

**Absence Management Policy & Procedures**

**POLICY**

It is recognised by the Trustees of Boleskine Community Care that from time-to-time staff may be absent from their place of work due to illness. The length of time lost by employees through illness must be monitored to ensure that each member of staff can do his/her job effectively and without putting themselves or others at risk. While it is not the intention of the Charity to penalise the genuinely sick, it must be recognised that an employee who is medically unfit to carry out his/her contractual duties may not be able continue in that employment.

However, it is recognised that in some cases, patterns/levels of absence will be unacceptable and formal management action will be required.

Employees who become aware that they have an illness problem are encouraged to inform their manager at the earliest opportunity. All such requests will be dealt with as speedily and compassionately as possible. Assistance to access an occupational health service can be provided.

**PROCEDURE**

On the first day of absence, you should report your absence to your line manager (or someone else in BCC if your manager is unavailable) prior to the start of the working day. Where possible you should report by telephone and should make the call yourself unless you are incapacitated. You should advise your manager of the reason for your absence and the likely duration if known.

If your absence continues beyond one day, you should keep your manager updated

on a regular basis of your progress.

On return from absence, the employee and the line manager must complete a 'return to work interview' form agreeing the reason for the absence, the period of absence and, where appropriate, what course of action is required because of the absence. This form must be signed by both parties before being filed in the employee’s personnel file.

**Stage 1**

In situations where an employee's sickness record is giving some cause for concern, the employee's line manager will discuss those concerns with the employee. It is essential that any message conveyed in this manner is clear and unambiguous. This may result in an informal warning for attendance, with a target for improvement set.

**Stage 2**

If there is no obvious improvement in the health of the employee or any sign of patterns emerging in an employee's absence, a nominated Trustee will invite the employee to a meeting to ~~'~~formally~~'~~ review the employee’s case. The employee must be offered the opportunity to have appropriate representation by a work colleague or trade union representative.

The employee must be given the outcome of this meeting in writing and where appropriate, they must be given notice that their level of absence is unacceptable, a timescale in which to improve and a target for improvement. This constitutes a formal warning.

**Stage 3**

If there is still no improvement within the timescale, a review will be held with the chair of the Charity, or a Trustee not involved in Stage 2. The employee will be formally invited to this meeting. The employee must be offered the opportunity for appropriate representation at this meeting by either a colleague or trade union representative. All the available evidence will be reviewed.

If there are no special circumstances, the employee will be dismissed on the grounds of incapacity and their inability to meet the acceptable standards of attendance required by BCC.

**APPEAL**

Every employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of any formal review stage of the absence procedure. The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:

(i) the policy had not been followed correctly

(ii) the resulting action was inappropriate

(iii) the need for action was not warranted

**Appeal against the formal stages of the Absence Procedure**

An appeal should be put in writing to the chair of the Trustees. The letter of appeal may be submitted by the employee or their representative. The letter should contain the grounds for appeal and should be lodged within 7 days of receipt of the issue of a formal letter. An appeal hearing should be arranged within 7 days of receipt of the appeal letter. An appeal against Dismissal will be considered in the same way but should be heard by a Trustee of BCC who has not previously been involved in the case.

**PROCEDURES CHECK LIST:**

**Stage 1**

**Return to Work Interview**

This is an informal part of the Procedure, however, to give the process credibility, the following rules should be followed:

1. Every employee should complete a 'return to work interview' form with their immediate line manager.
2. Interviews should be carried out in an area where there will be no interruptions and where both parties may feel at ease.
3. The employee should always be informed of the reason for the meeting.
4. The meeting should be prefaced by an indication of concern for the employee as well as the need for the manager to be aware of the health of his/her employees.
5. The employee should be encouraged to discuss any problems they may be having with their health and to actively contribute to the solution to the problem.
6. Any apparent problem or patterns of absence should be brought to the employee’s attention.
7. All relevant absence documentation **must** be recorded on the employee’s personnel file.
8. As the first step in the procedure, it is vital that the message conveyed is clear and unambiguous.
9. Prior to the interview, full details of the employee’s absence record and reasons should be made available to both participants.
10. The employee should be made aware of the date and location of the meeting and the reasons for it.
11. The employee should be given the opportunity to explain absence records and present any evidence required.
12. The Manager will advise the employee of the outcome of the meeting and where appropriate, of the need for improvement in his/her current absence level. Written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting will be given to the employee and a copy recorded on their personnel files.

**Stage 2**

1. If there has been no improvement in the absence record in the period set at the first review, the employee must be informed and asked to attend a second review. In addition, they should be informed of the right to be represented at the review.
2. The employee should be given the right to present any evidence in mitigation.
3. The employee should be informed of the need to improve their record and the possibility of dismissal if they do not do so. The employee must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision (see Appeals). This should be confirmed in writing to the employee and held on their personnel file for 18 months.

**Stage 3**

1. The employee must be given full details of the case and the possible consequences prior to attendance. The employee must also be informed of their right to representation at this meeting.
2. All evidence should be taken and considered before a final decision is taken.
3. If the decision is taken to dismiss the employee, this should be done by giving full entitlement to notice (even if sick pay is exhausted).
4. The employee must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision. (see Appeals).