

LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY

ATTENDANCE POLICY: REPORTING ABSENCE AND MAINTAINING CONTACT

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Important principles associated with the management of sickness absence

The principles outlined in the policy are as important to the member of staff who is absent as they are to the manager. The key principles are:

- Early intervention by line managers to support the individual and to identify the need for early medical intervention.
- To achieve early and positive resolution on a partnership basis – management, individual and medical, as appropriate.
- On-going management support and intervention.

Initial day of absence.

- Beyond the individual reporting sick, (line) managers to make contact with absent individual and to maintain contact throughout the duration of the absence. Interventions on the first days of an absence are critical in establishing what needs to be put in place to enable a return to work at the earliest opportunity.

First ten days of absence

- HR Managers/ Advisors to intervene within the early days of an absence and/or when it appears that the absence will exceed the self-certification arrangements. The purpose of the intervention is to ensure that line managers have intervened and have considered all the support that may be appropriate to offer the individual, including options available to assist with a return to work.

Within first two weeks of absence

- HR Managers/ Advisors to utilise the expertise/ advice of OHSW – Occupational Health Nurses and Welfare Advisers, as appropriate, and consider the need for a referral to the Force Medical Adviser (FMA), access to Fast Track Physiotherapy and Fast Track medical interventions, etc.

Within three weeks of absence

- Referrals for FMA appointments should be submitted by the HR Manager/ Advisor as soon as it appears likely that the individual will be absent for more than 21 days and certainly no later than the 21st Day of absence.

Within five weeks of absence

- Appointments with the FMA will be made within two weeks of the request being received by OHSW.

Within six weeks of absence

- A senior management case conference will normally take place within the Division/ Department.

Within two months of absence

- Discretion exists for a case conference to take place involving representatives from Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare.

Within three months of absence

- The aim should be that there is clarity with regard to the diagnosis and the likely prognosis for the future.
- A case conference should have taken place with the Head of Human Resources.

Within five months of absence

- A case conference should have taken place with the Chief Officer, Human Resources.

Upon return to work

In all instances a return to work interview (see separate toolkit) should take place. In addition, on occasions where an individual has had 4, or more, sickness absences in the preceding 12 months, subject to individual considerations, they will be required to attend a Case Conference with the Chief Officer, Human Resources, or the Head of Human Resources (see separate toolkit).

1.0 Issues directly associated with the reporting of absence and maintaining contact

1.1 It will be the responsibility of the individual reporting his or her absence from duty to notify their intention to the Constabulary as soon as possible and, other than in exceptional circumstances, before the tour of duty that the absence affects. The principles outlined in this section will normally be possible except in exceptional circumstances. In any case, confidentiality must always be respected.

1.2 Unless exceptional circumstances exist, the notification should be made by the individual personally and should be given to the line manager. Where the line manager is not available, another line manager should be informed. It will be the responsibility of that line manager to inform the individual's line manager as soon as practicable.

1.3 It is recognised that in exceptional circumstances (e.g. Hospitalisation) it will not be possible for the individual to communicate personally. However, every **reasonable** effort to advise the Constabulary, in person, should be made.

1.4 Where alternative arrangements are made the communication must be made to a person of supervisory rank. In particular, messages should only be left with colleagues in exceptional circumstances.

1.5 Any absence not reported in line with these provisions will be treated as unauthorised absence.

1.6 The notification should include:

- The nature of the illness or circumstances surrounding the absence (Line managers should be conscious of the need for confidentiality in recording medical conditions. Exceptionally, it may be appropriate to record the condition as 'personal' if there is potential for the confidentiality being compromised)

- Whether a doctor has been seen and, if not, when this will take place
- An assessment of the likely period of absence
- Where and how the line manager can make contact
- Issues that might arise during the period of absence which might require action before the date of resumption
- Whether the absence is related to an injury or accident and, if so, whether this took place at work. If the injury took place at work, the Manager is responsible for ensuring that the accident is recorded on the Computerised Accident Reporting System (CARS).
- Whether the absence is considered to be associated with a condition covered by the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Any other information which might assist the Constabulary to provide appropriate support or which will enable the line manager to comply with the provisions of this policy

1.7 The line manager will immediately record the absence on the Duty Management System (DMS) or on form A27 (for staff not on DMS). Where form A27 is used, it should be forwarded to the local Human Resources Department where it will be recorded on the Human Resources System.

1.8 Where the notification has not been made to the absentee's line manager, the line manager must make contact with the individual at the earliest opportunity.

1.9 The line manager must remind the absentee that a medical certificate is required if the absence is to extend beyond 7 days. Medical certificates should be forwarded to the local Human Resources department.

1.10 It is essential that effective contact is maintained with all members of the Constabulary who are absent from duty. This is a joint responsibility between the absentee and the line manager.

1.11 Line managers should maintain personal contact with absentees - a personal visit may be appropriate. Arrangements should be made with the absentee. All contact should be the subject of a written report to the local Human Resources Manager. The Police Federation, the Police Staff Trade Unions, and other Constabulary support groups, may be a valuable source of support for individuals and may assist with finding solutions with Managers. Their involvement may be very constructive.

1.12 It is good practice to keep the absentee informed of developments at work during their time away unless there is medical advice to the contrary. Colleagues should be encouraged to maintain contact and any significant events or developments should be communicated. Contact should be seen as an opportunity to support the individual's needs while, at the same time, address the issue of an early return to duty.

1.13 If the absence is likely to be for more than 21 days, a referral to OHSW should be made via the local Human Resources Manager. An early discussion with the local Human Resources department may assist with considering possible interventions from OHSW to support the individual.

1.14 In some cases, the illness as initially advised may change or be diagnosed by a doctor as a different condition. In these cases it will be the responsibility of the individual to advise his/her line manager accordingly. The line manager will arrange the appropriate amendment of DMS or advise the local Human Resources department in writing if the absence is recorded on form A27.

1.15 Absentees should inform their line manager regarding their intention to be away from their normal living address during the period of absence – in particular for travel or holidays that prevent the Constabulary from maintaining contact. The advice of the Force Medical Adviser should be sought where the line manager considers there may be a detrimental effect upon recovery by travel or holidays during periods of absence.

1.16 The local Human Resources Manager is responsible for monitoring these arrangements and ensuring that there is compliance by both the absentee and the line manager.