

Attendance Management Policy



1 Policy Statement

Rosehill Housing Co-operative values the health and wellbeing of our employees. We recognise that on occasions, it may be necessary for staff to be absent from work. However, we also have a duty to provide a reliable service to our customers and therefore need to ensure that staff are assisted in maintaining the highest possible level of attendance at work.

This policy is designed to support all employees achieve acceptable attendance levels, and to ensure that a consistent and fair approach in managing attendance is adopted throughout the organisation.

Regular attendance at work is an implied term of every contract of employment, in the same way that acceptable performance and conduct is expected.

This policy seeks to ensure that staff who are absent from work, because of sickness, are offered the support and guidance that they require, and that the impact of staff absence on the efficiency and quality of Rosehill's services is minimised.

In applying this policy, full consideration will be given to our relevant conditions of service and other employment policies.

2 Scope

The policy applies to all Rosehill Housing Co-operative employees.

3 Principles of the Policy

The principles of the Policy are to:

- Promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of employees.
- Promote high levels of attendance at work.
- Ensure that all employees recognise that their attendance is vital to the success of Rosehill, and that their contribution is valued.
- Ensure employees are aware of, and understand Rosehill's position on managing attendance at work, and their own responsibilities in reporting sickness absence.
- Ensure that Line Managers adopt a fair and consistent approach, taking account of individual circumstances, while seeking to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of attendance.
- Encourage employees to seek help and support with any problems which result in them not attending work.
- Ensure employees are made aware of the support mechanisms available within Rosehill.

- Ensure Line Managers are trained to be able to monitor and manage attendance effectively, fairly, and consistently.
- Ensure Line Managers are aware of the levels of attendance within their own department and across Rosehill.

4 Definition of Absence

For the purpose of this policy, absence is defined as non-attendance at work, whether this is authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence is when the employee has provided a self-certificate or medical certificate from a General Practitioner or hospital, and when the dates on their medical certificate are current and continuous.

Unauthorised absence is a period of absence for whatever reason has not been authorised. Reasons for this may be that the employee has not turned up for work and has not contacted their Line Manager to report their absence.

5 Absence Reporting

5.1 Notification

Employees must follow the Absence Reporting Procedure outlined below:

- All absences, excluding pre-authorised holidays, must be reported as soon as possible.
- The employee should call the main office number to speak with their line manager as close to their usual start time as possible, and within 1 hour of this. If the line manager is unavailable, staff should request to speak with the Corporate Services and HR Manager, or another manager in their absence.
- The employee should always call, by telephone themselves, unless there are exceptional reasons why they are unable to do so, e.g., lost their voice; or they have a disability which prohibits them from doing so.
- It is not acceptable for an employee to text, WhatsApp, or email their Line Manager to report an absence.
- Depending on the circumstances, the employee may be required to call their line manager each day to keep them advised of their illness and the expected return to work.
- Where the absence extends to more than seven days, the employee is required to notify the line manager of their incapacity once a week thereafter, unless otherwise agreed, for instance, if an employee has undergone surgery and there's an anticipated recovery time of 6 weeks.
- Failure to follow the absence notification procedures may, after a full investigation of the facts, lead to disciplinary action being taken.

- If an employee is ill whilst on annual leave and does not think they will be fit to return to work at the end of their leave period, they should contact their Line Manager whilst they are on leave to advise them of this.

5.2 Certification

Employees must complete a self-certificate for all periods of absence up to and including seven days, regardless of length. For the purpose of sickness absence certification, all seven days of the week count, including non-working days.

A medical certificate (Fit Note) is required for all periods of absence beyond seven days and must be emailed, posted, or delivered to the employee's Line Manager as soon as possible after it has been issued. All medical certificates must run consecutively, i.e., every calendar day must be covered.

Any uncertified periods of absence will be unpaid and may be treated as unauthorised or Absence Without Leave (AWOL). Consistently failing to provide certificates in a timely manner may, after a full investigation of the facts, result in disciplinary action being taken.

Within a Fit Note, The GP has the option to advise if an employee would be fit for some work or to work with some adjustment. Any temporary workplace changes should be agreed in consultation with an employee's Line Manager and the Corporate Services and HR Manager. Where the adjustment cannot be made, the employee will remain on sick leave, and the absence will continue to be managed in line with the policy (See Sections 8 -10 for further information).

If a phased return to work is suggested by the GP, and agreed by the Line Manager, and the Corporate Services and HR Manager, the days an employee is off sick within the agreed period will count as one period of absence.

An employee can come back to work at any time, even if this is before their fit note expires. They do not need to go back to their doctor first to be signed fit for work. In certain circumstances, we may seek professional advice before an employee returns to work.

5.3 Monitoring of Absence

All absences will be recorded and monitored by Line Managers, supported by the Corporate Services and HR Manager.

5.4 Sickness and Annual Leave

If an employee becomes unwell during a period of annual leave, they must contact their Line Manager as soon as they are aware that there is a period of incapacity during their holiday and submit a medical certificate at the earliest practicable opportunity. The period of sickness absence shall be treated as sick leave and not as annual leave. (For further information, please refer to the Terms and Conditions of Employment).

6 Employee Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring they maintain an acceptable level of attendance at work.
- Looking after their general health and wellbeing and seeking medical attention or other support where necessary.
- Ensuring their lifestyle does not impact on their ability to attend work.
- Attending work unless unfit to do so.
- Reporting sickness absences promptly to their Line Manager in line with the reporting procedures and ensuring that the appropriate certification is provided in accordance with procedure.
- Attending return to work meetings and other attendance review meetings as required.
- Maintaining contact with their Line Manager during periods of sickness absence and effectively communicating the reason for their sickness absence.
- Advising their Line Manager of any illness which affects their ability to attend work or to undertake the duties of their post to a satisfactory level.
- Raising concerns at an early stage with their Line Manager if they consider their sickness absence to be connected to their job.
- Attending any appointments and co-operating fully with the Occupational Health Service and other organisations that provide support to Rosehill Housing Co-Operative and its employees.
- Ensuring that any medical advice and treatment received, is followed as quickly as possible to facilitate a return to work.
- Not participating in any external activity which may be detrimental to their recovery.
- Not abusing the sickness absence procedures or sick pay scheme.

7 Return to work

This policy requires Line Managers to monitor the attendance of employees, to support employee wellbeing and improve attendance. Rosehill will support Line Managers in this process through training and support provided by the Corporate Services and HR Manager.

Research indicates that the single most effective action to reduce absence is to consistently conduct return to work meetings for all staff who have been absent, irrespective of the length of the absence period and without exception.

Upon return to work following any period of sickness absence, the employee's Line Manager must undertake a Return-to-Work Meeting with them. This is an informal meeting however must be recorded and signed by both parties. The meeting must be conducted on the employee's first day back at work, or in exceptional circumstance at the earliest opportunity.

The purpose of the return-to-work meeting is to:

- Welcome the employee back to work.
- Update them on how their work has been managed in their absence and any other relevant information on changes that have taken place within the organisation during their absence.
- Ensure that they are fit to return to work.
- Explore the reasons for absence.
- Establish if the absence was work-related and if so what Rosehill, or the manager, can do to resolve any work-related matters.
- Establish if there are any underlying medical problems that their Line Manager should be aware of.
- Discuss whether a referral to the Employee Counselling Service or Occupational Health may be of assistance.
- Determine what precautions can be taken to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence.

8. Types of Sickness Absence

When a Line Manager becomes concerned about an employee's health, or level of attendance the matter should be raised with the employee.

Absence can be categorised into three distinct types:

8.1 Short-Term Absence

Short term absences are in most cases due to unconnected ailments.

Any absence for up to 7 calendar days would be considered a short-term absence and must be supported by a self-certificate and return to work meeting form.

8.2 Frequent Absence

Frequent absence is a series of frequent or regular absences which can be related or unrelated. Categories of frequent absence are as follows:

- 2 or more absences in any 6-month period.
- 4 or more absences in any 12-month period.
- 10 or more working days absence in 12 months.

Where there has been frequent absence and the employee has met one of the absence trigger points detailed above, their Line Manager will arrange an Absence Review Meeting. The line manager will normally carry out this meeting themselves with the employee. The purpose of this meeting is not only to explore the reasons for the employee's frequent absences and highlight that a trigger has been reached, but for the Line Manager to offer support and put in place any reasonable adjustments enabling the employee to attend work and achieve a sustainable level of attendance.

This is a formal meeting because the employee's attendance record is now causing concern although the style of the meeting should be positive and constructive. The employee will be advised that their attendance will be monitored on an ongoing basis with clear expectations agreed. A note of the meeting will be documented using the Absence Review Meeting Form, and both parties should sign this before a copy is retained in the employee's personnel file.

At the end of each financial year, the Corporate Services and HR Manager will report on each employee's absence levels for the year. Anyone who has met a trigger outlined above, will receive a year end absence review. Within this meeting the line manager will look at ways we can support the employee to improve attendance and outline expectations for the coming year.

If the level of attendance continues to cause concern, a decision will be taken as to whether to either proceed to a formal disciplinary, or ill health capability meeting.

8.3 Long-Term Absence

Long term absence is any one period of absence which exceeds 4 weeks (28 days).

A Long-Term Absence Review Meeting should be held when an employee has been absent for more than 4 weeks. This is an important part of maintaining contact with the employee so that any reasonable support can be offered by Rosehill. This meeting can be held in Rosehill's Office or at a mutually agreed place such as the employee's home, if consent has been given, or a local cafe or community centre. The Line Manager will normally carry out this meeting themselves with the employee, however they may, depending on circumstances request support from the Corporate Services and HR Manager. If a HR Representative is present, employees will be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a work colleague, or Trade Union Representative.

To ensure that regular contact is maintained, the employee must remain contactable during periods of absence, provide medical certification timeously and respond to letters and phone messages.

The employee also has a responsibility to maintain regular contact with their Line Manager via the telephone, particularly on receipt of medical certificates. In cases of prolonged, long-term absence, further review meetings will be arranged as appropriate.

It is important for Rosehill to gather medical information to establish a prognosis, indicative return to work date and guidance on whether adjustments are necessary to support a return to work. Such guidance will be sought from an Occupational Health Specialist, the employee's GP, or another medical professional, e.g., Consultant, Nurse Practitioner, or Physiotherapist.

9. Capability or Disciplinary?

9.1 No Underlying Medical Condition

Where there is no underlying medical condition detrimentally affecting the employee's overall capability, or no improvement in attendance, this type of case will be dealt with in accordance with Rosehill's Disciplinary Policy.

9.2 Underlying Medical Condition

If medical certification, specialist reports, or Occupational Health information shows an underlying medical condition, a view should be

taken on whether continued or increased support will help an employee attend more consistently or return to work completely.

Each case should be considered on an individual basis taking into consideration the length of the current absence, the nature of the absence, the likelihood of recovery and the potential to attend work consistently or return to work at all. Through discussion with the Corporate Services and HR Manager, and the Director, consideration should be given as to whether it is appropriate to look at the employee's capability because of Ill Health.

9.3 Ill Health Capability

If the stage is reached where an employee's long-term sickness absence is causing serious concern in relation to operational effects on Rosehill, the employee will be referred to a General Practitioner, Consultant or Occupational Health Advisor in order that an up-to-date medical opinion can be obtained.

Following receipt of these opinions, the Director and Corporate Services and HR Manager will consider what decisions require to be made regarding future employment. The Corporate Services and HR Manager will write to the employee to arrange to meet with them and his/her representative, if any.

The Director will chair the meeting and discuss with the employee the nature of the illness, its expected duration, whether a return to work is likely and the estimated time scales for doing so. Recommendations made by a doctor for the way an employee could return, e.g., a phased basis, will be taken account of. Consideration will also be given to whether any reasonable adjustments could be made to enable the member of staff to return to work and the capability of the member of staff to carry out his/her work. Redeployment might be an option if the employee cannot do their existing job.

Ill health termination will only be considered where it is not possible for the member of staff to return to work. All the above information should be ascertained from the employee or, if appropriate, from the employee's General Practitioner or Consultant or by referring the employee to an Occupational Health Practitioner.

If the medical advice is that the member of staff is incapable of discharging their duties permanently, or for a significant period deemed unsustainable, or if the medical advice is such that there is no indication of a near or clear return to work date, then decisions relating to the future will need to be taken. This will include the possibility of terminating the

employee's employment with notice, on the ground that he or she is incapable, through illness, of performing work that they were employed to do.

How long Rosehill can wait before considering termination is dependent on several factors, e.g., the type of work the employee carries out and the need for the job to be done by a permanent member of staff, the difficulty in continuing with a temporary replacement or overtime and the likelihood of the employee returning to work in the foreseeable future.

In the event of a decision to consider termination of employment, the employee will be advised in writing of the circumstances which lead Rosehill to contemplate dismissal. This stage is reached when there are no adjustments which can be made to the job or equipment or to the office to enable the employee to return to work or if medical opinion is such that the employee is incapable of discharging his or her duties permanently, or for a long time or if there is no indication of a date for return to work.

Arrangements must be made to meet with the employee to discuss their future employment, and to consider any appropriate alternatives to dismissal.

The employee should be made aware of their right to be accompanied at this meeting by a colleague or trade union representative.

The employee will be informed in writing of the outcome of the meeting and, if dismissed, will be notified of their right to appeal against that decision and notified of the appeal procedure.

Where a decision is taken to dismiss an employee under these provisions, the dismissal will be confirmed in writing.

The letter will:

- Refer to meetings held to discuss the employee's absence.
- Refer to the most recent medical opinion and any earlier medical opinions.
- State the reason for dismissal.
- State the effective date of dismissal.
- Indicate that the employee will receive a payment in lieu of entitlement to notice.
- Confirm the employee's right of appeal and indicate the date by which notice of appeal should be received.

10. Medical Reports

Rosehill uses Integral Occupational Health as their dedicated Occupational Health provider for professional, independent and specialist advice on all Occupational Health issues relating to employees, including providing information to managers to enable decision-making around workplace support and/or adjustments.

Requests for medical reports are dependent on individual circumstances. Some of these circumstances are outlined below:

- Where an employee is or has been absent due to work related stress, anxiety or depression, specialist guidance and support should be sought.
- Where the employee has indicated that they are having problems affecting their job, a medical report from Occupational Health should be sought immediately. An employee does not need to be absent from work to be referred.
- If an employee is absent from work due to long-term sickness, Rosehill will normally obtain a medical report from Occupational Health, depending on the circumstances and reason for absence.
- In the case of frequent short-term absence, to determine if an underlying medical problem is a contributory factor, the employee may be required to attend Occupational Health.

11 Failure to Comply with Notification Procedure and Employee Responsibilities

Should an employee fail to comply with the terms of the Notification Procedure as detailed in point 5 or Employee Responsibilities within point 6, Rosehill reserves the right to withhold Company Sick Pay. In addition, the reasons for failure to adhere to the Policy will be required to be explained at the Return-to-Work Meeting with their Line Manager.

If an employee repeatedly fails to follow the correct absence reporting procedures and/or fails to fulfil their Employee Responsibilities e.g., not sustaining an acceptable level of attendance, formal disciplinary action may, after a full investigation of the facts, be taken against them, in line with Rosehill's Disciplinary Procedure.

12 Payment Arrangements

12.1 Statutory Sick Pay

Employees are eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) when they are absent from work due to sickness absence.

The main features of the scheme are:

- The first three days of incapacity are unpaid (called 'waiting days').
- Further sickness is paid at the weekly rate published by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (revised annually in April) for up to 28 weeks.
- Once SSP is exhausted, an employee may transfer onto benefits, paid directly by the Department of Work and Pensions.
- If two periods of sickness are separated by less than eight weeks (56 days) then they are linked, and the employee need not serve the waiting days again.

12.2 Company Sick Pay

Arrangements relating to company sick pay are detailed in the conditions of service.

All periods of sickness absence, for pay purposes, are reviewed based on a rolling year i.e., the previous 12 months' absence history from the 1st date of the current absence.

SSP will be paid in conjunction with Company Sick Pay. Where Company Sick Pay is withheld due to non-adherence to the Policy, the employee will only be entitled to SSP, where this is still payable, or no pay where SSP has been exhausted, or the employee fails to provide a Fit Note.

13 Recording Absence

All self-certificate and medical certificates are the property of the employee and will be returned to the employee once it has been appropriately recorded.

14 Monitoring and Measurement of Attendance

It is the responsibility of Line Managers to review attendance for each employee within their department on a regular and consistent basis and take appropriate action in line with policy and procedure where necessary.

15 Abuse of the System

Any abuse of the absence system may, after a full investigation of the facts, be dealt in accordance with the terms of the Disciplinary Policy and may result in Company Sick Pay being withheld.

16 Training

The Corporate Services and HR Manager will ensure that all Line Managers, responsible for managing staff absences, are trained in all aspects of attendance management and will receive refresher training as appropriate.

17. Data Protection

17.1 On the 25th of May 2018 the legislation governing data protection changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Following the UK's exit from the EU, and the end of the transition period which followed, the GDPR formed part of the retained EU law and became the UK GDPR which together with the Data Protection Act 2018 constitute the UK's data protection legislation.

18. Equality and Diversity

18.1 We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for all people in our work. In implementing this Policy, we will provide a fair and equal service to all people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

18.2 Rosehill is committed to removing any barriers to communication. Therefore, if required this Policy can be produced in another format e.g. braille, large print, etc.

19. Risk Management

19.1 In all key areas of our business we need to consider any risks which may arise. To this end we have in place a robust Risk Management Policy and from these flows our Risk Register. We have identified our material risks which are regularly monitored by our Management Team and Audit Sub-Committee.

19.2 To ensure we continue to manage the associated risks we will periodically review this policy to ensure compliance with all legislative requirements and regulatory and best practice guidance.

20 Review of Policy

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if required to comply with legislative requirements.

