

What are 'sickness absence triggers'?

You would reach a 'trigger' by having

- three separate episodes of sickness during any 12 month rolling period, regardless of the length of each sickness episode,
- a single episode of 10 or more days
- reaching 15 days total sickness absence in a single year.

What happens if I reach a 'trigger'?

You will be asked to attend a meeting with the Foundation Team to review your absence levels and set defined targets for improvement.

If sickness absence has been persistent and continues to be so, your case will be escalated to Medical Staffing and may be referred to a Final Stage interview at which your employment may be terminated. If it is a long term absence, then a stage three meeting may result in termination of contract.



DEALING WITH SICKNESS ABSENCE

Can my employment be terminated for being sick?

If sickness absence has been persistent over a period of time, and it seems unlikely that you will be able to return, or to stay within the parameters of the policy and procedure for the management of absence, then it is possible for the Trust, following a procedural fair inquiry, to terminate your employment due to sickness absence and the capability you lack to perform your duties.

Sickness Absence

A guide for Foundation Doctors

MAKING CONTACT – Employee’s Responsibility

I do not feel well enough to attend work Consider if you need to make an appointment with your Doctor / Dentist / Specialist.

What do I do when I am poorly and cannot report for work during ‘normal working hour’s’?

You must report your absence to the appropriate person(s) in the workplace as per individual department guidance – this is usually the Rota Coordinator and your supervisor. **You must also email the Foundation Mailbox to notify of your absence and must keep all the above updated with an expected return date. You must make contact at a minimum of every 3 days. This also applies to placements in GP and Psychiatry.**

What do I do when I am poorly and cannot report for work ‘Out of Hour’s’

If this is known “in hours” the above advice should be followed. Out of hours the consultant on-call should be contacted via switchboard at the earliest opportunity.

Can I ask my partner/parent/relative/friend or colleague to phone on my behalf? No, it is important that **you** contact the Rota Coordinator in person.

Can I send a text message/email to my line manager? No, you must contact the Rota Coordinator in person and speak to him/her yourself.

What could happen if I don’t make contact when off sick? If you fail to contact the Rota Coordinator and the Foundation Team then this will be dealt with through the policy and procedure for the management of absence, which states that failure to comply with these requirements may result in pay being withheld and may result in disciplinary action.

What happens if it was physically impossible for me to contact the appropriate Manager, will my SP still be withheld?

If you could provide an acceptable, reasonable explanation why it was impossible for you to make contact, this will be discussed with your supervisor and a decision taken in relation to pay.

Will my manager contact with me while I am off sick? It is possible that someone will make contact with you, and this may be the Medical Staffing, the Rota Coordinator or a member of the Foundation Team.

Is this not harassment? No, the Trust has a duty to ensure that you are recovering well, as it is in both yours and the Trust’s interest that you recover fully and return to work as quickly as is suitable. It is also your responsibility to maintain

communication with the Rota Coordinator and the Foundation Team during your absence.

REFERRAL TO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SERVICES

When will my manager refer me to Occupational Health & Wellbeing Services?

Where necessary your case will be discussed with Medical Staffing and the Foundation Team and a decision will be made regarding a referral to the appropriate Occupational Health Department, or you will be signed posted to one of the other support services available to staff i.e. Fast Physio, Well-being service, EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) etc.

What happens if I don’t attend (DNA) my meeting at Occupational Health or another Service?

Failure to attend will be dealt with under the policy and procedure for the management of absence.

Is Occupational Health Departments’ opinion absolutely binding on my line manager?

No. Occupational Health and other services have an advisory role to managers and employees. The advice given in reports is impartial, and managers and employees may choose to not take that advice. In the case of managers, there may be valid business reasons for example, but should a manager’s decision be challenged, then they will need to be able to justify the reasons for their decision. Likewise, if an employee decides to not act on advice given by Occupational Health, depending upon the circumstances, they may be challenged about this and asked to justify their decision.

RETURNING TO WORK

What happens when I return to work?

On returning to work, your Clinical or Educational Supervisor should hold a ‘return to work’ meeting with you. This should be undertaken within 3 days of your return, and you must sign the return to work interview record. Alternatively, if a meeting is difficult then a telephone conference will take place. Your Supervisor may delegate this to an appropriate Manager.

Why is this necessary? It is important to confirm that you are fit to return to work, to verify if you have breached any absence triggers within the policy and procedure for the management of absence and to help you return to your role as effectively as possible. Absence can affect your ARCP outcome and additional training time is required if more than 20 days is taken in either F1 or F2 year.