

# UK - Sickness Absence Procedure

## Purpose and Scope

The Company aims to encourage all its employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that employees will, from time to time, be unable to come to work because of ill health.

While the Company understands that there will inevitably be some sickness absence among employees, it must also pay due regard to its operational needs.

By implementing this procedure, the Company aims to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of its operational needs and the genuine need of employees to take time off work because of ill health.

This procedure outlines the approach that will be taken to manage sickness absence effectively, fairly, and consistently and the support which is available to employees during periods of sickness absence and ill health.

This procedure applies to all employees who are employed by Wood in the United Kingdom.

This procedure does not form part of an employee's terms and conditions of employment, and the Company reserves the right to amend it at any time.

This procedure will be superseded by the content of any recognised collective bargaining/working rule agreements, site agreements or individual contracts of employment, in the event of there being any difference(s) in arrangements.

This procedure does not apply to contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals providing services to Wood.

## Applicability - United Kingdom

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## 1.0 Key Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities apply within the context of this procedure.

### 1.1 Employees

Employees are responsible for ensuring they act in compliance with this procedure.

### 1.2 Managers

Managers are responsible for ensuring the application and adherence to this procedure.

### 1.3 Human Resources (HR)

HR will provide support and guidance for the application of this procedure.

## 2.0 Sickness Absence Procedure

### 2.1 Reporting Absence

On the first day of sickness absence, the employee must inform the Company as soon as reasonably practicable that they will not be working because of illness or injury.

Preferably, the employee should notify the Company of their non-attendance by a form of business communication (i.e., telephone/Teams/email). Refer to sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 for further details.

The employee should provide a clear reason why they cannot attend work and estimate how long they think the absence will last. The employee should also be prepared to briefly discuss any consequences of their absence (e.g., any essential work that needs to be covered).

Notification of sickness absence must be via a form of business communication (i.e., telephone/Teams/email) rather than text message or social media. In exceptional circumstances, where the employee is unable to make a telephone/Teams call or email, another person such as a friend or relative can contact the Company on their behalf.

If an employee becomes unwell during the working day, in the first instance they should advise their manager where possible. If their manager is unavailable, the employee should inform the next appropriate person within the department/team.

#### 2.1.1 Onshore Based Employees

Onshore (office based and site based) employees should notify their manager of their non-attendance before they are due to start work and no later than one hour after they are due to begin work. If the employee's manager is unavailable, the employee should contact the next most appropriate person within the department/team.

For periods of absence likely to last less than seven calendar days, the employee should maintain regular contact with their manager to advise on their status and likely return to work date.

For periods of absence likely to last more than seven calendar days, the employee and HR should maintain contact at an agreed frequency.

#### 2.1.2 Offshore Based Employees

Offshore based employees should report their absence to the Absence team by calling 01224 851500 (Option 1) at the earliest opportunity. Sickness during field break should also be reported as there may be a requirement for the employee to attend an occupational health assessment prior to their next mobilisation to ensure fitness to work. Failure to inform the Company of any concerns regarding fitness to work prior to mobilising may result, after investigation, in disciplinary action.

Regular contact should be maintained between employees and the Absence team for employees to advise on their status and progress towards recovery where applicable.

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### 2.2 Certification and Recording

For absences of less than seven calendar days (including part days of absence) the employee must complete a UK - Leave of Absence Form on their return to work and return to their manager or HR as soon as possible.

For periods of sickness absence of more than seven calendar days, the employee should provide the Company with a Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note) from a GP, nurse, occupational therapist, pharmacist, or physiotherapist. Onshore based employees should send Fit Notes to HR. Offshore based employees should send Fit Notes to the Absence Team at [health.surveillance@woodplc.com](mailto:health.surveillance@woodplc.com).

Further medical certification must be sent to HR on the expiry of the previous one and continue to be provided for the whole period of sickness absence.

Employees must not return to work before the date indicated on their last medical certificate unless they have separate written consent to return and the Company agrees to this.

The Company may require employees to undergo an occupational health assessment and for the employee's fitness to return to work to be confirmed by an occupational health provider prior to their return to work.

Failure to provide the required medical certification may result in the employee's absence being deemed as unauthorised (see section 2.3).

Employees are required to record all periods of sickness absence in the Company's timewriting system. For offshore employees or those who have a long-term sickness absence, timewriting for sickness absence will be recorded on their behalf.

### 2.3 Unauthorised Absence

Failure to notify sickness absence in accordance with this procedure, or to provide the required medical certification may result in the employee's absence being deemed as unauthorised.

Cases of unauthorised absence will be dealt with under the United Kingdom & Republic of Ireland - Disciplinary Procedure.

### 2.4 Return to Work

On the employee's first day back to work after any period of sickness absence, the employee's manager will arrange to meet informally with them.

If this is not possible on the employee's first day back (e.g., for operational reasons or because the manager is not available), the return-to-work meeting should take place as soon as reasonably practicable.

The purpose of the return-to-work meeting is for managers to welcome the employee back to work, bring them up to date with matters relating to their role/team and to ensure all necessary documentation is submitted. This discussion also provides an opportunity for the employee to make their manager aware of any underlying problems, and if there are any measures that may help to avoid a recurrence of the absence. If there are any concerns arising from the meeting, the manager will further discuss with HR.

### 2.5 Medical Advice

Medical advice may be required by the Company regarding an employee's ability to perform their duties and responsibilities due to their sickness absence or medical condition. In these circumstances, an employee may be required to attend an occupational health assessment. Employees will be asked for their consent to the disclosure of the report produced in connection with an occupational health assessment being shared with the Company.

An employee may also be asked for their consent for the Company to obtain a medical report from a health professional so that the Company can assess the effect of their medical condition on their ability to perform their role and whether there are any reasonable adjustments that need to be considered.

If an employee refuses to attend an occupational health assessment or provide any requested health professional reports without good cause, it may be necessary for the Company to review the employee's absence and make decisions based only on the information available.

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If the employee fails to provide adequate notice that they will not be attending the occupational health assessment, they may be liable to pay any cancellation charge.

Following receipt of medical advice, the Company will consider recommendations made and options available on a case-by-case basis. This may include making reasonable adjustments to the employee's role and/or working environment. Employees will not be allowed to return to work until the Company is satisfied that the medical opinion provided allows the employee to do so.

If the medical opinion is that an employee is not fit to carry out the duties for which they were employed due to ill health, and there are no reasonable adjustments that can be made to the employee's current role, the Company may consider whether redeployment is an option. If there are no suitable alternative positions for an employee who is unable to perform their role due to ill health, the Company may take the decision to end their employment on medical grounds. Section 2.10 sets out the sickness absence procedure that applies to employees who are on long-term sickness absence.

### **2.6 Phased Returns and Reasonable Adjustments**

#### **2.6.1 Phased Return to Work**

In some circumstances, it may be a recommendation for an employee to return to work on a phased basis, such as a period of reduced hours or reduced days for a period of time.

All periods of phased return will be reviewed on a regular basis by the manager and employee until the employee is able to return to normal working hours and normal duties. A phased return to work will normally be up to a maximum period of six to eight weeks. If a phased return to work is for a longer period, this may result in a temporary adjustment to the employee's normal working hours and salary.

If an employee has not exhausted any entitlement to Company Sick Pay (CSP), they will be paid salary for the time they are at work and CSP for the remainder of the period of absence until either they return to their normal working hours, or their entitlement to CSP is exhausted, whichever comes first.

If an employee has exhausted any entitlement to CSP, they will be paid for the hours that they are at work only, and Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), where applicable, until they return to their normal working hours, at which point salary will be reinstated.

#### **2.6.2 Reasonable Adjustments**

If the medical advice is that the employee may be fit for work if certain reasonable adjustments are made to their working duties and/or working environment, the employee will be invited to attend a meeting with their manager and HR.

The purpose of the meeting is to understand what adjustments are required, to consider whether the Company can meet those requirements and, where necessary, suggest alternative adjustments. Consideration will also be given as to how long the adjustments need to be in place and whether a risk assessment is required. A suitable review period for these adjustments will be agreed.

Should the Company be unable to accommodate either a phased return or the adjustments recommended, the employee will remain absent from work and will be paid as per their sick pay entitlement detailed in their terms and conditions of employment.

If the medical opinion is that an employee is not fit to carry out the duties for which they were employed due to ill health, and the suggested adjustments are unable to be accommodated, the Company may consider whether redeployment is an option. If there are no suitable alternative positions for an employee who is unable to perform their role due to ill health, the Company may take the decision to end their employment on medical grounds.

## 2.7 Frequent/Persistent Short-Term Absences

Managers and HR will regularly review sickness absence levels and will take appropriate action where necessary.

As a general guide, where an employee's absence record shows a frequency of four separate absences over a twelve-month rolling period, the employee will be invited to attend a sickness absence meeting with their manager and HR to discuss their absence record and any mitigating circumstances that may exist.

The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the reason for the employee's absence, to understand whether it is likely to recur and whether there are reasonable adjustments that could improve the employee's health and/or attendance. The Company may, where appropriate, set a target for improved attendance within a certain timescale.

HR will produce a written summary of the key points discussed at the meeting; this will not be a verbatim account.

A letter confirming the outcome of the meeting will be sent to the employee.

An employee may be requested to attend a consultation with an occupational health provider to help the Company understand the nature of the condition and adjustments required to support this.

If from any occupational health assessment, it is identified that there is no medical reason for the absence, the employee will be advised that continued frequent/persistent short-term absence may be dealt with in accordance with the United Kingdom & Republic of Ireland - Disciplinary Procedure.

## 2.8 Pregnancy-related Absences

Pregnant employees who are off work because of pregnancy-related ill health must follow the Company's absence reporting procedure. For example, a pregnant employee is subject to the usual notification and evidence requirements and can be asked to attend a return-to-work meeting when returning to work.

However, any sickness absence by a pregnant employee for a pregnancy-related reason should not be included when checking to see if the need for formal action has been triggered. Any periods of pregnancy-related sickness absence from the start of an employee's pregnancy until the end of their maternity leave will be recorded separately from other sickness records and will be disregarded by the Company in any future employment-related decision.

If an employee is absent from work due to a pregnancy-related illness in the four weeks immediately before the due date, please refer the UK - Maternity Procedure for further details.

If a manager is in any doubt as to whether a pregnant employee's absence is related to their pregnancy, they should contact HR for clarification.

## 2.9 Terms and Conditions During Absence

### 2.9.1 Sick Pay

Employees are entitled to sick pay in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment, provided they follow the Company's notification and evidence requirements.

The Company reserves the right to withhold or suspend sick pay at its discretion. This decision would only be made following a full investigation and consideration of all the facts. Employees will be given written notice if their sick pay is being withheld or suspended.

### 2.9.2 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

Most employees will be eligible to receive SSP for up to 28 weeks of sickness absence in any period of incapacity for work (PIW) or in any series of linked PIWs. PIWs will be linked if one occurs within 56 days of a previous PIW. However, if a series of linked PIWs runs over three years, liability to pay SSP stops after three years, even if it has not been paid for 28 weeks. Qualifying days for SSP are the employee's normal working days.

Employees who receive a letter from the Department of Health and Social Security excluding them from receiving SSP must pass this to HR at the earliest opportunity who will forward onto Payroll. Any overpaid SSP shall be repayable by the employee and can be automatically deducted from any payments due.

When entitlement to SSP expires or the individual is not entitled to SSP, Payroll will issue an SSP1 Form to the individual who may be able to claim Employment and Support Allowance.

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### 2.9.3 Annual Leave

Where an employee falls sick or is injured while on annual leave, the Company will allow the employee to transfer to sick leave and take replacement annual leave at a later time. This is subject to the employee submitting the required medical evidence.

If an employee is ill or injured before the start of a period of planned annual leave, and is consequently unable to take the leave, the Company will agree to the employee postponing the holiday dates to another mutually agreed time. Any period of sickness absence will then be treated in accordance with this procedure.

An employee who is absent on sick leave will continue to accrue their full contractual annual leave entitlement and will be given the opportunity to take this within 18 months of the annual leave year in which it was accrued.

An employee on sick leave may also apply to take their annual leave entitlement while on sick leave. The annual leave dates must be approved in accordance with the relevant leave procedure.

Further details of annual leave entitlements during sickness absence and sickness during periods of annual leave can be found in the UK - Annual Leave Procedure.

### 2.9.4 Pensions

During a period of paid sickness absence, the Company will continue to pay contributions into the employee's pension scheme. The amount to contribute will differ depending on the employee's pension arrangements.

In the case of non-salary sacrifice pension, the employer contribution will be based on what the employee earnings would have been had they not been receiving sick pay. The employee contribution will be the relevant percentage of earnings whilst in receipt of sick pay. The total amount paid into the pension will be the employer contribution plus the employee contribution.

In the case of salary sacrifice pension, the employee contribution will be the relevant percentage of earnings whilst in receipt of sick pay and the employers' contribution will be based on what the employee earnings would have been had they not been receiving sick pay. The Company will also make up for the shortfall in the employee contribution to ensure the sum paid into the pension remains unchanged.

During any unpaid period of absence, both employee and employer contributions will cease.

### 2.9.5 Group Income Protection

Employees who are in receipt of GIP are still bound by their terms and conditions of employment and will continue to be supported by the Company during their absence.

Regular contact should be maintained by both parties for employees to advise on their status and progress towards recovery where applicable.

The Company may request that individuals attend an occupational health assessment to receive an update on the employee's condition and to see if there is anything the Company can do to facilitate their rehabilitation and return to work.

### 2.10 Long-term Absences

To ensure that the Company can provide an appropriate level of support to employees during periods of long-term absence, it is important that mutual contact is maintained. Contact may be by telephone or face-to-face, depending on the nature of the absence.

#### 2.10.1 Absence Review

An absence review will take place when an employee has been absent from work due to a long-term or intermittent illness where their health prevents them from carrying out their role to the required standard. The employee's manager and HR will meet with the employee to discuss the employee's ongoing health concerns and to consider how the Company can support such circumstances.

An employee may be asked to attend a medical review with an occupational health provider to enable an understanding of the effect the illness may have on the employee's ability to perform their work, its short and long-term prognosis and whether alternative work or suitable adjustments should be considered.

### 2.10.2 Ill Health Capability Meeting

If the medical opinion is that an employee is no longer fit to carry out the duties for which they were employed due to ill health, the employee will be invited, in writing, to attend an ill health capability meeting with their manager and HR. Where dismissal on the grounds of ill health may be a possible outcome of the meeting, the employee will be advised of this in writing.

The meeting will be conducted by the appropriate manager (this may be the employee's manager), supported by a member of HR. Where the employee's manager is not employed by the same employing entity as the employee, it will be necessary to also involve an appropriate manager from the employee's employing entity.

The employee may be accompanied at the meeting (see 2.10.4). Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting, the meeting will be conducted remotely.

At the meeting, the employee's absence and occupational health report will be discussed. Full consideration will be given to any recommendations for proposed adjustments which could reasonably be made to the employee's current position, or the option of looking for suitable alternative employment where appropriate. The Company will also consider the effect of any prolonged or frequent absence on the business, and whether the illness is a result of a disability.

HR will produce a written summary of the key points discussed at the meeting; this will not be a verbatim account.

If it is established that an individual is not capable of returning to their existing role even with adjustments or if no adjustments can reasonably be made and redeployment is not an option, then the employee may be dismissed on the grounds of ill health capability as outlined below. There may, however, be circumstances where a further ill health capability meeting is appropriate.

### 2.10.3 Further Ill Health Capability Meeting

In some situations, the employee may be required to attend a further ill health capability meeting with the appropriate manager and HR. At this meeting, the manager will provide an update on any adjustments and/or suitable alternatives which are being considered. A further assessment with an occupational health provider may also be required.

HR will produce a written summary of the key points discussed at the meeting; this will not be a verbatim account.

### 2.10.4 The Right to be Accompanied

An employee may be accompanied at any ill health capability meeting(s) and any resulting appeal meeting by a companion who is either a work colleague, a trade union representative, or an official employed by a trade union. Where appropriate, the Company may allow an employee to be accompanied by a friend or relative.

If an employee wishes to be accompanied, they must let the manager holding the meeting know the name of their chosen companion in good time beforehand.

The Company may ask the employee to choose a different companion if they will not be available within five working days of the original meeting date.

A companion may address the meeting to put and sum up the employee's case, respond on their behalf to any view expressed at the meeting and confer with the employee during the meeting.

### 2.10.5 Alternative Role

Where it is identified that an employee is unable to meet the required standards for their current role due to reasons of ill health but may be able to potentially carry out another role, the Company would look to redeploy the employee where a suitable alternative vacancy exists.

### 2.10.6 Dismissal

If no adjustment or redeployment options are suitable/viable and the employee has exhausted any entitlement to Group Income Protection (as per their terms and conditions of employment), the employee will be dismissed on the grounds of ill health capability.

In this event, the appropriate manager will inform the employee verbally and in writing.

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### 2.10.7 Appeal

An employee may submit a formal appeal against the decision to terminate their employment on the grounds on ill health capability.

The employee should appeal in writing to the relevant person named in the outcome letter within seven calendar days of the date on which the outcome was confirmed to them.

The employee's written appeal must clearly state the grounds for the appeal and any specific points the employee wishes to be considered, including any new evidence that was not available at the time of the ill health capability meeting(s).

The employee will be invited to attend an appeal meeting. The meeting will be held without unreasonable delay.

The appeal meeting will be conducted by a manager who was not involved in the original case and, as far as reasonably practicable, will be a more senior manager than the one who made the original decision. HR will assist the business with appointing a suitable appeal manager.

The employee may be accompanied at the appeal meeting (see section 2.10.4).

Where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face meeting, the appeal meeting will be conducted remotely.

The appointed appeal manager will consider the grounds for appeal and decide whether the decision made was reasonable. Where new evidence is brought forward on appeal, the appeal manager should additionally review why that evidence could not have been presented at the original meeting.

HR will produce a written summary of the key points discussed at the appeal meeting; this will not be a verbatim account.

If the employee is unable to attend the appeal meeting because of circumstances beyond their control, they should inform the manager conducting the meeting as soon as possible.

If the employee fails to attend without good reason, or if it appears that they have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the meeting may take place in their absence, based on their written appeal and any other supporting documentation available.

Following the appeal meeting, the appointed appeal manager will inform the employee of the outcome, verbally and in writing, without unreasonable delay.

The outcome of the appeal is final.

If the employee is appealing against their dismissal, the date on which their dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of the appeal.

### 2.11 Employee Assistance Programme

Support is provided through the Wood Employee Assistance Programme and can be accessed at any time. Contact details are available on the Wood Intranet or can be obtained via HR.

## 3.0 References and Supporting Documents

Document Number	Description
HRM-FOR-100470	UK - Leave of Absence Form
HRM-PRO-110125	UK - Annual Leave Procedure
HRM-POL-100016	Human Rights
HRM-PRO-110104	United Kingdom & Republic of Ireland - Disciplinary Procedure
HRM-PRO-110121	UK - Maternity Procedure

## 4.0 Abbreviations and Definitions

Term	Description
Long-term sickness absence	Any period of sickness lasting 28 calendar days or more.
Period of sickness absence	Continuous period of sickness absence, of whatever length, during which the employee does not work.
Short-term sickness absence	Any period of sickness lasting one to 27 calendar days.
The Company	References to the "Company" in this procedure are references to the employee's current employer.

## 5.0 Revision History

Rev	Date	Summary of Changes
0	19 June 2024	New document, reclassified as a procedural document, replaces HRM-PLD-100021. Employees who are absent on sick leave will continue to accrue their full contractual annual leave entitlement and will be given the opportunity to take this within 18 months of the annual leave year in which it was accrued.
1	08 November 2024	Expanded section regarding long-term absences.

## 6.0 Author/Checker/Owner

Author	Checker	Owner
Carla Wallace, Senior HR Business Partner, HR Policy & Governance	Laura Low, HR Manager, HR Policy & Governance	Zena Phillips, HR Director, HR Policy & Governance