irrespective to your entitlement to company sick pay. The scale of entitlement to SSP is reviewed by the Government, normally at the beginning of each tax year. It is not paid for the first three days of absence and runs for 28 weeks after that.

## **8.0 Occupational Sick Pay**

- 8.1 In any one rolling period of 52 weeks, in line with your EVH Terms of Conditions of Employment, we will pay a sickness allowance in line with the following:

<b>Continuous service at the date sickness starts</b>	<b>Full allowance paid for</b>	<b>Half allowance paid for</b>
Up to 1 year	5 weeks	5 weeks
Over 1 year and under 2 years	9 weeks	9 weeks
Over 2 years and under 3 years	18 weeks	18 weeks
Over 3 years and under 5 years	22 weeks	22 weeks
Over 5 years	26 weeks	26 weeks

## **9.0 Absence Management**

9.1 Where a long-term and/or underlying health condition applies, the following points will always be considered in relation to long-term absence:

- The nature of the illness and any contributing factors
- The likely duration and/or frequency of your absence(s)
- Any actions that can be taken by you
- Any reasonable adjustments that we could make
- Any possible redeployment opportunities
- The nature of the duties in relation to your health conditions
- Our business needs and the impact that your absence may have upon these
- Your entitlement to statutory and company sick pay

9.2 If a medical professional makes suggestions for any reasonable adjustments, these will be discussed prior to your return to work to determine if these can be accommodated, along with any suggestions you or we may also have made. Although we are not bound by the doctor's suggestions, we will make all possible efforts to accommodate your prompt return and good attendance. If we agree, any reasonable adjustments, we will also set time scales and reviews to assess if they are still required and suitable.

9.3 When managing a long-term absence, a termination of employment may be considered where all other options have been exhausted, and the organisation can no longer sustain the absence. If this outcome is being considered we will seek relevant professional advice.

9.4 If you are off on long-term sick leave of more than 6 months, we may reduce your annual leave pay to the statutory minimum entitlement of 5.6 weeks. We would only do this after taking account of all the facts.

## **10.0 Dishonest Absence**

- 10.1 If you are found to falsify or exaggerate your absence, this will be treated as gross misconduct.
- 10.2 An investigation will be carried out in accordance with our disciplinary procedure and disciplinary action may be instigated, including dismissal or future withdrawal of the company sick pay benefit.

## **11.0 Other Provisions**

### **11.1 Absence and holidays**

If you are on annual leave and fall sick or have an accident, we will refer to your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment for guidance in this respect.

### **11.2 Doctor/hospital/dental appointments**

Doctor, hospital and dental appointments should be arranged out with working hours. If it is not possible, you should request time off from your line manager. We will refer to your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment for guidance on this.

### **11.3 Conduct whilst off sick**

When on sick leave, you are still bound by your contract of employment with us and all our policies including Code of Conduct. We also expect that you do not participate in activities that would be at odds with the reason for your absence. Any breach in respect of this will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. This includes conduct on social networking sites and any other publicly made remarks regarding our customers, work colleagues, partners and anyone else who is connected with us.

### **11.4 Cosmetic procedures**

Absence due to cosmetic procedures (whether carried out in the UK or abroad) will not fall under the sick leave or pay unless it is recommended by health professionals. Employees should therefore request time off and agree with their line manager how the absence will be processed, e.g. annual leave or unpaid leave.

### 11.5 IVF treatment

Absences relating to IVF treatment will not be processed as sick leave or pay. The same applies to a partner of a person that is undergoing such treatment. Instead, you should discuss with your line manager how time off for the treatment could be accommodated, e.g. annual leave, flexi time or unpaid leave. Absences relating to IVF treatment will also not be treated as relating to pregnancy unless the employee actually falls pregnant.

### 11.6 Stress management

Stress can result from an illness or lead to one but it is not an illness itself. The same relates to "nervous debility" or "anxiety" any other diagnosis of that type. If you go off sick with stress, we will adopt an approach of early intervention and follow our Stress Management Policy. If your absence is certified by a doctor, your manager may ask your doctor to clarify the underlying cause for stress, with your consent.

## **12.0 Equality & Diversity**

12.1 Govan Housing Association is committed to equality and diversity will not discriminate in the operation of this policy, in line with equalities legislation.

12.2 This policy can be made available free of charge in a variety of formats including Braille, large print, audio format or translated into a different language.

## **13.0 Review**

13.1 This policy will be reviewed in April 2024 or as required.

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Absence Management Policy</b>
<b>Strategic Outcome</b>	Improved or a continually high level of staff attendance to support the provision of excellent service delivery to tenants and other service users.
<b>What is the purpose of the proposed policy?</b>	The purpose of the policy is to clearly set out the steps for administering the Absence Management Policy for all staff fairly.
<b>Protected Characteristic Groups Affected By the Policy</b>	<p><b>Age</b>  <u>Positive Impact:</u>  The Association’s commitment to providing a fair and consistent framework in relation to administering the Absence Management Policy is clearly outlined in this policy which will hopefully reassure and have a positive affect on people concerned about age discrimination.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact:</u>  The Absence Management Policy should have no negative impact in relation to age.</p> <p><b>Disability</b>  <u>Positive Impact:</u>  Disabled people may be concerned about discrimination and not being treated fairly and equally. This policy clearly outlines the Association’s commitment to treat everyone consistently and equally which will hopefully provide reassurance that discrimination will not occur.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact:</u>  The Absence Management Policy should have no negative impact in relation to disability.</p> <p><b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>  <u>Positive Impact:</u>  People who are married or in a civil partnership may be a group who faces discrimination directly or indirectly with assumptions being taken about what their relationship means. This policy clarifies that all people should be treated with fairly and consistently and discrimination will not be tolerated.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact:</u>  The Absence Management Policy should have no negative impact in relation to marriage and civil partnership.</p>



	<p><b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b></p> <p><u>Positive Impact:</u> This policy clarifies that all staff will be treated equally with regards to absence management. Women affected by pregnancy or maternity will be included within this and will not be treated differently or unfairly.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact:</u> The Absence Management Policy should have no negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p><b>Race</b></p> <p><u>Positive Impact:</u> People may be concerned about racial discrimination and not being treated fairly and equally. This policy clearly outlines the Association's commitment to treat everyone fairly, consistently and equally which will hopefully provide reassurance that discrimination will not occur in relation to the Absence Management Policy.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact:</u> The Absence Management Policy should have no negative impact in relation to race.</p> <p><b>Religion or Belief</b></p> <p><u>Positive Impact:</u> This policy clarifies that all people should be treated with fairly and equally and discrimination will not be tolerated. People who hold religious or other beliefs can be a group that faces discrimination, either directly or indirectly. This policy has been designed to positively reassure people who are religious and hold a belief that they will not face discrimination of any sort in Govan HA in relation to the Absence Management policy.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact:</u> This policy should have no negative impact on those with religious or other associated beliefs.</p> <p><b>Gender</b></p> <p><u>Positive Impact:</u> People may be concerned about discrimination and that they will not be treated fairly and equally because of their gender. This policy clearly outlines the Association's commitment to treat everyone consistently and equally which will hopefully provide reassurance that discrimination will not occur in relation to the Absence Management policy.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact:</u> The Absence Management Policy should have no negative impact in relation to gender.</p>
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	<p><b>Gender Reassignment</b></p> <p><u>Positive Impact:</u> People who have or aim to reassign their gender can be a group who may be subjected to unfair treatment or behaviour. This policy clarifies that all people will be treated equally, fairly and discrimination will not be tolerated. This policy is designed to positively reassure people they will not face unfair treatment in Govan HA because of their gender reassignment and that steps will be taken should this occur. This message will hopefully positively deter discriminatory attitudes and behaviour.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact:</u> The Absence Management Policy should have no negative impact in relation to gender reassignment.</p> <p><b>Sexual Orientation</b></p> <p><u>Positive Impact:</u> People can be subjected to unfair treatment or not treated equally because of their sexual orientation. This policy clarifies that all people should be treated equally and discrimination will not be tolerated. Hopefully this policy will positively reassure people they will not face unfair treatment in Govan HA because of their sexual orientation and that steps will be taken should this occur. This message will hopefully positively deter discriminatory attitudes and behaviour.</p> <p><u>Negative Impact:</u> The Absence Management Policy should have no negative impact in relation to sexual orientation.</p>
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