

SICKNESS ABSENCE LEAVE

Document Control:



Document filename	Sickness Absence Leave		
Director Lead	Ruth Grimaldi	Status	Live
Owner	Ruth Grimaldi	Version	V04
Author	Sanika Thomas	Version Date	October 2024
Retention period	Review Annually	Configuration control	No
Confidentiality	Private	Distribution	Moorhouse Consulting

Version Control:



Version	Date	Amendment History
V01	April 2017	Document creation & draft
V02	April 2018	Revision & reflect move to St Andrews
V03	December 2021	Revision
V04	June 2022	Revision & rebranding and move to Dashwood House

1. Introduction

Moorhouse aims to promote a fair, consistent and supportive approach to employees experiencing sickness and injury and ensures that employees are treated in a fair and reasonable manner, without discrimination or bias, through:

- ❓ Offering empathy towards employees who are absent from work due to sickness or injury and promoting an element of responsibility on both sides to enable any period of absence from work to be managed effectively.
- ❓ Maintaining an effective process to monitor and understand the reasons for absences, including, where appropriate, investigation into unexplained continuous and/or frequent periods of unauthorised absence.

This policy will guide you in understanding what leave is available to you in the immediate event you require to take additional time off work for sickness – short or long-term.

2. Definitions

Discretion: The option to decide what should be done in a particular situation.

Short-term Absence: Absence that is up to 7 calendar days or less.

Long-term Absence: Absence that is from 8 calendar days or more.



3. Links to other Policies

- Family Friendly Leave Policy (To be launched in early 2022 – Refer to relevant policy i.e., Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental).

4. Notification of Absence due to sickness injury

Employees are responsible for contacting their Engagement Lead and Talent Lead to explain that they will be absent from work.

This communication may be by phone or email, but it should take place by 9.00am on each working day of absence. When giving notification, employees should give a reason for the absence and, as far as possible, provide an indication as to how long they expect to be absent.

Failure to report sickness absence, in accordance with this policy, on a regular basis may result in loss of pay and disciplinary action.



5. Sickness Certificate

Employees can self-certify for up to five working days sickness absence, without requiring a doctor's certificate. On their return to work, they will need to complete a Moorhouse ['sickness self-certificated form'](#) and send this to the [People & Talent team mailbox](#) for recording.

After seven calendar days of absence due to sickness or injury (five working days), a doctor's certificate (Fitness to Work note) will be required. It is important that the certificate is sent to [People & Talent team mailbox](#), and include your Engagement Lead and Talent Lead in the email, as soon as possible and that the dates indicated cover the full period of absence from work.

Failure to produce a doctor's certificate may result in the absence being considered unauthorised and, in this situation, payment of salary would be suspended.

6. Absence due to Surgery or Hospital Care

Any planned absences required for medical procedures or inpatient care in a hospital will be covered by the process described above.

The need for any likely adjustments to working arrangements, as a consequence of the surgery, should be addressed with your Talent Lead and Engagement Lead to ensure that the company is fully aware of the situation and able to make any necessary plans to support your return to work and effective rehabilitation. It may be appropriate for either your Talent Lead or Engagement Lead to seek further guidance from People and Talent.

The need for time off work before a medical procedure should also be discussed with your Talent Lead and Engagement Lead. Depending on circumstances, paid leave may be granted. Otherwise, it may be possible to use annual leave or unpaid leave.

7. Time off for Medical Appointments

Wherever possible, appointments should be taken outside of working hours to minimise disruption to work. Where this is unavoidable, employees should give as much notice as possible to their Engagement Lead of the expected time they are likely to be out. Where this amounts to half day or more, the employee should [self certify](#) and paid leave will be approved subject to the reasons of sickness. In this case, if the appointment is due to unexpected illness, and post surgery follow up then leave should be granted.

Time taken for routine checks such as dental routine check, are not recorded as sickness absence, providing appointments do not occur on a frequent basis, the employee will be paid as normal. It is recommended that flexible working hours are agreed with the employee's Engagement Lead or Talent Lead.

If an employee is pregnant, they are legally entitled to paid time off during working hours to receive antenatal care as advised by their GP, midwife or registered health advisor. Please refer to the Maternity Leave Policy for further information.

If an employee has a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010, they will be able to have time off work to attend medical appointments, related to their condition. Moorhouse will provide a duty of care to make reasonable adjustments to assist them in their role.

8. Eligibility for Pay during Absence due to Sickness or Injury Statutory

Sick Pay (SSP)

Employees who are absent from work due to sickness or injury may be entitled to receive SSP at the appropriate rate, from the fourth (qualifying) day of absence. SSP is payable for up to 28 weeks. For the tax year 2021/2022, the rate for SSP is £96.35 per week. This amount is set by the Government and reviewed annually.



Company Sick Pay

Subject to compliance with Moorhouse notification process and provision of medical certificate, Moorhouse has a discretionary company sick pay scheme (based on a rolling 12 month period) as follows:

- ❓ During your probation period Moorhouse will pay up to 10 days of sickness absence at full pay (further paid leave that exceeds 10 days will be approved on a case-by-case basis)
- ❓ After completion of Probation, and regardless of years of service, all Moorhouse employees have access to up to 6 weeks of sickness absence at full pay and a further 6 weeks of sickness absence at half pay. This benefit will be at the discretion of your Talent Lead, in consultation with your People and Talent Advisor. Further paid or unpaid leave is discretionary and considered on a case-by-case basis.
- ❓ Any paid sick leave under this scheme will include SSP and is not in addition to it.

If you are on sabbatical leave, you will not be eligible to sick leave payments.

9. Occupational Health (Independent Medical Assessment)

In order to support the employee's optimal health and wellbeing, it may be necessary for Talent Leads to request that the employee, at the company's expense, be examined by a relevant, independent medical practitioner of its choice. In this event, the employee will be asked to consent that the doctor carrying out the examination may disclose and discuss the results of the examination with Moorhouse where appropriate. Talent Leads must always discuss occupational health assessments with their relevant People and Talent Advisor beforehand.

10. Sickness or Injury during Annual Leave

If an employee falls sick, or is injured whilst taking annual leave, they may choose to instead take the period affected as sick leave and defer the annual leave to a later date. In this event, a medical certificate must be provided for the period affected.

11. Extended Sick Leave due to Ill Health

It is important to note that long term absence due to ill health may be putting continued employment at risk. Where possible, in alignment with paragraph 9 of this policy, Moorhouse will endeavor to support employees with reasonable adjustments and seek to understand appropriate measures to support the employee early return to work (see paragraph 13).

If an employee is unable to return to work in the longer term, we will consider whether they are entitled to any benefits under their contract and/or any insurance schemes/Pension we operate.

Employees on extended period of sick leave continue to accrue their statutory annual leave entitlements (28 days including bank holidays) and may still wish to take annual leave as long as the proper notice is given. If this situation arises, employees should contact the People and Talent team for further guidance.

12. Decision to Dismiss due to Ill Health

A decision to dismiss due to ill health may be made in relation to both short, intermittent sickness absence and long-term absence (as set out above). Consideration will be given to the extent of past absence(s) and the prognosis for future absence(s). Where, for example, there is no likelihood of an imminent return to work or there is likely to be continued intermittent absence(s) it may be necessary to consider dismissal. This decision will normally only be made after the following stages have been exhausted:

- ❓ All opportunities to facilitate the employee's return to work, or to maintain an acceptable level of



attendance, has been explored.

- ☐ Up to date medical advice has been received. If permission is not forthcoming from the employee to obtain this, Moorhouse will have to make its decision on the information available to it.



- ☐ The employee has had the opportunity to put forward any comments and any suggestions they may have which may facilitate and maintain their continued attendance at work.

Employees will have the right to appeal.

13. Keeping in Touch and Return to Work

During absences from work due to sickness and injury, the employee's Talent Lead will keep in touch with the employee at regular intervals. In the event of long-term absence, the Talent Lead will agree an approach with the individual to ensure an appropriate level of communication and connection with the firm.

Depending on the circumstances of the absence, shortly before the employee is due to return to work, the Talent Lead may invite the employee to a "return to work meeting" (either in person or by telephone) to ensure the appropriate support is in place to assist the employee's smooth transition. Appropriate support may include reasonable adjustments, phased return to work or suitable duties to ensure work performance effectiveness.

14. Further Support – Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Employees are encouraged to access our EAP provider, [Health Assured](#) at 0800 028 0199 or via **Perkbox** for additional support. The service is free, confidential, and can be used 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Other resources include up to four free structured counselling sessions Critical incident and trauma support; and an Online health portal which contains a comprehensive library of wellbeing and health information. Should employees require further counselling sessions, they should speak to their Talent Lead or People and Talent Advisor.

