



HUMAN RESOURCES

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

All Staff

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Date of Risk Assessment (if applicable)	N/A
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	30 November 2019
Date of Impact Assessment (commenced)	30 November 2019
Date of Impact Assessment (concluded)	19 November 2020
Quality Control (name)	Fiona Munro, Deputy Head of POD
Authorised (name and date)	Liz Barnes, Director of POD – September 2021
Date for Next Review	2026

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Change	Who	When
1.0	First version issued for familiarisation period, as Managing Attendance Policy	Elinor Walton, HR Advisor	06/05/2015
-	Gone live	-	03/08/2015
2.0	Reviewed and updated; issued for familiarisation period, as Attendance Management Policy	Gillian Clark, HROD Manager	16/09/2021
-	Gone live	-	01/10/2021
3.0	Updated section 5.3 in relation to review of Support Staff sick pay provisions	Linda MacKenzie, HROD Manager	09/01/2023



SCOTTISH
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PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HUMAN RESOURCES

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is committed to promoting a healthy working environment and to supporting staff in maximising their attendance at work and minimising the impact of ill health.

1.2 The SFRS recognises that the health and wellbeing of our employees is paramount and that there may be occasions where employees require managerial support with health conditions to assist in their overall wellbeing, to minimise absence from work or in supporting a return to work. This policy, together with the associated Procedure and Manager's Handbook, provides a focus on employee wellbeing, early intervention and support mechanisms, supporting employees to be able to return to the workplace and also supporting employees where they are no longer able to return to the workplace or to carry out their role.

1.3 As part of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, this policy supports our statement on We Are Positive about Disability, a Manager's Guide to Making Reasonable Adjustments, along with our Mental Health Strategy and associated documents, whereby we seek to take a fully integrated approach to health and wellbeing. We aim to remove the stigma of mental ill health in the workplace, by improving our mental health literacy, to increase the wellbeing of our staff and support those who face mental health challenges.

1.4 Objectives

To support a positive attendance culture, the purpose of this Policy is to:

- Promote the health and wellbeing of the workforce;
- Maximise attendance at work by ensuring appropriate support is provided to assist employees;

- Ensure timely intervention to provide appropriate support to those who are absent through illness or injury to assist a timely return to work;
- Manage recurring or long-term absence through capability process, as required;
- Minimise the disruption to service delivery caused by sickness absence.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees of SFRS.

3. DEFINITION OF ABSENCE AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS FOR EMPLOYEES

3.1 Short-Term

A short-term sickness absence is defined as any single period of absence up to a maximum of 28 consecutive days.

3.2 Long-Term

Long-term sickness absence is defined as a period of absence lasting longer than 28 consecutive days.

3.3 Advice and Support Mechanisms

It is recognised that employees may require support and assistance during an absence. The undernoted examples are reflective of the current sources of assistance, which may prove helpful:

- The employee's Line Manager;
- Human Resources Business Partners / Advisers;
- Trade Union Representative;

- Health and Wellbeing / Referral to Health and Wellbeing Practitioner;
- Physiotherapy Service;
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for counselling services;
- Flexible Working;
- Period of Alternative Duties;
- Phased Return to Work;
- Redeployment (temporary/permanent);
- Rehabilitation services;
- Family Support Trust / Fire Fighter's Charity;
- Post incident support, including modified duties;
- Rivers Centre (NHS Lothian) for post traumatic psychological injuries;
- Online resources available via the iHub and other digital platforms;
- <https://www.lifelines.scot/>.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Employee Responsibilities

Employees have a responsibility for immediately notifying their manager of their absence, in accordance with the Attendance Management Procedure. They must also submit the Statement of Fitness for Work note immediately (full electronic versions are acceptable via email); however, the original should be submitted as soon as practically possible.

Employees also have a responsibility for ensuring they attend all medical / fitness assessments, health and wellbeing appointments and sickness absence meetings, as required. In addition, employees must keep in contact with their Line Manager (or a mutually agreed alternative manager) during their period of absence.

Failure to comply with the provisions outlined in both the policy and associated procedure, may lead to loss of occupational sick pay entitlement. Repeated or serious abuse of the Attendance Management Policy and associated Procedure may also lead to formal disciplinary action being initiated, as a last resort.

4.2 Manager Responsibilities

Managers should engage with their employees to discuss support that meets their individual needs. They are responsible for monitoring and managing the attendance of their employees, within their area of responsibility. They must ensure that their employees are fully aware of what is expected of them and that they adhere to all reporting / certification requirements. They must also ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all points of the managing attendance process. In addition, Managers must ensure that they maintain regular contact with their Employee's during periods of absence, implement appropriate support and mechanisms and review as required.

4.3 People and Organisational Development Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Human Resources and Organisational Development Business Partners (HRBP) and Health and Wellbeing staff to provide professional and specialist advice and support to all involved in the attendance management process to assist Managers in effectively managing employee absence from work.

5. SICKNESS PAY PROVISIONS

5.1 Support Staff

In accordance with the Guide to Terms and Conditions of Employment (Support Staff Handbook), payment of Occupational Sick Pay for Support Staff will be

made on a sliding scale depending on length of service and sickness period. For such employees, entitlement to sickness allowance in any one 12-month period is:

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

5.2 Uniformed Staff

In accordance with the [National Joint Council Scheme of Conditions of Service, 6th edition \(Grey Book\)](#), uniformed employees are entitled to full pay for six months in any twelve-month period. Thereafter, the Service may reduce pay by up to half for six months. Further details regarding provisions for injuries arising from authorised duty can be found in the Attendance Management Procedure.

- 5.3** Where employees have exhausted their entitlement to 26 weeks' full pay, they may request an extension to this. Details pertaining to this will be contained within the notifications of commencement of half pay to the affected employees. Support Staff employees who have not yet accrued their full occupational sickness allowance as outlined at [5.1](#) may request a review of their sick pay allowance and request an extension be considered at an earlier stage.

6. PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

A Manager's Handbook and an Attendance Management Procedure have been developed to support this policy, to achieve the stated aims of this policy in relation to employee attendance at work and the management of absence. In this respect, the Attendance Management Procedure provides details of how the individual stages of managing attendance, inclusive of both physical or psychological absences will be applied in practice from commencement of an absence through to supporting a return to work. This also includes details of the processes for managing both persistent short-term and long-term absence should there fail to be improvements in an employee's attendance at work, including consideration where appropriate of medical redeployment, ill health retirement or, ultimately, a capability dismissal.

7. DYING TO WORK CHARTER

7.1 SFRS is committed to providing additional support to employees diagnosed with a terminal illness and who reach end of life care. In such circumstances, we will work with the employee to secure the best outcome for them whilst considering Service requirements. Each case will be reviewed on their individual circumstances.

7.2 End of life care involves treatment, care and support for people who are nearing the end of their life. It is an important part of palliative care and is for people who are thought to be in the last year of life; however, it is recognised that this timeframe can be difficult to predict. Some people might only receive end of life care in their last weeks or days. End of life care aims to help people live as comfortably as possible in the time they have left. Further information on the Service's commitment is detailed at [Appendix A](#), the [Dying to Work Charter](#) and in the Attendance Management Procedure.

8. THIRD PARTY DAMAGES

Where the employee is absent as a result of a third-party accident, the SFRS shall continue to pay the individual. Any claim for damages against a third party should include a sum equivalent to the salary provided, which shall be repaid to SFRS when recovered by the employee. The SFRS will, on receipt of such a request, provide a certificate to the employee as evidence to the third party.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW

9.1 Monitoring and Record Keeping

SFRS is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of its activities and operations and meeting its statutory obligations for monitoring. To do this, we will:

- Create and capture necessary data to demonstrate evidence, accountability and information about our decisions and activities and the effectiveness of policies, procedures and processes;
- Maintain securely and preserve access to records, as long as they are required to support the SFRS operations, in accordance with the SFRS Records Retention Schedule;
- Meet legal record-keeping requirements, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, and confidentially destroy those records as soon as they are no longer required.

9.2 Privacy Statement

The SFRS processes personal data collected as part of this Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). In particular, data collected as part of this policy is

held securely and accessed by and disclosed to individuals, only for the purposes of supporting employees. In addition, Data Protection Impact Assessments are carried out where necessary for all new and revised policies, involving the processing of personal data.

9.3 Consultation

This policy has been developed following full consultation with relevant stakeholders and representative bodies. It has been agreed by the relevant SFRS Boards / Committees who provide strategic advice and advice on matters affecting employees, whilst ensuring it supports the strategic aims of the SFRS.

9.4 Policy Review

This policy will be subject to update and review as necessary by the People and Organisational Development (POD) Directorate, at no more than five yearly intervals or earlier should any relevant legislative, precedent, judgement, operational review or organisational changes occur prior to that date.

10. EQUALITY

The equality issues associated with this policy have been considered and are detailed within the Equality Impact Assessment to which interested parties are directed for associated equality issues, both directly and indirectly relevant to this policy.

11. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS / REFERENCES

Attendance Management – Manager’s Handbook

Attendance Management Procedure

Equality Impact Assessment on Attendance Management

Guide to Terms and Conditions of Employment (Support Staff Handbook)

Management of Health Conditions Policy and Procedure

Mental Health Strategy 2020-2023

Post Incident Support Policy and Procedure

Records Retention Schedule

We are Positive about Disability – Guide to Reasonable Adjustments and Supporting Staff with a Disability

[Dying to Work Charter](#)

[Data Protection Act 2018](#)

[Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#)

[Lifelines Scotland](#)

[National Joint Council, Scheme of Conditions of Service, 6th Edition \(Grey Book\)](#)

APPENDIX A – THE DYING TO WORK CHARTER

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) supports the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) Dying to Work Campaign. We recognise that employees diagnosed with a terminal illness require support and understanding. Each case will be reviewed on the individual circumstances and we will provide our employees with the security of work, peace of mind and the right to choose the best course of action for themselves and their families which will help them through this challenging period, when they reach end of life care and are supported by a clinical judgement.

1.1 The Dying to Work Charter states:

- We recognise that terminal illness requires support and understanding and not additional and avoidable stress and worry;
- Terminally ill workers will be secure in the knowledge that we will support them following their diagnosis and we recognise that safe and reasonable work can help maintain dignity, offer a valuable distraction and can be therapeutic in itself;
- We will provide our employees with the security of work, peace of mind and the right to choose the best course of action for themselves and their families which helps them through this challenging period, with dignity and without undue financial loss;
- We support the STUC's Dying to Work campaign so that all employees facing end of life care with a terminal illness have adequate employment protection and have their death in service benefits protected for the loved ones they leave behind.

1.2 How will the Service continue to achieve this?

The Service will achieve this by working collaboratively and sympathetically with the employee and their representative through this difficult time and will:

- Appoint a family liaison officer to maintain personal ongoing contact with the employee and their family;
- Ensure that the relevant Managers are supported by HROD and Health and Wellbeing, through case management;
- Support employees who have reached end of life care with a terminal illness diagnosis to maintain dignity and be empowered to explore appropriate options that provide them with choices, giving some peace of mind and financial security to them and their families through this difficult time;
- Liaise with Health and Wellbeing professionals and the employee directly to consider reasonable adjustments to support them in undertaking valuable work and provide some improved measure of wellbeing. Whilst ensuring health, safety and wellbeing implications for the employee, the requirements of the Service and community are also considered;
- To work with the employee to assist them to achieve an appropriate work life balance and flexible working to support improved end of life care and support;
- To consider each case on its own merits and create a specific support package for each employee diagnosed as being terminally ill and has reached end of life care;
- No employee with a terminal diagnosis will be dismissed because of their condition.

1.3 Where it is acceptable to the employee and consent is granted, the Chief Officer / member of the Strategic Leadership Team may conduct a visit to the employee at their home in such circumstances.

Chief Officer: ----- Trade Union Partners: -----

December 2021