

# CASS Sickness Absence Policy

**The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance about arrangements for sick pay and for reporting and managing sickness absence.**

## About This Policy

This policy deals with sick pay, reporting sickness absence and how we manage sickness absence. Failing to report absence under this policy or falsely claiming sick pay will be treated as misconduct. This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and CASS may amend it at any time. This policy is only applicable to CASS employees.

## How to Report That You Are Sick

- Where you are unable to come to work because you are sick or where you have suffered an injury of some sort it is important that you telephone your line manager as early as possible. At least 1 hour before your normal start time.

## Providing Evidence of Sickness

- It is important that you fill in and send to your line manager a self-certification form for sickness absence of up to seven calendar days.
- Where the sickness absence lasts for more than a week, you must provide CASS with a relevant doctor's certificate, called a fit note, which will state why you are not fit for work. As we have explained about, you must also complete a self-certification form in relation to the first seven days.
- If your sickness absence is going to continue when the fit note or Doctor's certificate expires, it is your responsibility to provide us with a new certificate covering your continued absence.
- Where your doctor provides a fit note stating that you 'may' be fit for work, it is important that you tell your manager. We can then discuss with you the arrangements for your return to work. Where, for whatever reason, appropriate steps cannot be taken so that you can return to work, you will remain on sick leave. The position will be reviewed at an appropriate interval.

## Fit for Work Service

- The Fit for Work programme is a government-funded health assessment service. The intention behind the programme is to help employees get back to work when they have been absent with sickness.
- If you are absent with sickness for four weeks, either we or your doctor may suggest referring you to the Fit for Work service. Your Doctor can, where he or she believes it is appropriate, suggest that a referral is made earlier than 4 weeks.

## **Sick Pay**

- CASS do not provide contractual sick pay over and above any statutory sick pay to which you may be entitled.
- You may be entitled to receive statutory sick pay if you meet the statutory requirements. Statutory sick pay is not paid for the first three consecutive days of sickness absence. Statutory sick pay may be payable for up to 28 weeks.

## **Meeting with You About Your Return to Work**

- When you have been absent with illness, your line manager may hold a return-to-work interview with you. The reason for the meeting is to check that you are fit enough to return to work and consider whether there are any steps that could be taken to facilitate this. It is also our opportunity to speak with you about any issues regarding your absence record.

## **Dealing with Long-Term Sickness Absence or Frequent Short-Term Absences**

- In circumstances where you have been absent for a long period or you have had frequent short-term absences, we will follow the process outlined below.
- It is important for us to understand the reasons for your absence. We want to know whether there are things we can do to help you improve your attendance and your health. In some circumstances we may need to get medical information about your illness before deciding on a course of action.
- We may need to meet with you to discuss your absence, the medical information or other related issues. We will give you reasonable notice of the meeting and location.
- Where you are unable to attend the meeting, at the time specified, it is very important that you let us know as soon as possible. We will then seek to arrange another time where you are able to attend.
- Where it is relevant, we will consider whether reasonable adjustments may need to be made to the sickness absence procedure, or to your role or working arrangements.

## **Medical Assessments**

- In appropriate circumstances, we may ask you to consent to attending a medical assessment by a doctor or occupational health adviser. Sometimes it may be that a specialist medical practitioner is the right person for you to see and we will discuss that with you.
- We will ask you to agree that any medical report produced may be disclosed to us. Ideally, we would want to discuss the information with the occupational health adviser or doctor.
- All medical reports will be kept confidential.

## **First Sickness Absence Meeting**

- This meeting will be to discuss the reasons for your absence, the likely next steps and prognosis.

- We will also want to discuss whether to obtain a medical report and whether there are any steps that you and CASS could take to improve your health.
- Where the sickness absence is of a long-term nature, it may be appropriate to agree a return-to-work programme.
- For regular, short-term absence concerns, CASS may set you targets for improvements.

### **If the Sickness Absence Does Not Improve**

- CASS will monitor your progress following the first sickness absence meeting. Where you have not been able to return to work from longer term sickness or if you are unable to meet any targets set for short term absences, we will invite you to another meeting.
- The point of the second meeting is to assess whether the absence situation is likely to improve. Where it is appropriate, we will consider redeployment opportunities.
- Where we believe that it is unlikely that you will return to work from long term absence or where you have not been able to meet the targets for improving short-term absences, you may be given a written warning that you are at risk of dismissal. Where the circumstances require, we will agree a further review period and a meeting to follow.


### **Final Sickness Absence Meeting**

- Where there is no improvement in reaching any targets set for reduction of short-term absences or you have been unable to return to work from long-term sickness we will invite you to another meeting.
- This meeting will include an assessment of whether or not to terminate your contract of employment.
- We will consider any points that you want to raise in relating to your sickness absence and the likely prognosis.

### **Appeal Against Decisions Under this Policy**

- Where you want to appeal against decisions taken under this procedure, you must set out your appeal grounds in writing. You will be required to submit your appeal within one week of the date on which the decision you are challenging was sent to you.
- We will seek to hold an appeal meeting within three weeks of receiving your appeal.
- We will seek to deal with your appeal fairly and reasonably. The decision will be provided to you in writing, usually within two weeks of the appeal hearing.
- You will have no further right of appeal under this policy.
- Where you lodge an appeal against dismissal, the date of dismissal does not change. If your appeal is successful, the dismissal will be revoked, and you will receive any relevant back pay and your continuity of service is restored.



Signed:	
Name:	Tom Gent
Title:	Managing Director
Date:	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2023