

Appendix 1 - Return to Work Meetings Guidance

- Return to work meetings must take place following each period of absence, regardless of the length of the absence, ideally within the employee's first day of return to work.
- Line Managers should conduct the review and the [Return to Work form](#) should be completed online during the meeting.

Purpose of the meeting:

- To welcome the employee back to work.
- To ensure the employee is fit to return to work.
- To identify the cause of absence.
- To agree a way forward, if relevant.
- To provide an up-date on what's been happening in the workplace.

Preparation

- Ensure that you have a suitable location to hold the review. It should be held in a suitable environment, i.e. a private location and not in the middle of an open-plan office;
- Ensure you have access to the employee's sickness record and current period of absence;
- Be prepared to discuss patterns or trends of absence, following discussion with the relevant HR business Partner.

How to structure the Discussion:

- Welcome the employee back.
- Be positive, highlight that they have been missed.
- Explain purpose of the meeting is to establish why they have been absent from work.
- Try and determine the cause of absence, be sensitive and calm if personal problems or stress are discussed.
- If the absence is work-related, what can be done to help, i.e. adjustments to work hours, work place or duties. These should be adjustments which are either temporary or which can be supported without compromising the business need.

- Establish if the employee is undergoing any treatment, will time off be required for medical appointments etc.
- Ask if there any other factors contributing to the absence.
- Place current absence in the context of previous absences.
- Agree the next steps, such as a follow-up review, referral to Occupational Health, attend a training course.
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...if you've been here before

- Explain the impact of their absence on the colleagues within the School/Department.
- Explain that their absence will continue to be monitored.

Things to bear in mind:

- Listen actively – don't assume you already know why the individual has been absent;
- Respect their privacy if they do not wish to discuss the reasons for absence. If this does happen then you can offer them the option to speak to somebody else. If not then you should highlight that if you don't know the problem you are unable to help and their absence will continue to be monitored.

Recording

- Ensure that the correct certification has been provided.
- Complete the return to work form, ensuring that both parties sign to confirm their agreement in what is recorded.
- Send the appropriate medical certification and return to work meeting form to Human Resources.