Our Attendance Policy

... working together to reduce sickness absence!

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Our journey: Why the need for change?

- Feedback from managers and staff
- Perception of ‘stick’ (not ‘carrot’)
- Managers do not feel they have discretion
- Horror stories
- Evidence base
- Every step was taken with our unions
Sickness: the key statistical evidence base:

The **25:15:60 rule** (fixed)

The **1 in 6 rule** (fixed)

The **first week rule**: off >7 days = absent for 1-3 months

The **‘computer says no’** principle

There are **few long term absences**
A new policy … so what?

• We took our time and agreed it with our unions
• The policy is brief
• But … it’s not about the policy!
• HR have to stop being the ‘police’
• Self-regulation can work
• Know Your Staff!
‘Know Your Staff’ – our approach to people management

- Outcome focused
- People before process
- No surprises
- Apply discretion
- Clarity, Ownership, Accountability
- Trust, Relationships, Engagement, Empowered

KNOW YOUR STAFF
The ‘know your staff’ principles for managers:

- Have an outcome focus.
- Think about the person before the process.
- Have no surprises.
- Apply discretion appropriately.
- Provide clarity, have ownership and be accountable.
- Adopt an ethos of leading through:
  - Trust, with positive
  - Relationships and
  - Engagement, knowing that you are
  - Empowered to take appropriate decisions.
Attendance Policy Timeline - the essential guide for managers

The ‘know your staff’ principles encourage our managers to:

- Be outcome focused
- Think about the person before the process
- Have no surprises
- Apply discretion appropriately
- Provide clarity, have ownership and take accountability
- Adopt an ethos of leading through trust, with positive relationships and engagement, knowing that they are empowered to take appropriate decisions.

What can you do to keep someone at work?

- Know your staff!
- Use your discretion – you are the manager!
- Be approachable.
- Be flexible.
- Be innovative.
- Would a tailored adjustment help?

Simple, supportive interventions (F.O.C.U.S.)

First week is crucial - Remember the first week rule:
sick >7 days = absent for 1-3 months.
Organise – Plan and prepare for your intervention.
Conversation - Any discussion is likely to be better than none.
Understand their perspective including the reason for the absence.
How are you going to make them feel? How would ‘you’ want to be treated?
Support - How may you assist with a return to work? Be as innovative as possible.

Refer to WHWB as soon as is appropriate but no later than 28 days.
What can you do to keep someone at work?

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• Use your discretion – you are the manager!
• Be approachable
• Be flexible
• Be innovative
• Would a tailored adjustment help?
‘KNOW YOUR STAFF’

Use your discretion – you are the manager!
Are you interested in our £5,000 challenge?

Yes … £5,000 for 15 minutes work?
Simple, supportive interventions in the first week (F.O.C.U.S.)

**First** week is crucial - Remember the first week rule: sick >7 days = absent for 1-3 months.

**Organise** – Plan and prepare for your intervention.

**Conversation** - Any discussion is likely to be better than none.

**Understand** their perspective including the reason for the absence. How are you going to make them feel? How would ‘you’ want to be treated?

**Support** - How may you assist with a return to work - be as innovative as possible?
Put yourself in their shoes

“At the end of the day people won't remember what you said or did …

… they will remember how you made them feel.” (Maya Angelou)
So … what?

• Sickness reduced 11% in 12 months
• That’s up to 40 extra staff available every day
• Fewer staff have 4+ absences (14%)
• More staff have no absence in previous 12 months (37%)
• Fewer staff are being sanctioned
• A genuine partnership with our unions and the catalyst for many other policy changes
Don’t forget …it’s about people!

I’ve been saying for years that “employees are our most valuable asset.”

It turns out that I was wrong. Money is our most valuable asset. Employees are ninth.

I’m afraid to ask what came in eighth. Carbon paper.