

### Absence due to illness

#### Section 1 - Policy statement

IntaGR8 recognises that certain levels of absence due to illness are inevitable. It is IntaGR8's policy to deal with cases of genuine illness sympathetically and supportively. IntaGR8 also recognises that non-attendance can have a disruptive and damaging effect on the business. It is IntaGR8's right and responsibility to ensure that attendance levels are monitored and managed effectively to meet the needs of the organisation.

This policy statement and the procedures and standards set out in Sections 2 - 10 below apply to all employees who are absent from work, apart from:

- Employees absent with a pregnancy related illness.
- Authorised absence, eg, maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave, parental leave, jury service, bereavement leave and emergency time off for dependants.

It is the responsibility of all employees to make themselves familiar with these procedures and standards and to comply with them in all cases of absence.

#### Section 2 – Notification

Employees who are absent from work, for whatever reason, are required to comply with the following procedure:

##### Procedure for notifying absence

##### Principles

It is the employee's responsibility to notify IntaGR8 at the earliest opportunity if he/she is absent from work for any reason. If the absence continues for any length of time, the employee must keep his/her line manager fully informed and submit medical certificates, where appropriate. IntaGR8 requires this information in order to manage the organisation effectively in the employee's absence and to pay the employee appropriately.

##### The procedure

#### 1. Sickness Reporting

- In cases of absence due to illness you (or someone on your behalf) must notify your line manager or IntaGR8 Admin by telephone within the first hour of your normal start time, or as soon as practicable thereafter, on your first day of absence. You should also indicate when you expect to return to work and give information about any commitments that need cancelling.

- If your absence continues, you should keep in regular contact with your line manager (every couple of days) to keep him/her fully informed about your progress and likely return date.
- For any period of absence up to seven days (including non-working days), you will be required to complete a self-certification form and submit it to your line manager not later than the first day of your return to work.
- If your absence continues after seven days (including non-working days), you will be required to submit a doctor's statement of fitness for work (fit note) to your line manager at weekly intervals or such longer intervals as may be agreed.
- Statutory sick pay will be paid in line with eligibility conditions. Unless stated in your contract.

## **2. Failure to notify absence and/or unauthorised absence**

- All absences will be recorded and monitored.
- Failure to submit a fit note on the eighth day of sickness may be regarded as unpaid absence without leave. No occupational sick pay or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid until the date on which the certificate is received.
- Failure to follow the notification procedure, without good reason, will be regarded as a disciplinary matter.
- Frequent, unexplained or unauthorised absence will also be regarded as disciplinary matters.

If you are not able to speak to your line manager, contact another member of staff. You should also leave a contact telephone number in case your manager needs to contact you. When you contact your manager, you will be required to explain why you are absent and give the date when you expect to be able to return to work.

You should contact your line manager personally. However, if you are unable to do so, for example because you have been admitted to hospital, you should arrange for someone else to do this on your behalf within the timescales outlined above. During periods of absence, you must keep your line manager updated on your situation on a regular basis.

## **Section 3 – Self certification**

For any period of absence up to seven days (including non-working days), you will be required to complete a self-certification form and submit it to your manager no later than the first day after returning to work.

A self-certification form can be found at the end of this policy.



## **Section 4 – Statements of fitness for work (fit notes)**

If the absence continues after seven days (including non-working days), you will be required to submit to your manager a doctor's statement of fitness for work (fit note), covering the period of absence.

It is your responsibility to ensure that fit notes are submitted on time, with no gaps in coverage. Failure to submit the necessary fit notes may result in sickness payments being stopped or suspended.

Keep your manager informed of any continuing sickness absence. In most cases, you will be expected to return to work when your fit note expires. You do not need to "signed back" to work by your doctor.

If, during your absence, your doctor considers that you may be fit for work, provided you are given additional support and/or some adjustments are made to your working arrangements, this will be stated on your fit note. Your manager will give careful consideration to any advice given in your fit note and discuss it with you.

Every effort will be made to agree appropriate, additional support and/or workplace adjustments for the period indicated. IntaGR8 is not duty bound to follow the advice given in your fit note and will decide whether or not it is possible for you to return to work after discussing the advice with you and taking into account all relevant circumstances and health and safety regulations.

Any agreed temporary arrangements will be confirmed to you in writing, including the dates when they apply. If IntaGR8 is unable to provide the support suggested by your doctor, you will be treated as being unfit for work. You will not need to return to your doctor for a new fit note to certify this.

If you intend to return to work prior to the expiry of your fit note, you should discuss this in advance with your manager.

IntaGR8 complies with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988. Under this legislation, the Company requires your written consent to contact your doctor and/or other medical authorities for medical information about you. Any medical information we obtain about you will be treated in the strictest confidence.

## **Section 5 – Return to work**

You should notify your line manager of your return to work date, giving as much notice as possible. On your return to work, you should immediately report to your line manager. After a period of sickness absence, your manager may arrange a return to work interview with you and an appropriate record of the meeting will be kept.

## **Section 6 – Short-term absence**

IntaGR8 defines short-term absence as any absence of 7 days, (including non-working days), or less.



Persistent or frequent short term-absences, even though they may be for genuine medical reasons, are particularly disruptive and create additional work for colleagues, often at short notice.

IntaGR8 has adopted a procedure for managing short-term absence. This procedure applies to self-certified absence and absence covered by a doctor's statement of fitness for work (fit note). IntaGR8 does, however, recognise that all cases of short-term absence are different and will deal with individual cases on their own merits and in the light of individual circumstances.

The procedure is as follows:

- All absences from work will be recorded and monitored as a matter of routine.
- You will be asked to attend a sickness review meeting with your manager if you have:
  - More than 10 self-certificated working days sickness within any rolling 12 month period (pro rata for part time staff); or
  - 4 periods of absence within a 6 month period or;
  - A pattern of absence that is of concern (e.g. Mondays/Fridays or absence following bank holidays).
- At this meeting, your manager will review your absence record and establish any possible underlying problems or medical conditions. Following the absence review meeting your attendance will be monitored.
- It may be necessary for IntaGR8 to obtain a medical opinion or prognosis from your doctor. If this is the case, you will be required to give your written consent to IntaGR8's request for a medical report (in accordance with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988). If you refuse to co-operate in this regard, IntaGR8 will have no alternative other than to make decisions based on the information it has available at the time.
- If you have already attended an absence review meeting and you are absent again, you will be required to attend a further absence review meeting where the reason for your absence will be discussed.
- If, in the light of all information obtained, IntaGR8 considers your absence record to be a disciplinary matter, you will be dealt with in accordance with the IntaGR8's formal disciplinary procedure. (see policy)
- Where there is a genuine medical reason for your absences, the TTVS will keep your attendance under review. If your absences continue at an unacceptable level, further absence review meetings will be held.
  - In conducting these review meetings, IntaGR8 will follow a procedure which mirrors the stages and warnings of the formal discipline procedure. The stages are: verbal warning; written warning; final written warning and dismissal.

- At each absence review meeting, your line manager will consider your attendance record and its effect on the business. You will be given the opportunity to explain your absences and make any representations. Your line manager will agree with you appropriate requirements to improve your current attendance levels. Target attendance levels within a timescale will be set in accordance with your individual circumstances. Your line manager will also consider any alternative options to help you to maximise your attendance, for example changes to your working arrangements or a transfer to another role. It may also be necessary to seek further medical advice. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed to you in writing. Depending on the stage of the procedure, this may be a verbal, written or final written warning or dismissal, on the grounds of unsatisfactory attendance. Failure to make the necessary improvements within the agreed timescale will result in an escalation of the procedure to the next level.
- You will have the right to appeal against any warning or dismissal. If you wish to appeal against a decision made at any stage of the procedure, you should follow the procedure as set out in IntaGR8's Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.
- You will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or an advocate of your choice at every stage of the procedure, including any appeal.
- Failure to make the necessary improvements after a final written warning may lead to your dismissal on the grounds of unsatisfactory attendance. If you are dismissed, you will be provided with written reasons for your dismissal, the date your employment terminates and details of any notice pay to which you are entitled. You will also be informed of your right of appeal.
- Before any decision is made to dismiss you IntaGR8 will consider alternative options including demotion, transfer to another role and changes to your working arrangements (such as altered hours, amended duties and/or workplace adaptations). If IntaGR8 is considering dismissal, demotion or any other action short of dismissal, you will be given a written statement prior to the absence review meeting, setting out the reasons for the proposed course of action. The issues will be fully discussed at the meeting and you will be informed in writing of the outcome. If you are demoted, you will be entitled to the salary and other terms and conditions of employment appropriate to the position to which you have been demoted. You will have a right of appeal against demotion.

## Section 7 – Long-term absence

The Company defines long-term absence as:

- more than 4 consecutive weeks absence (including non-working days); or
- 4 separate occurrences of absence, one or more of which lasts for more than week, in a 12 month rolling period.

IntaGR8 has adopted a procedure for managing long-term absence, the aim of which is to facilitate and support the return to work of the individual concerned. All cases of long-term illness will be treated sympathetically, taking into account the particular circumstances of the case.

The procedure is as follows:

- All absences from work will be recorded and monitored as a matter of routine.
- The procedure will be triggered when your absence from work has become long-term (as defined above). At this stage, IntaGR8 will begin consultations with you about your return to work. These consultations will take the form of staged absence review meetings, during which your manager will discuss with you:
  - Your medical condition and prognosis;
  - The effect of your absence on the business;
  - A return to work date;
  - Any possible alternative working arrangements (such as altered hours, amended duties and/or workplace adaptations) or roles which might enable you to return to work;
  - Where appropriate, a planned, graduated return to work programme, including, wherever possible reduced hours and/or lighter duties.
- At any stage in the procedure, it may be necessary for IntaGR8 to obtain a medical opinion or prognosis from your doctor. If this is the case, you will be required to give your written consent to TTVS's request for a medical report (in accordance with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988). If you refuse to co-operate with TTVS in this regard, TTVS will have no alternative other than to make decisions based on the information it has available at the time.
- You will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative of your choice at every meeting during the course of this procedure, including any appeal.
- The content and outcome of every meeting will be fully documented and confirmed to you in writing.
- When your absence becomes long-term (as defined above), you will be required by your manager to attend an initial absence review meeting. If it is not possible for you to attend a meeting at work, a home visit will be arranged.

In most cases, it will be at this stage when IntaGR8 seeks your permission to obtain a medical report on your condition.

- If your absence continues, you will be required to maintain regular contact with your manager. After you have been absent for a further period of 4 weeks, your manager will arrange a second absence review meeting. Your manager will discuss the contents of any medical reports on your condition that have been received. IntaGR8 will take into account the recommendations of your medical adviser and wherever possible and practicable make any necessary arrangements to accommodate your return to work. Such arrangements may include a planned, graduated return to work programme, altered hours, amended duties, workplace adaptations and/or alternative employment if appropriate and available.
- If, in the opinion of your medical adviser, you are still unable to return to work, you will be required to maintain regular contact with your manager. After you have been absent for 12 weeks, your manager will arrange a third absence review meeting to discuss the likelihood of your return to work. If necessary, IntaGR8 will seek further medical advice before this meeting. At this stage IntaGR8 will seek to finalise a clear plan for your return to work. If, having considered the medical evidence and all possible alternative arrangements, IntaGR8 considers that there is no prospect of your return to work and your absence is having a detrimental effect on the business, you will be advised that IntaGR8 is considering your dismissal on the grounds of ill health/capability.
- If IntaGR8 is considering dismissal, demotion or any other action short of dismissal, you will be given a written statement prior to a further absence review meeting, setting out the reasons for the proposed course of action. The issues will be fully discussed at the meeting and you will be informed in writing of the outcome. If you are dismissed, you will be provided with written reasons for dismissal, the date your employment terminates and details of any notice pay to which you are entitled. You will also be informed of your right of appeal. If you are demoted, you will be entitled to the salary and other terms and conditions of employment appropriate to the position to which you have been demoted. You will have a right of appeal against demotion.

In implementing the above procedure, IntaGR8 will take into account the particular circumstances of the absence in relation to the individual (for example, the nature and predicted length of the illness) and the business (for example when key employees are absent at critical times). IntaGR8 reserves the right to amend the procedure in the light of these circumstances and may take more or fewer steps as appropriate.

## **Section 8 - Payment**

### **Statutory sick pay (SSP)**



Provided you satisfy the eligibility conditions, you will be entitled to receive 28 weeks' SSP in each sick pay year. Depending on your contract of work.

SSP is not payable for the first three days of sickness absence, as these are classed as waiting days. You are, however, still required to complete a self-certification form. A self-certification form can be found at the end of this policy. If your absence lasts for four to seven consecutive working days (i.e. excluding Saturday and Sunday), you will be eligible to receive SSP. Absences of four days or more can be linked to form one Period of Incapacity for Work (PIW) for the purpose of calculating SSP providing not more than eight weeks elapse between the last day of one absence and the first day of the next absence.

If your absence lasts for more than seven days (including non-working days), you must obtain a doctor's statement of fitness for work (fit note) and send the completed form to your manager immediately. The fit note will be noted and retained. The doctor will issue fit notes, as necessary, indicating the period of absence.

### **After 28 weeks of statutory sick pay (SSP)**

Once you have received a total of 28 weeks of SSP in a year, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will assume responsibility for the payment of Incapacity Benefit. IntaGR8 will notify you on the appropriate DWP form that IntaGR8 is no longer responsible for the payment of SSP and provide you with details of the procedure to be followed. You should be aware that, as part of this procedure, absences of four days and more require a DWP self-certification form to be completed. After seven days, you should send fit notes to the Company. Provided you have followed the correct procedure and have fulfilled the necessary national insurance contribution (NIC) conditions you will receive DWP Incapacity Benefit during your continued absence. Further information on this matter can be provided by the DWP.

### **IntaGR8 Sick Pay**

Once an employee has successfully completed their probationary period, if the Employee is absent from work due to sickness or injury, s/he will be eligible for **4 weeks full pay less any SSP or NI benefit in any 12 consecutive months**, provided that IntaGR8 receives notification and certification as detailed above. However if you have a zero hour contract or bank contract you will not be entitled to sickness or holiday pay.

**The above payments are inclusive of SSP and any other benefits you are entitled to receive from Social Security for illness or injury.**

IntaGR8 may refuse or terminate the payment of company sick pay for any of the following reasons:

- You have failed to advise IntaGR8 of sickness/injury absence in line with the requirements of IntaGR8's procedure for notifying absence.
- IntaGR8 is not satisfied that the absence is genuinely attributable to sickness or injury.



- You have been disqualified from receiving benefit under any of the Social Security Acts.
- You have failed to provide appropriate certification for the total period of sickness absence.
- You have undertaken other paid work whilst in receipt of sick pay from IntaGR8
- You have not completed 3 months continuous service with IntaGR8 or your probationary period has been extended to a maximum period of 6 months (this does not include your right to receive SSP).
- Your absence record is unacceptable and for this reason you are subject to disciplinary action.

## **Section 9 - Misconduct**

### **Non-notification**

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, failure to notify IntaGR8 of an absence in accordance with the notification procedure will be treated as misconduct. Sick pay will not be paid and the matter will be dealt with under IntaGR8's Grievance and Disciplinary procedure. If non-notification continues, IntaGR8 will endeavour to make contact with you. Please be aware that if all reasonable steps to contact you are exhausted by IntaGR8, your contract of employment may be terminated.

### **Unauthorised absence**

Your absence will be regarded as unauthorised:

- If you fail to provide the necessary certification; or
- If you are absent from work without prior permission and/or your absence is not as a result of sickness.

All unauthorised absence will be regarded as misconduct and dealt with under IntaGR8's disciplinary procedure.

### **Falsification of records**

If you inform IntaGR8 that your absence is due to sickness and subsequent investigation indicates that the absence was not due to sickness, this will be regarded as misconduct and dealt with under IntaGR8's Discipline Procedure.

## **Section 10 – Ill health while on holiday**

If you are injured or become ill while you are on holiday, you are required to:

- notify IntaGR8 in accordance with the sickness notification procedure set out in Section 2 above;
- Comply with the medical certification requirements, as detailed in Sections 3 and 4 above (if you are abroad, you may submit either a medical certificate or a copy of a medical insurance claim).



Provided you have complied with these requirements, any holiday leave that has been lost due to sickness or injury will be classed as sick leave.

You will be allowed to replace the holiday leave you have lost at a later date. Replacement holiday leave must be booked in accordance with IntaGR8's normal procedure for booking holidays and must be approved by your line manager. Wherever possible, replacement holiday leave should be taken in the current holiday year. Exceptionally, where this is not possible, for example where there is insufficient time left in the current holiday year, replacement holiday leave may be carried over to the next holiday year.

If you are absent as a result of injury or illness immediately before a pre-booked period of holiday leave and your absence continues into the holiday period, provided you have complied with all the necessary notification and certification requirements, your holiday may be postponed and your absence classified as sick leave. You will be allowed to take replacement holiday leave at a later date, as described above.

Prepared by: R Raper	Policy Staff sickness
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As agreed by board of directors	
Date Sept 2015	

### Illness self-certificate form

Name:		Department:	
Job title:		Area	

<b>A</b>			
Date and time illness began: (including non-working days)		Date fit for work: (including non-working days)	
First notification to: (give method of notification and name of person notified)		Notification date:	

<b>B</b>		<b>C</b>	
Reason for absence:		Did you attend:	
		Hospital:	YES/NO
		Clinic	YES/NO
		Your doctor	YES/NO
Please describe symptoms:		Did you receive medication either from:	
		Your doctor:	YES/NO
		Self-prescribed from chemist:	YES/NO
Give details of accident (if applicable):		If you still away from work due to illness when are you likely to be fit for work?	
		Date:	

I understand that if I provide inaccurate or false information about my absence it may, depending on the circumstances, be treated as gross misconduct and result in my summary dismissal.			
Signed:		Date:	
Manager's remarks (including date of return if known):			



Signed:		Date:	
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