

Attendance and Absence Management Policy & Procedure

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Section A

1. Aims

The Combined Authority is committed to the well-being of its workforce. Employee attendance is a vital factor in delivering the level of service required by our stakeholders and community. This policy aims to provide guidance and support in both managing absence and in supporting the return-to-work process. We aim to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) is maintained at all times.

This policy and its procedures apply to all fixed-term and substantive staff directly employed by the Authority. This policy does not apply to Agency, locum, honorary staff or students.

Line managers will apply this policy to only sickness related absences with the support from HR and Occupational Health.

2. Principles

Our policy is based on the following key principles:

- Employees will always be treated with sympathy, understanding and compassion.
- We recognise the importance of managing absence through good employment practice and effective return to work interviews.
- It is very important that employees and their managers have regular contact during periods of sickness absence. Support will be provided to help employee's return to work following a period of long-term sickness.
- When dealing with cases of sickness absence which involve the issue of an individual's physical or mental capability to undertake their duties, it is advisable to involve the HR Representative and Occupational Health at the earliest possible stage.
- Employees who are unfit for work, should be classed as absent due to sickness, annual leave days should not 'cover' the sickness

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority employees as far as possible, except where there is a specific local agreement, or a clause within the contract of employment, which is at variance with the provisions as contained within the NJC agreement. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time.

4. Vision and Values

Our vision is for a prosperous and sustainable Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Driven by our values and using our collective voice and strengths, we seek inclusive good growth for an equitable resilient, healthier and connected region.

Our values define what is important in the way we deliver this vision. At Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority our core values are Collaboration, Integrity, Vision, Innovation and Leadership. We are committed to ensuring our culture enables our

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employees to display these values regardless of their roles within the organisation. Managers and employees alike must ensure our core values are upheld when implementing this policy.

5. Responsibilities of the employee

- To attend work unless unfit or unable to do so, regardless of working style
- To report each absence promptly and in line with the notification process detailed in this document; to keep in regular contact with their manager during the absence
- At all times to follow medical advice to support a return to work at the appropriate time
- Not to undertake activities that may compromise their health, or their return to work following sickness.
- To attend Occupational Health Appointments if referred. For further support Staff are encouraged to access the Employee Assistance Programme which offers advice, information and counselling 24 hours service which is both free of charge and confidential.

6. Responsibilities of the line manager

- To ensure that The Combined Authority fulfils its duty of care to employees according to The Combined Authority's Health & Safety Policy
- To create a supportive climate in which good attendance prevails
- To ensure that all employees are aware of the sickness reporting procedures and the importance of adhering to them
- To carry out return to work interviews after all absences
- To maintain accurate, up to date records of each employee's attendance daily.
- To complete Sickness/Absence Notification forms where applicable as soon as possible.
- To treat information regarding medical conditions sensitively and with due regard to confidentiality
- To refer employee's where necessary to Occupational health for support when appropriate.
- To maintain responsibility for the employee regardless of whether they are office based, flexible or agile workers
- To ensure that disability related issues are carefully considered when applying this policy and seek advice as appropriate.
- To give due regard to health promotion and ensure employees are aware of what support and help is available to them (e.g., EAP).
- To inform HR Team of employee's absence in line with the absence procedure
- To keep HR and Payroll teams up to date with ongoing sickness of team member to ensure full support and guidance is given to line manager with regards to phased return to work plans and Occupational Health Advice.

7. Management of workplace stress

The Combined Authority is committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of our employees. The Combined Authority recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and alleviating workplace stress. We will provide appropriate support through the Employee Assistance Programme. Referral to

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Occupational Health will be considered as soon as the line manager has been informed that an employee is absent with a stress related condition.

8. Procedure for notification of sickness absence

If an employee is absent from work due to any illness or injury which incapacitates them and prevents them from doing the work they are employed to do, the following rules must be observed in order to qualify for sickness absence and payment for the absence. All staff need to contact their line manager before normal start time to let them know they won't be able to work and advise on their expected date of return. **Usually, this can be over a Teams call, by email or by phone.** For every subsequent day after the first day of illness team members must call each day to report their absence if appropriate (e.g., when fit note expires and employee is fit enough to do so) and advise line manager anticipated return date.

On the first and every subsequent day of absence (unless agreed with manager a different time frequency), the employee must inform their line manager of their absence by normal start time. The telephone call should be made by the employee themselves – only in extenuating circumstances will a call be accepted by another party. The employee should give details of the nature of their illness/incapacity (i.e. migraine; chest infection etc.); whether they will be seeking medical attention and some indication of when they will be able to return to work. Any delay in notification or failure to notify will require further explanation. Should the reason be deemed unacceptable, this may result in loss of entitlement to sick pay and or disciplinary action. Communication will be maintained with the employee throughout the absence, which may be in the form of telephone conversations or face to face meetings, whichever is most appropriate, unless medical evidence prevents this from happening. Up to 7 days a self-certification certificate will be required.

9. Fit Notes Day Eight and onwards

If an employee is still unfit for work on account of ill health on the eighth calendar day, they should obtain a Fit Note from their GP or other medical professional in line with Government guidance. The original Fit Note should be forwarded to the HR Department within two days of the Fit Note being signed by a qualified medical practitioner. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that dates on subsequent Fit Notes follow on with no breaks in between, and that all notes are submitted within two days of the note being signed by the qualified medical practitioner if they are to be paid sick pay for the whole period.

When the employee has submitted a Fit Note, the manager and employee should agree the intervals at which communication will take place. In normal circumstances, there should be contact at least once per week.

10. Reporting of Workplace Disease/Accident or Assault

Where Workplace Disease/Accident or Assault is alleged, the employee:

- must inform their line manager that they believe their medical condition arises from their work with The Combined Authority, and state how they believe their work caused the condition
- report this within 3 days of the incident happening.

11. Trigger Points

The Sickness Management Procedure will be followed when an employee reaches one or more of the following points during any rolling twelve-month period:

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- Three or more occasions of sickness absence
- 10 working days absence over 2 occasions
- Unacceptable patterns of absence.

Each occasion of absence should be followed by Return-to-Work meeting where an informal discussion will take place before the trigger point is reached and a formal attendance management meeting arranged.

If someone is absent due to a pre-planned operation, time off for recuperation purposes will not be counted towards the triggers. See 25.

Where an employee has two or more posts the sickness absence will only count against the role that would have been worked on the day of the absence.

The unacceptable patterns may cover a period of more than one year if there is evidence to confirm the absence or the absence pattern occurs annually, bi-annually etc.

The trigger points for employees that work fewer than 5 days in a week will be pro rata to the average number of days worked per week, as detailed below:

Working days per week	Trigger Point
1 Day	2 days absence
2 Days	4 days absence
3 Days	6 days absence
4 Days	8 days absence
5 Days	10 days absence

There will not be an adjustment to the number of occasions.

If employees work on an annualised hours' contract, managers will need to apply an average working week and make adjustments during the year if needed.

12. Return to Work Interview

It is the Combined Authority's policy that a return-to-work interview is carried out with all employees on the first day of their return from any sickness absence. The line manager or supervisor should complete a Return-to-Work Form during the return-to-work interview, with the employee. This meeting is to determine the reasons for the absence, to ensure that the employee is fit to have returned to work and to consider any support required to ensure a successful return to work. The Line Manager/Supervisor may decide to refer employees to Occupational Health for support and guidance on how to support the employee in achieving satisfactory attendance.

If the employee fails to complete a Sickness Self Certification and Return to Work form on the first day of their return, or knowingly completes it inaccurately, then the entitlement to contractual sick pay may be lost. This may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

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13. Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments applicable to the reasons for absence, will be carried out before any reasonable adjustments are agreed, and will usually inform part of the decision-making process when determining the suitability of a return to work and subsequent reasonable adjustments.

14. Reasonable Adjustments

Before any reasonable adjustment is made for an employee. It is important that line managers seek advice and support from Occupational Health and HR.

Occupational Health will provide advice and support to managers and employees on individual cases of sickness absence, how to support and if employees require any reasonable adjustments. Managers **must** seek support from their HR Representative on how to implement any suggested reasonable adjustments.

It may be the case that an employee could return to work if adjustments were made to either the role they carry out, or to their working pattern on a permanent basis. The Combined Authority will endeavour to accommodate the needs of employees in line with the requirements of the Equality Act. With guidance from Occupational Health and the employee's GP, we may agree to a phased return to work. This will be reviewed after 4 weeks. Where this is the case, the employee will be paid normal pay whilst at work and sick pay (which may be no pay) when they are not at work.

15. Sick Pay scheme

Statutory Sick Pay and Contractual Sick Pay will be paid for periods of sickness absence only providing the notification process has been followed. Any unauthorised absence may result in disciplinary action being taken.

The payment of sick pay operates on trust. Employees are expected to act with integrity and honesty in complying with the spirit of the scheme. All employees must comply fully with the requirements of this policy to retain their eligibility to sickness pay.

If the absence is for less than half a day/shift, then the absence will be classed as a half-day sick absence. If the absence is for more than half a day/shift, then the absence will be classed as a full day's sickness absence.

16. Details of the scheme

If the employee has complied fully with this policy, The Combined Authority will provide contractual sick pay at the levels and for the periods outlined in the table below. Statutory payments will be offset against this and not paid in addition.

LENGTH OF SERVICE	SICK PAY PERIOD
Less than four months' service	One month's full pay
Between four months and one year's service	One month's full pay and two month's half pay
During second year of service	Two months' full pay and two months' half pay

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During third year of service	Four months' full pay and four months' half pay
During fourth and fifth year of service	Five months' full pay and five months' half pay
After five years' service	Six months' full pay and six months' half pay

Sick pay is calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day the aggregate of periods of paid absence during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of absence.

17. Loss of entitlement to sickness pay and conduct during sickness absence

There are circumstances where the Combined Authority may consider suspending contractual and/or statutory sickness payments. The Combined Authority would advise the employee of the grounds for the suspension of pay and the employee would have the right of appeal against the suspension of pay. If The Combined Authority decides that the grounds for suspension were justified, then the right to any further payment in respect of that period of absence would be forfeited.

Circumstances of sickness pay suspension may include, but is not limited to:

- If an employee refuses to meet with their manager to discuss their absence (unless medical evidence has been submitted to state that the employee is too unwell to meet with their employer or manager)
- If an employee is absent on account of sickness which is as a result of deliberate conduct that does not help their recovery or makes it worse,
- The employee's own misconduct or neglect
- An injury sustained while working in the employee's own time on their own account for their own private gain or for another employer
- If COMBINED AUTHORITY have any reason to doubt the validity of an employee's illness or injury or the reason given for absence.
- If an employee does not comply with their obligations under this policy

Disciplinary action may be taken against an employee for fraudulent sickness pay claims.

In all cases of sickness absence that necessitates taking time off work, it is expected that the employee will do their utmost to facilitate a speedy return to fitness and to work. In this regard, employees are expected to act sensibly and honestly. COMBINED AUTHORITY reserves the right to fully investigate the reasons why an employee refuses treatment that would expedite their recovery.

It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that their return to work is not compromised by their actions outside of work.

18. Annual Leave instead of sickness absence

An employee can ask to take their paid holiday for the time they're off work sick. They might do this if they do not qualify for sick pay, for example. Any rules relating to sick leave will still apply. This must be approved by the Director and HR department.

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19. Sickness during Annual Leave

Where an employee falls sick or is injured while on holiday, within or outside of the UK, the Combined Authority will allow the employee to transfer to sick leave and take replacement holiday at a later time. This is subject to the following conditions:

- The total period of absence must be fully certificated by a qualified medical practitioner
- The employee must contact the organisation (by telephone) as soon as he/she knows that there will be a period of incapacity during a holiday.
- Where the employee is overseas when he/she falls ill or is injured, evidence must be produced that the employee was ill by way of either a medical certificate or proof of a claim on an insurance policy for medical treatment received.

Where the employee fulfils all of the above conditions, the organisation will grant the employee the same number of days' replacement holiday leave as the number of holiday days lost due to sickness or injury.

If an employee is ill or is injured before the start of a period of planned holiday, and consequently unable to take the holiday, the Combined Authority 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 the Combined Authority's normal policy on sickness absence, providing medical certificates are in place to cover the absence.

The employee must submit a written request to postpone the planned holiday, and this must be accompanied by a letter from his/her doctor confirming that he/she is unfit, or is still likely to be unfit, to take the holiday.

If an employee wishes to take the pre-booked period of leave as leave, then they must provide a medical statement which states that the period of sickness is as at an end before the holiday starts.

20. Sickness during a period of suspension

If an employee falls sick during a period of suspension, he/she must notify the Investigating Officer or HR Representative by normal start time on the first day of incapacity. The employee should be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of the medical statement. A medical certificate must cover all sickness during a period of suspension as there will be no entitlement to self-certified absence during a period of suspension.

The suspended employee may still be required to attend meetings with the investigating officer whilst off sick, but this will only be done following medical advice. They will also be expected to follow the agreed absence reporting procedure in their team.

21. Absence relating to disability or ill Health

If an employee considers that he or she is affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects their ability to undertake their work, they should inform their line manager or the HR department.

The Combined Authority will always endeavour to support and will comply with all relevant legislation relating to disabled employees. We would work closely with our independent

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medical experts to establish any reasonable adjustments that need to be made to enable the employee carry out their role satisfactorily. Absences not related to employee's disability will be managed under the normal absence procedure. However, if a disabled employee has been given all the relevant support and all options have been explored, but their absence or ability to carry out their role is a cause for concern, then Section B or C of this policy will be followed.

22. Access to medical records

In operating this policy, the Combined Authority may, at any time, ask an employee to consent to a medical examination carried out by an external medical practitioner nominated by the Combined Authority.

If such a request is made, the employee will be asked to agree that any report produced in connection with any such examination may be disclosed to the Combined Authority, and that the Combined Authority may discuss the contents of the report with our advisers and the relevant doctor.

If an employee refuses to attend appointments or allow access to their medical records, then they will be informed that the Combined Authority will take decisions based on the information it has to hand.

23. General information about absence meetings

Absence meetings should, wherever possible, be carried out in private and conducted face to face. The meetings will normally be conducted by an employee's line manager, a more senior manager or nominated deputy; a representative of the HR Department may be in attendance at any of these meetings.

An employee is entitled to bring a companion with them to formal meetings. A companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up an employee's position, but will not be allowed to answer questions on an employee's behalf.

An employee must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. If an employee continues to be unable to attend scheduled meetings, the meeting may take place in their absence and a decision will be made on the evidence available.

Confirmation of any decision made at a meeting, the reasons for it, and the right of appeal will be given to an employee, in writing, usually within 1 week of an absence meeting (unless this time scale is not practicable, in which case it will be provided as soon as is practicable).

24. Right to be Accompanied

Employees may bring a companion to any formal attendance meeting under this procedure. The companion may be a trade union representative or a work colleague.

Companions may make representations and ask questions but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf.

Acting as a companion is voluntary and no employee is required to fulfil this role unless they are happy to do so.

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If the employee's choice of companion is unreasonable, they may be asked to choose someone else for example:

- If there is a conflict of interest or the companion's attendance may prejudice process; or
- If the companion's unavailability will cause unnecessary delays within the prescribed timeframes unless exceptional circumstances exist.

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SECTION B: SHORT TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

25. Management of Short-Term Sickness Absence

An employee whose level of sickness absence has reached a defined trigger point (as outlined in Section A paragraph 11), will be invited to attend an informal absence meeting (absence review meeting). An absence review is an opportunity to look into the cause of an employee's absence, check on employee's wellbeing and see what support can be offered.. These meetings should take place as soon as is reasonably practicable after the trigger point has been reached.

26. Absences that may be taken into account

In most cases all sickness reasons will be taken into account. However, those wholly attributable to an employee's pregnancy, will be discounted. The absence will be recorded and discussed at the return-to-work interview, but not used to take further action against the employee. Please refer to Maternity policy for management of employee's absence from 4th week before the EWC.

Any absence of a pregnant employee that is not pregnancy related will be managed in accordance with this policy.

The Combined Authority will always endeavour to support and will comply with all relevant legislation relating to its disabled employees. Absences due to a disability will not be discounted, however, following support and guidance from Occupational Health, the triggers may be amended to take the disability into account.

Should an employee's sickness absence immediately follow a pre-planned operation, be wholly related to the operation and be for recuperation purposes, the absence will be recorded and discussed at the return-to-work interview, but not used to take further action against the employee.

However, should further related absences occur after the employee has returned to work, they may not be discounted.

27. Stage 1 Formal Attendance Management Meeting

In circumstances where an employee had failed to achieve the attendance targets set in the informal meeting or has reached a defined trigger point (as outlined in Section A paragraph 11 of this policy), they will be invited to a Stage 1 Formal Attendance Management Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Review the concerns as highlighted in any informal meetings and in return-to-work interviews
- Review and discuss the success of any measures made and consider what, if any, further strategies / support might improve the employees' health and attendance
- Provide the employee an opportunity to fully explain the circumstances of their absences
- Agree a timescale for review over which the employee's attendance will continue to be monitored.

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Please see Section 24 – Right to be accompanied,

Possible Outcomes

The Stage 1 formal attendance management meeting may result in an attendance monitoring period set for the employee. This could be from 3- 6 months from the date of the meeting. A First Written warning may also be issued.

Should a first written warning be issued, this will be held on the employees' file and be considered live for a period of 12 months. The employee will have the right to appeal against a first written warning by following the Combined Authority's Appeals Policy and Procedure.

28. Stage 2 Formal Attendance Management Meeting

In circumstances where an employee had failed to achieve the attendance targets set in the Stage 1 meeting or has reached a defined trigger point (as outlined in Section A paragraph 11 of this policy), they will be invited to a Stage 2 Formal Attendance Management Meeting.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Review the concerns as highlighted in the Stage 1 meeting, in subsequent return to work interviews and in any informal meetings that may have taken place
- Review and discuss the success of any measures made and consider what, if any, further strategies / support might improve the employees' health and attendance
- Remind the employee of the need for immediate sustained improvement in attendance
- Provide the employee an opportunity to fully explain the circumstances of their absences
- Consider the employees ability to remain in their current role in view of their capabilities and business needs and possible redeployment opportunities
- Consider whether any formal action is required
- To remind the employee of the importance of regular attendance at work and that if the appropriate improvement in attendance has not taken place by the review date, that a further formal meeting in line with Stage 3 of the procedure will be arranged and may result in termination of their employment.

Please see Section 24 – Right to be accompanied.

Possible Outcomes

The Stage 2 formal attendance management meeting may result a further review period to be determined according to the circumstances of the case, but usually a 3–6-month period from the date of the meeting

A Final Written Warning may also be issued. Should a final written warning be issued, this will be held on the employees file and be considered live for a period of 12 months. The employee will have the right to appeal against a final written warning by following the Combined Authority's Appeals Policy and Procedure.

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29. Stage 3 Formal Attendance Management Hearing

In circumstances where an employee has failed to achieve the attendance targets set in the Formal Stage 2 Attendance Management Meeting or has reached a defined trigger point (as outlined in Section A of this policy), the employee will be invited to a Stage 3 Formal Attendance Management Meeting.

The meeting will be chaired by the Head of Department (or their nominee) and a representative from the HR Department will be present.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Review the concerns as in the Stage 2 Meeting and in subsequent return to work interviews
- Review and discuss the success of any measures made and consider what, if any, further strategies / support might improve the employees' health and attendance
- Provide the employee an opportunity to fully explain the circumstances of their absences
- Consider the employees ability to remain in their current role in view of their capabilities and business needs and possible redeployment opportunities
- Consider whether any formal action is required.

Please see Section 24 – Right to be accompanied.

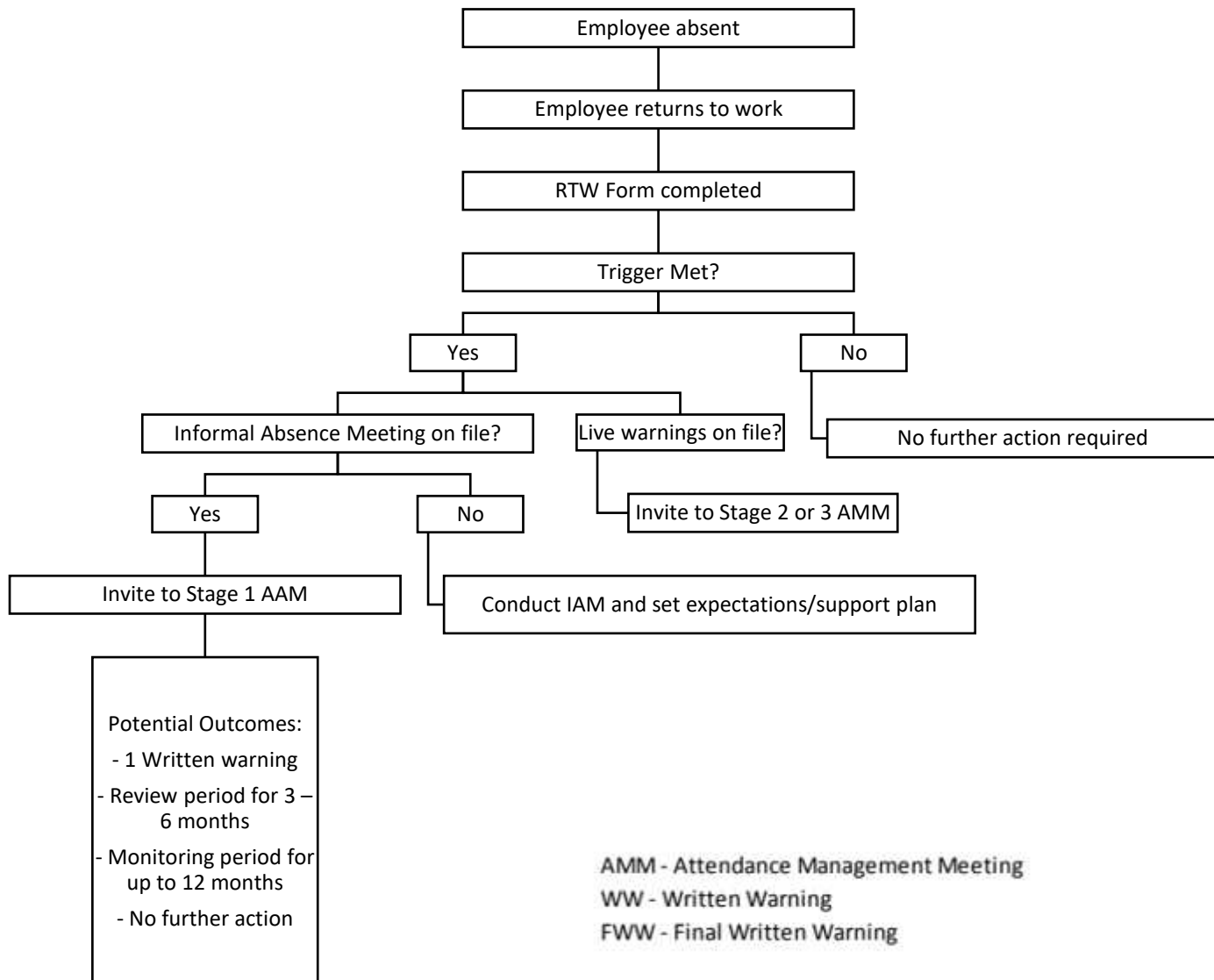
Possible Outcomes

The Stage 3 formal attendance management meeting may result in an extended review and attendance monitoring period. The employee may also be dismissed, usually with notice. Should the employee be dismissed, they shall have the right to appeal against the dismissal by following the Combined Authority's Appeals Policy and Procedure.

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30. Short Term Absence Flowchart

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SECTION C: LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

31. Management of Long-Term Sickness Absence

The definition of long-term sickness absence is absences of four weeks or more. Each case will be treated on an individual basis, and in partnership with the employee, their manager and HR Department. It is expected that the manager will already have been in contact with the employee on an informal basis before this process is followed.

The Combined Authority will maintain contact with the employee during periods of long-term sickness absence, unless there is medical evidence that no contact should be made. Contact ensures that the Combined Authority are fully aware of the issues surrounding the absence and the likely return to work date. This may be in the form of telephone conversations or face to face meetings or a combination, whichever is most appropriate.

All employees who are absent (or likely to be absent) for four weeks or more, may be referred to the occupational health service.

If at any stage during this procedure it is considered that the absences from work are not due to sickness and that the employee is abusing the scheme, this will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

32. Returning to work after Long Term Sickness Absence – Light duties/Phased returns

When an employee's GP or Specialist states that the employee is fit to return to work providing that they can work on 'light/reduced duties' or on a 'phased return' then the Combined Authority will endeavour to support this. We will seek guidance from Occupational Health on how best to phase the employee back to work. 'Light duties' may be defined as:

- reduced or altered duties.
- reduced or amended working hours or working pattern
- temporary medical re-deployment to an alternative role.

Light duties are a temporary measure and will usually be for a period of not more than four weeks unless medical advice recommends that a longer period is necessary. This can only be extended after medical consultation and guidance from Occupational Health. During any period of light/reduced duties, the employee must be able to carry out the majority of their job and play a useful role once back at work. If the employee is unlikely to be fully fit within four weeks, then they should obtain a Fit Note and remain absent due to sickness. For employee's working on a phased return basis they will be paid normal pay for the hours that they are at work and sick pay (full, half or none) for the hours that they are not at work.

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33. Stage 1: First Sickness Absence Meeting

The purposes of a first sickness absence meeting will include:

- Discussing the reasons for absence:
- To determine how long the absence is likely to last.
- Where an employee has been absent on a number of occasions lasting 4 weeks or more, determining the likelihood of further absences.
- Considering whether medical advice is required, obtaining the employees permission to write to their doctor if so, and informing the employee that they shall be referred to Occupational Health.
- Considering what, if any, measures might improve the employees' health and/or attendance.
- Agreeing a way forward; any action that will be taken and a timescale for review and a further meeting under the sickness absence procedure.

Please see Section 24 – Right to be accompanied.

Possible Outcomes

The Stage 1: first sickness absence meeting may result in one or more of the following outcomes:

- No further action
- An extended review and monitoring period.

34. Stage 2: Second Sickness Absence Meeting

Depending on the matters discussed at the first stage of the sickness absence procedure, a further meeting or meetings may be necessary under Stage 2.

The purposes of further meeting(s) may include:

- Discussing the reasons for and impact of an employee's ongoing absence.
- If it has not already been obtained, considering whether medical advice is required. If it has been obtained, considering the advice that has been given and whether further advice is required.
- Considering an employee's ability to return to/remain in their job in view both of their capabilities and the Combined Authority business needs and any adjustments that can reasonably be made to the employees' job to enable them to do so.
- Where an employee is able to return from long-term sickness absence, whether to their own job or to a redeployed job, agreeing a return-to-work programme.
- Agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting(s). This may, depending on steps the Combined Authority has already taken, include warning an employee that they are at risk of dismissal.

Please see Section 24 – Right to be accompanied.

Attendance and Absence Management Policy & Procedure

Possible Outcomes

The Stage 2 absence meeting may result in one or more of the following outcomes:

- No further action
- An extended review and monitoring period
- First Written warning

Should a first written warning be issued, this will be held on the employees file and be considered live for a period of 12 months. The employee will have the right to appeal against a first written warning by following the Combined Authority's Appeals Policy and Procedure.

35. Stage 3: Final Sickness Absence Meeting

Where an employee has been warned that they are at risk of dismissal, the Combined Authority may invite them to a meeting under the third stage of the sickness absence procedure. The purposes of a stage 3 meeting will be:

- To review the meetings that have taken place and matters discussed with the employee.
- Where an employee remains on long-term sickness absence, to consider whether there have been any changes since the last meeting; either as regards their possible return to work or opportunities for return or redeployment.
- To consider any further matters that the employee wishes to raise.
- To consider whether there is a reasonable likelihood of the employee returning to work or achieving the desired level of attendance in a reasonable time.
- To consider the possible termination of the employees' employment due to lack of capability to carry out their role.

Please see Section 24 – Right to be accompanied,

Possible Outcomes

- The Stage 3 absence meeting may result in Dismissal. Termination in such circumstances will normally be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice. Should the employee be dismissed the employee will have the right to appeal against this by following the Combined Authority's Appeals Policy and Procedure.

36. Right to be Accompanied

Employees may bring a companion to any formal attendance meeting under this procedure. The companion may be a trade union representative or a work colleague.

Companions may make representations and ask questions but should not answer questions on the employee's behalf.

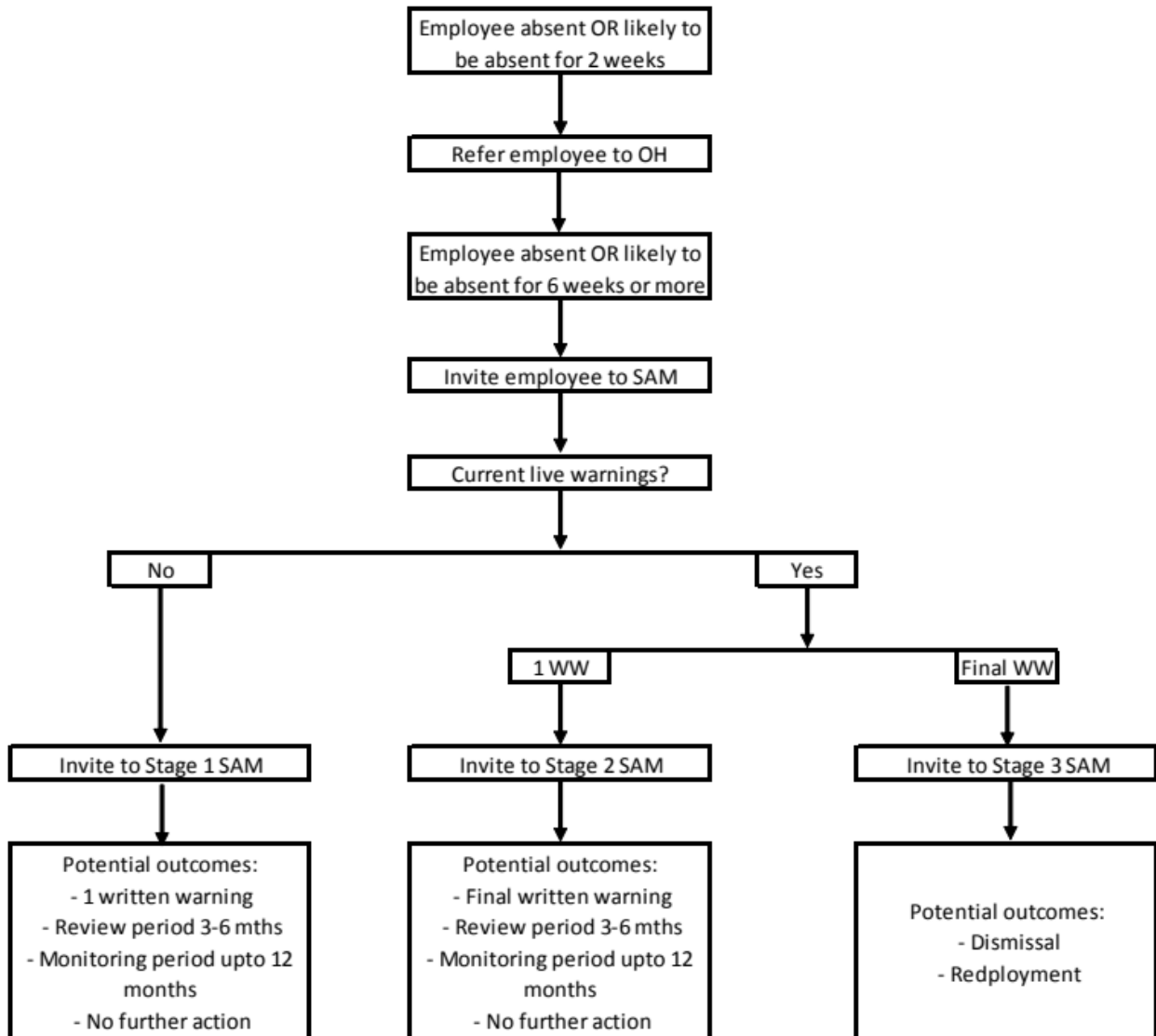
Acting as a companion is voluntary and no employee is required to fulfil this role unless they are happy to do so.

If the employee's choice of companion is unreasonable, they may be asked to choose someone else for example:

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- If there is a conflict of interest or the companion's attendance may prejudice process; or
- If the companion's unavailability will cause unnecessary delays within the prescribed timeframes unless exceptional circumstances exist.

37. Long Term Absence Flow Chart



SAM - Sickness Absence Meeting
WW - Written Warning

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References:
Appeals Policy

Issue date:	2023
Version number:	2
Review due date:	2026

Document Control Sheet

Purpose of document:	This policy is designed to support employees and managers to help manage absence from work. It is also designed so that there is a consistent approach when matters are raised under this Policy.
Type of document:	Policy/Procedure
Document checked by Legal	No
If applicable, has an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed?	Yes
Document lead and author:	HR Team
Dissemination:	
What other documents should this be read in conjunction with:	Guidance documents listed in policy
Who will review the document (job title):	HR Team
Why is this document being reviewed?	Review of existing Policies and Procedures
Mandatory read	Yes

Revisions

Version No.	Page/ Paragraph No.	Description of amendment	Date approved
2		Changes made in line with statutory updates. Includes reference to fit note from GP – added other medical professional in line with Government guidance.	March 2023
3	24 and 26	Additional step added to a process: informal absence meeting before the formal process is triggered. Moved info around right to be accompanied.	Feb 2024