

Maximising Attendance

Employee Guide

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1. Introduction

Our policy

Every day, you act as the 'face' of Glasgow Life, often coming into contact with the people who live in and visit the City. Our reputation and success depends on the services you deliver. As a result, we expect a high level of attendance from you in order to deliver an efficient and effective service to all our customers.

We recognise the importance of your health, safety and wellbeing. Our **Maximising Attendance Policy** provides a framework which allows us to support your attendance, and to assist you with any health problems at an early stage. We're committed to supporting employee attendance and improving employee health and wellbeing. This is demonstrated by the professional services we have available, such as our employee assistance programme and occupational health service.

Purpose of the guide

This guide outlines your responsibilities under our policy, and takes you through the process you'll need to follow when reporting absent. It also outlines the support available to you, and the steps that your manager will take in helping you to maintain your attendance at work.

2. Why Manage Attendance

Costs and benefits

There are many reasons why it's important to manage attendance within Glasgow Life:

Cost

Absence costs us hundreds of thousands of pounds each year. These costs include:

- paying Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) and Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) to you if you're off sick; and
- in some cases, paying someone else to perform your duties while you're absent.

It can also:

- Demotivate colleagues who have to take on extra responsibilities.
- Cause deadlines to be missed due to a lack of trained, experienced employees.
- Reduce customer satisfaction.
- Disrupt productivity and the services we deliver.
- Damage our reputation.

It's very important that Glasgow Life takes an active role in managing attendance and in supporting you to maintain regular attendance. This allows us to:

- Respond well to problems with service delivery that could or do happen.
- Support you at an early stage if you have a health problem.

Benefits

The main benefits of managing attendance are:

- Improved employee health and wellbeing.
- Providing the right help and support.
- Increased productivity.
- Reduced costs.
- Ability to plan and manage workloads and how we deliver the service.
- Improved customer service and satisfaction

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Your role

You have a key role to play in making sure that your attendance stays at an acceptable level. You should:

- Attend work unless you're not fit to do so.
- Take personal responsibility for your health, attendance and wellbeing.
- Tell your manager about any illness or condition that may affect your ability to come to work or to do your job.
- Seek medical advice and treatment early on to either maintain your attendance or aid an early return to work.
- Raise any concerns with your manager. You should tell your manager about any potential solution you feel may help, if you believe that your job is affecting your health or contributing to your illness.
- Telephone your manager to report absence, and keep in regular contact with them while you're off.
- Tell your manager as soon as you're fit for work.
- Complete a sickness absence certificate on your return to work or, if appropriate, supply a statement of fitness for work from your doctor.
- Attend sickness absence meetings, including return to work discussions, giving your manager details of your absence.
- Make use of our employee assistance provider, where appropriate.
- Engage fully in consultations with our occupational health provider, as requested.

Your manager's role

Your manager will review and manage your attendance in line with our policy, taking appropriate action to as required.

They will:

- Tell you about Glasgow Life and service attendance targets.
- Regularly review attendance levels within your section or team.
- Advise you of the high level of attendance that's expected from you.
- Outline the impact that absence can have on your colleagues and on the services we deliver.
- Make sure that you're aware of and follow the correct procedures for reporting absence, and the forms you need to provide.
- Discuss any periods of absence with you, carrying out return to work and attendance review meetings as appropriate.
- Encourage you to seek help at an early stage if you have any issues that may impact on your health or ability to attend work.
- Consider reasonable adjustments to support you in the workplace.
- Speak to you if they have concerns about your level of attendance, if appropriate outlining the potential consequences of this.
- Arrange a referral to our occupational health provider as appropriate.

1. The Procedure

Reporting absence

Making contact

If you're unable to attend work due to illness, you must contact your manager as soon as possible on the first day. The latest time you can do this will depend on local arrangements operating within your Service, and your manager will be able to advise you of this.

You must contact your manager directly to report absence. If they're not available, you should leave a message and provide contact details for your manager to call you back.

It's not sufficient to:

- leave a message with a colleague or switchboard staff;
- leave a recorded message on an answer phone; or
- send an e-mail or text message.

In exceptional circumstances, a family member or friend may make contact with your manager on your behalf (for example, if you're in hospital and are physically unable to make the contact yourself).

Questions your manager will ask

Your manager will need to ask you some questions when you report absence. This is to help them assess whether they can offer you any support and assistance, and to make arrangements to cover your duties in your absence.

Your manager will ask you questions such as:

- What is the reason for your absence?
- How long do you expect to be absent?
- What action have you taken to improve your condition? (for example, pharmacy or taken over the counter medication).
- Do you intend to visit your GP?
- Is there anything that can be done to assist you?
- Are there any workplace issues contributing to your absence?
- What work is outstanding?
- Are there any pending deadlines or meetings that need to be rearranged?
- Are there any issues that are likely to come up while you're off?

Your manager will also ask if there's anything else that they need to know, and will confirm when you should next make contact.

Continued absence

Maintaining contact

If your absence from work continues, you'll need to contact your manager on the 4th day and again on the 7th day of your absence. These are based on calendar days and not work days.

You must make contact every 7 days where your absence continues beyond a calendar week. You'll also need to submit a statement of fitness for work (or 'fit note' as it's commonly known) from your doctor for any absence that lasts for more than 7 days.

Your absence may be considered unauthorised if you don't do this. Unauthorised absence is any period of absence which isn't reported under our maximising attendance policy. It's considered to be misconduct under our code of discipline, disciplinary and appeals procedure.

Your manager will arrange to meet with you regularly on a face-to-face basis during your absence, if appropriate. You also have a responsibility to maintain weekly telephone contact under our absence reporting procedures.

Sick pay

You will normally receive a 'sickness allowance' if you are absent due to sickness. This allowance is made up of Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) from Glasgow Life and Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from the government. You may receive full and half pay, each up to a maximum of 26 weeks, depending on your length of service as shown in the following table.

Length of service at start of absence Full allowance for Half allowance for

Length of service at start of absence	Full allowance for	Half allowance for
Less than 1 year	5 weeks	5 weeks
1 year, but than 2 years	9 weeks	9 weeks
2 years, but less than 2 years	18 weeks	18 weeks
3 years, but less than 5 years	22 weeks	22 weeks
5 years or more	26 weeks	26 weeks

You can find more information in our sickness absence: leave and pay condition of service.

Return to work discussion

Your manager will carry out a return to work discussion with you when you return to work after any period of absence. This will normally take place on the day you return.

The purpose of the return to work discussion is to:

- Welcome you back and confirm that you're fit to be back at work.
- Confirm and discuss the nature and reason for your absence.
- Offer any relevant help and support.
- Update you on any developments or changes that may have taken place while you were absent.

- Confirm whether any further action is required, for example, an attendance review meeting or referral to occupational health.
- Advise you of the consequences of further absences where your manager considers that your attendance is reaching an unacceptable level.
- If necessary, agree with you the actions you will take to improve your attendance.

Attendance review meeting

Your manager will meet with you to review your attendance record if it falls into any of the following categories, also known as trigger points:

- 3 certified (Self Certified (SC) or Medically Certified (MC)) absences within 6 months or 5 certified (SC or MC) absences within 12 months. Note: This criteria is not applied on a pro rata basis.
- 6 working days (or hours equivalent) within 6 months or 8 working days (or hours equivalent) within 12 months (applied on a pro rata basis); or
- any period of unauthorised absences*

*Note unauthorised absence will be managed as a conduct issue. Prior to the meeting your manager will:

- Confirm the arrangements for the meeting.
- Advise you of your right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative. It's your responsibility to make these arrangements.
- Arrange for the interview to take place in a private setting.
- Allow enough time for all the issues to be discussed.

At the meeting

Your manager will:

- Confirm the trigger point reached.
- Explore the reasons for your absence and your overall level of attendance.
- Advise you of the impact of your absence and the effect this has on service delivery, your team and workload levels.
- Identify any areas of support and concern.
- Consider referring you to the Occupational Health Service (OHS) or Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) if appropriate.

Your manager will listen to and consider your responses, making sure that our policy is applied fairly and consistently when deciding on the appropriate outcome.

4. Short Term Absence

What is short term intermittent absence?

This is defined as any period of sickness absence of up to 19 days. This can include absences that are covered by a sickness absence certificate and/or a statement of fitness for work ('fit note').

Short term absence is routinely managed via the attendance review meeting process described in section 4 above.

Through this process your manager will try to better understand the reasons for absence and establish if there is any assistance which can be provided to support your attendance at work.

If you experience regular spells of absence, your level of attendance may be deemed to be unsustainable. Your manager will discuss and implement actions in an effort to assist you to improve your attendance. However failure to achieve a sustained improvement in attendance may result in your attendance being regarded as unacceptable and managed as a capability issue as described in section 7 below.

5. Long Term Absence

What is long term absence?

This is defined as any period of absence lasting over 19 days.

You should maintain regular contact with your manager during your absence. Remember that you'll also need to submit a statement of fitness for work ('fit note') once you've been absent for more than 7 calendar days.

The attendance review meeting

Your manager will arrange to meet with you around the fourth week of your absence, and normally every 4 – 6 weeks or so after that, where appropriate.

You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at these meetings, and you should arrange this.

These meetings will take place at your work location. However, if you're unable to travel you may in exceptional circumstances, ask that the meeting takes place somewhere else. This could be at your home or another location that you and your manager both agree on.

The main purpose of the meeting is to:

- Fully discuss your health situation.
- Ensure steps are taken to establish the medical position.
- Offer support and assistance in helping you to return to work.

Early intervention

Your manager may ask to meet with you at an early stage where you're absent due to:

- a musculoskeletal condition, such as backache, neck pain and muscle pain; or
- a psychological condition, such as stress, anxiety or depression.

Where appropriate, your manager will normally arrange to meet with you within the first seven days of your absence, and will ask you if there's any help and support they can offer to assist your recovery. This could include:

- The opportunity to address any work related issues.
- The chance to provide counselling or physiotherapy at an early stage.
- Establishing whether any reasonable adjustments could be made to aid your return to work.

The role of occupational health

Your manager may need to refer you to our occupational health service (OHS). The purpose of this will be to seek advice and information regarding your health condition, and how it affects your ability to attend work and carry out your duties. Your manager will tell you that they're referring you to occupational health and the reasons for this.

You'll be required to engage with the OHS consultation process and discuss your health situation with a nurse or doctor. You may be charged a fee if you don't attend your consultation or are late, depending on the circumstances.

Your manager will receive a report after your consultation and will arrange to meet with you to discuss it.

Review medicals

Your manager may refer you to OHS more than once during the course of your absence, in order to get the most up to date medical information on your condition. Your manager will arrange to meet with you after each OHS consultation to discuss the content of the report. **Physiotherapy**

The aim of the physiotherapy service is to:

- provide fast and effective treatment of musculoskeletal problems; and
- speed up recovery from musculoskeletal injuries.

We will normally give priority to employees who are absent from work with a musculoskeletal problem as a result of an industrial injury which would improve following physiotherapy treatment and support an earlier return to work.

If your manager refers you to physiotherapy, they'll receive a report including advice on:

- the impact of your condition on your ability to perform your full range of duties; and
- any reasonable adjustments or adaptations considered.

Reasonable adjustments

Your manager will consult with you in considering all reasonable adjustments to aid your return to work, taking into account any recommendations made by OHS or your doctor in the statement of fitness for work (the 'fit note').

This may include:

- Adaptations to equipment or aids.
- Flexible working hours
- Phased return (this is where your hours or days increase gradually, normally over a period of no more than 4 weeks, until you're back to your normal working pattern).
- Redesigning the job or giving some of your duties to another employee.
- Additional training and/or retraining.
- Alternative work or lighter duties.

Access to work

If you have a disability, you may find that practical obstacles stop you from making the most of your opportunities at work. Access to Work (ATW) is a Government grant-funded programme that can help by providing you with advice and financial assistance. If your health or disability affects the way you do your job and is likely to last for at least 12 months then you may be able to receive help from ATW.

ATW might contribute towards the cost of any equipment you need at work, or adapting premises to meet your needs. It can also help pay towards the cost of getting to work if you can't use public transport. If you require further information please speak with your manager.

Employee assistance

Our independent employee assistance programme is designed to provide you with advice and support, and is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. You can receive help with a range of problems from practical everyday matters to more sensitive or emotional issues.

You can access counselling support over the telephone, online or face-to-face. A summary of the types of services available include:

- Access to confidential, independent support.
- Practical and emotional support on a wide range of work, personal and family issues.
- In-house expertise including accredited counsellors, solicitors, debt advisors and education experts.
- Relationship or bereavement counselling.
- A comprehensive debt management programme.
- Specialist information on child, elder and disability/illness care issues, plus tailored searches for local care providers.
- Legal advice on criminal and civil matters.
- Web-based service, including access to online fact sheets, consumer tips, debt surgery, care locator, self-assessment tools and online counselling.

Your family, partner and those close to you can also access telephone and online support. You can

contact our employee assistance provider as follows:

- Telephone: (information and counselling service) - 0800 247 1100
- Bullying & harassment helpline: 0800 042 0135
- E-mail: assistance@workplaceoptions.com
- Online: www.workplaceoptions.com

You can access this by clicking on member login and entering the following details:

- Username: *GCC*
- Password: *employee*.

Unpaid leave of absence

In exceptional circumstances, your Head of Service may grant you a period of unpaid leave, if appropriate, if you run out of sickness allowance during your absence.

This will be reviewed on a regular basis (at least every three months), and won't last for longer than 12 months, unless in exceptional circumstances.

You should continue to submit medical statements during this time, and advise your manager when you're likely to return to work.

6. Termination of employment

Your manager will fully explore all options in helping you to return to work and sustain an acceptable level of attendance, confirming details in writing. However, they will also advise you of the potential outcome in cases where you're unable to return to work or improve your level of attendance. They may have to consider your continued employment with us.

In such cases, your manager will first explore whether ill health retiral may be an option.

Ill health retiral

Ill health retiral is only available to employees who are members of Strathclyde pension fund. It's granted in cases where OHS assess that:

- you're unlikely to work again before age 65 (tier 1); or
- you have a reasonable prospect of working again before 65 (tier 2).

Approval must be sought from a qualified medical practitioner on whether you meet the criteria for ill health retirement.

You can appeal against a decision not to grant ill health retiral. You can get details on the procedure for this from the Strathclyde pension fund or by contacting your HR team.

Capability dismissal

Your manager may have to consider the option of dismissal on capability grounds where:

- you're unable to return to work or maintain an acceptable level of attendance.
- they have explored all options of support; and
- you don't meet the criteria for ill health retiral;

Before considering capability dismissal, your manager will have:

- Met with you face to face on a regular basis.
- Given you the opportunity to put your side forward.
- Issued letters confirming the discussions that have taken place at these meetings.
- Sought advice from OHS.
- Explored reasonable adjustments that may enable a return to work.
- Explored whether you're eligible for ill health retiral.
- Advised you in writing that dismissal is being considered and is a potential outcome.

You have the right to appeal against a decision to dismiss you on capability grounds. The appeal will be heard by members of the Glasgow Life Directorate.

You can find full details in our Code of discipline, disciplinary and appeals procedure.