

Sickness and Absence Policy

Introduction

Peninsula Ultrasound is committed to providing the commissioned service in a manner that provides high quality and consistent patient care. The wellbeing of employees with high levels of attendance is crucial to the achievement of this.

The policy outlines the procedures for managing short term, intermittent and long term sickness. Unacceptable attendance levels due to sickness could result in formal action being taken in accordance with this policy.

Key principles

1. Regular, punctual attendance is an important aspect of everyone's employment. We ask each employee to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance.
2. As a responsible employer we undertake to provide payments to employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness through the government statutory sick pay scheme (SSP) and also the company sick pay scheme (CSP).
3. We will consider any advice given by an employee's GP on the 'Statement of Fitness for Work'. If the GP advises that an employee 'may be fit for work' we will discuss with the employee how we can help them get back to work through a return to work interview.
4. Where appropriate we will use an occupational health adviser, to help advise the employee and their manager on the best way to improve the employee's health and wellbeing.
5. The company's disciplinary procedures will be used if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or is not thought to be satisfactory.
6. We respect the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness.

Notification of absence

If you are going to be absent from work they should speak to the Operations Manager on the first day of absence within 1 and a half hours of your normal start time in order to sufficient time to organise the required cover. You should also:

- Give a clear indication of the nature of the illness (employees do not have to disclose the nature of their illness if it is of a sensitive nature or may request to speak to another member of the management team or be referred to Occupational Health)
- The date of expected return to work
- If the employee has seen or is planning to see their GP
- Contact arrangements for the employee

It is the employee's responsibility to keep in touch with Peninsula Ultrasound. If the absence continues beyond 2 days, you should make a further phone call to the operations manager on the 3rd day.

If you are unable to make the call personally, arrangements should be made for someone else to call on their behalf.

Failure to notify the operations manager of a sickness absence on the first day and to keep Peninsula Ultrasound updated may result in the period of absence being treated as unpaid leave. This may also result in formal disciplinary action.

Sickness certification

Employees can use self-certification for the first 7 days absence. Thereafter, a 'Statement of Fitness for Work' is required to cover every subsequent day.

If employees have been sick for 4 or more days in a row, an 'Employee's statement of sickness form (SC2)' is required. This is available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-sick-pay-employees-statement-of-sickness-sc2> and will help the employer to decide if they are eligible for SSP.

If absence is likely to be long-term - more than four weeks continuously, there is a shared responsibility for the Company and the employee to maintain contact at agreed intervals.

A medical certificate is required if the absence is for a period of 8 or more consecutive days including weekends and bank holidays. This is usually provided free of charge by a GP. Peninsula Ultrasound reserves the right to require employees to provide a medical certificate for periods of fewer than 8 days. In this instance, any charges made by the GP/medical practitioner will be the employee's responsibility.

Medical certificates should be received by the operations manager by the 11th day of absence. Failure to obtain or send a medical certificate could result in the payment of salary being withdrawn.

Sick Pay

Subject to meeting the reporting and certification requirements set out in this policy, you may be eligible for statutory sick pay (SSP) from the 4th day of your sickness absence.

Provided you are eligible, Peninsula Ultrasound has a duty to pay Statutory Sick pay (SSP) for up to 28 weeks.

Peninsula Ultrasound may, at its discretion, pay company sick pay (CSP) from the 8th day of your sickness absence. Any payments of CSP will include the SSP which is set nationally and is dependent upon on your normal weekly earnings.

In normal circumstances, company sick pay is based on the following:

Length of service	Maximum period of half normal salary payments (CSP) in any 12 month period	Maximum Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) payable by Peninsula Ultrasound
Up to 6 months	Nil	28 weeks
6 months – 2 years	3 weeks	28 weeks
2 years onwards	4 weeks	28 weeks

Peninsula Ultrasound will refuse or terminate payments where, in its opinion, the sickness, injury or prolongation of absence is attributable to negligence or misconduct on the part of the employee.

Return to Work

On return to work, the self-certification form should be completed and passed on to the HR manager for authorisation.

After any absence due to sickness, the HR manager or identified member of the management team, will carry out a 'return to work' interview. The type of 'return to work' interview will depend on the nature and duration of the sickness absence and the employee's overall sickness record.

The interview discussion will be aimed at:

- updating the employee on developments in the company during their absence
- establish the support required upon the employee's return to work

Sickness and holiday entitlement

Holiday entitlement will accrue whilst an employee is on sick leave. An employee will be entitled to use their holiday entitlement upon their return from sick leave, subject to the usual approval system.

Should sickness prevent you from going on holiday or you are ill whilst on holiday, a doctor's certificate will be required for the period of time the employee wishes to have reinstated. Where an employee is abroad, the equivalent medical certification relevant to the country will be required. In this instance, any charges made by the GP/medical practitioner will be the employee's responsibility.

Conduct during sickness absence

When you are absent due to sickness, you are expected to work towards a return to fitness and to work. Unless advised by the employee's GP or medical/health specialist Peninsula Ultrasound would not normally expect any employee absent because of sickness to:

- participate in any activities which are in any way inconsistent with sickness or which might aggravate the sickness and thus delay a return to work
- undertake any other paid or unpaid work

Prolonged or frequent sickness

Peninsula Ultrasound carefully monitors all sickness absence. Where there is either prolonged sickness or frequent short-term absence, we will work with the employee to ensure that the employee returns to work as soon as it is medically safe to do so. Each case will be treated on an individual basis to determine the most appropriate course of action and support. This may include:

- support from Occupational Health
- a request to the employee's GP for a medical report
- regular keeping in touch meetings to review progress and identify additional support required
- regular communication about progress from the employee during their absence
- certification of all absences

Triggers

Short-term absence is any period of sickness less than 28 days.

Long-term sickness is any period of sickness longer than 28 days.

A review of your absence and health may occur at the following trigger points.

- 3 absences in a rolling 3 month period
- 5 absences in a rolling 12 month period
- a total of 11 days or more in any rolling 12 month period
- apparent patterns or trend in your absence
- lack of appropriate certification for absences that require it

For short term absence, reaching a trigger point would prompt a discussion with manager and employee about the reasons for the absence and what action might be taken to improve wellbeing and attendance.

In respect of long-term absence, a home visit may be arranged or Peninsula Ultrasound may request a formal prognosis from an occupational health specialist and/or the employee's GP.

If employees do not co-operate with any reasonable request which Peninsula Ultrasound makes in relation to sickness absence, sick pay may be withheld or steps to end the employment may be taken.