

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

Should you be unable to attend work due to illness or injury, you must comply with the following sickness absence reporting procedure:

1. On the first morning of your sickness absence, you must contact the Company and speak to your line manager at the earliest possible opportunity and as close to your normal start time as possible and/or at least one hour prior to the start of your shift. If the call falls out of normal office hours (Monday to Friday 9-4.30pm) then please contact the on call number relevant for your department. (Spinal on call 07973050334/Day Care on call 07973267984). If you are unable to speak to your line manager personally, you should speak to one of the directors. You should give details of the nature of your illness and, if the illness is of a minor nature, you should indicate when you believe you will be fit to return to work. You must inform your line manager as soon as possible of any change in the date of your anticipated return to work. Contacting your line manager by text message or e-mail is not acceptable. If you have been diagnosed as having contracted an infectious or contagious disease such as measles or chicken pox, or a pandemic virus, you must inform your line manager as soon as possible after your diagnosis.
2. For an absence of seven consecutive calendar days or less, you are required to telephone your line manager on a daily basis in accordance with the reporting procedure set out above, unless a specific period of absence is confirmed on day one. However, the Company may relax this requirement in exceptional circumstances, for example in the case of a pandemic virus affecting a large percentage of the Company's employees. You will be advised about any modified sickness absence reporting requirements at the appropriate time. You must also complete a self-certification of sickness absence form immediately on your return to work. Self-certification forms are available from N:\Spinal Homecare\Policy and Procedure Control\Documents\ Doc 074 self cert sickness form.doc and should be returned once completed to your line manager). You are reminded that it is a serious disciplinary offence to provide false information on a self-certification form.
3. Should your sickness absence be for a period in excess of seven calendar days, you are required as an absolute minimum to contact your line manager on a weekly basis in order to provide an update on your illness or injury. A doctor's certificate must also be obtained. Your doctor's certificate must be forwarded to your line manager as quickly as possible and, in any event no later than the end of the calendar week in respect of which the certificate commences.
4. You should have certificates (either self-certification of sickness absence forms or doctor's certificates) to cover the entire period of your sickness absence.
5. The Company reserves the right to request a doctor's certificate for any period of sickness absence, even though this may be less than eight calendar days. If you incur costs in relation to obtaining a doctor's certificate, the Company will reimburse those costs upon production of a receipt.
6. Where a doctor's certificate indicates that you may be fit for work and the doctor has suggested ways of helping you get back to work, such as a phased return to work, altered hours, amended duties or workplace adaptations, your line manager will discuss the advice on the doctor's certificate with you and will consider any comments made by the doctor, any of the return to work tick boxes and any other action that could help you return to work despite your illness. The various options will be discussed with you and if a return to work is possible, your line manager will agree with you a return to work date, any temporary adaptations or adjustments that are to be made and for how long and will set a date for

review. If you disagree with the Company's proposals to support your to return to work, you will be asked to confirm why you believe you cannot return to work despite your doctor's suggestions, and the Company reserves the right to obtain further medical evidence as necessary, such as a medical report. If the Company is not able to make any adaptations or adjustments to help you return to work, your line manager will explain the reasons for this to you and will set a date for review. You may then use the doctor's certificate as if the doctor had advised "not fit for work".

7. For all periods of sickness absence of half a day or longer, your line manager may require you to attend a "back to work" interview on your return to work to discuss the reasons for your absence and whether it was work-related. At the interview, you will be advised that your absence record is monitored and recorded in order for the Company to manage performance, identify any problem areas and offer support where appropriate, you will be asked to explain the reasons for your absence and whether you consulted a doctor or attended hospital and you will be requested to complete a self-certification form for the period of your absence. In the case of frequent or repeated absences, your line manager will discuss whether there are any underlying reasons for the regular absences (and, in particular, whether they are in any way work-related) and explore with you whether there is any apparent pattern of absence. You may also be set reasonable targets and time limits for improvement in your attendance and warned that a failure to improve may result in disciplinary action.
8. For long-term sickness absence, your line manager may request to visit you at home.
9. For long-term sickness absence or frequent periods of sickness absence, the Company may request a medical report from your GP or consultant or alternatively request that you visit a doctor selected by the Company to undergo a medical examination. The cost of any such report or examination will be met by the Company and you are required to co-operate in the obtaining and disclosure of all results and reports to the Company. The Company will only request you to undergo a medical examination where reasonable to do so.
10. The Company reserves the right to withhold sick pay in circumstances where the certification procedure described above has not been followed or where there is sufficient reason to doubt the validity of your sickness absence claim. In the latter circumstances, the Company may request you to undergo a medical examination by a doctor selected by it.
11. On being fit to return to work, you must contact your line manager and let them know as far in advance as possible of the proposed date of your return.
12. If you have been suffering from an infectious or contagious disease such as measles or chicken pox, or a pandemic virus, you must not report for work until you are medically fit to do so. This is a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of the disease or virus in the workplace.
13. Persistent short-term sickness absence is, in the absence of any underlying medical condition or other reasonable excuse, a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in accordance with the Company's disciplinary procedure. If it is subsequently discovered that your sickness absence was not genuine, this will also be treated as a disciplinary matter.
14. Sick Pay

You may be entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP) if you are absent because of sickness or Injury provided you meet the criteria in the current SSP regulations. When you are absent for four or more consecutive days you will be paid SSP by us if you are eligible. This is treated like wages and is subject to normal deductions.

Qualifying days are the only days for which you are entitled to SSP. These days will be notified to you. The first three qualifying days of absence are waiting days for which SSP is not payable.

Where a second or subsequent period of incapacity (of four days or more) occurs within 56 days of a previous period of incapacity, waiting days are not served again.

Where the circumstances of your incapacity are such that you receive or are awarded any sum by way of compensation or damages in respect of the incapacity from a third party, then any payments which we may have made to you because of the absence (including SSP) shall be repaid by you to us up to an amount not exceeding the amount of the compensation or damages paid by the third party and up to, but not exceeding, any amount paid by us.

Sick pay exclusions

Your entitlement to SSP may be affected if:

- a. you have entered false information on any form including Self Certification form;
- b. you have failed to follow the policy and rules;
- c. there are serious doubts about the circumstances surrounding your claims for sick pay;
- d. your absence record with your employer is in the opinion of your employer excessive;
- e. your absence is caused by negligence, recklessness or carelessness by you in observing standard safety practices or by wilful misconduct at work;
- f. your absence is caused by any self-inflicted illness or injury including those primarily caused by your failure to heed medical advice;
- g. your absence is caused through injury in any dangerous sport in respect of which you are advised to take out your own personal accident insurance cover;
- h. your absence is caused through illness or injury caused by any outside employment or charity parachute jump or run or similar activity; or
- i. your absence is caused by surgery or medical treatment which you have elected to have unless undertaken upon the advice of a registered medical practitioner and confirmed as necessary by any doctor appointed by your employer.