

Absence Management Policy

Customer
Focus

Respect

Communication

Integrity



www.clochhousing.org.uk



Attendance & Absence Management

1. Introduction

Cloch H.A. recognises that on occasions it may be necessary for staff to be absent from work. However, we also have a duty to provide a reliable service to our customers and we need to ensure that we help you maintain the highest possible level of attendance.

This policy is designed to help all employees achieve good attendance and to ensure that a consistent and fair approach in managing attendance is adopted throughout the organisation.

This policy and the guidelines it contains are not intended to replace other policies, such as discipline & grievance, dignity at work, health & safety, managing stress, etc.

2. Aims of the Policy

- To manage absence in a way that reflects genuine concern for staff and to develop a positive attitude towards attendance.
- To set clear expectations for standards of attendance that we require from our staff
- To identify the causes of absence and where possible, develop a programme of preventative measures.
- To ensure training and support is available to those involved in the process.

3. Principles

The organisation requires good attendance from all staff in order to meet its objectives.

- If your level of attendance is unsatisfactory then you will be informed what improvement is required and possible consequences of failure to do so (which may include disciplinary action, including dismissal).
- The absence management process is not directly concerned with reasons for absence but with number of periods of absence/ days absent.
- If you have an underlying medical condition causing absence(s), then we will make efforts to put reasonable adjustments in place, where possible.
- Managers will conduct "return to work" interviews within the spirit of this policy.
- You need to adhere strictly to our absence reporting procedures. Failure to do so may result in a disciplinary action and withholding of the organisation sick pay.
- Managers will maintain accurate, up-to-date attendance records for all staff.
- We will monitor short and long term absences. Short absence is anything from 1 to 14 calendar days, long term absence is anything above 14 calendar days.
- We will monitor and manage unplanned absences. These are absences where you are not ill, you have not booked holiday, flexi or TOIL and you have not come in to work.

4. Absence Monitoring

A fundamental feature of good attendance management is the accurate and timely recording of all absences. This is essential for processing the requirements of the statutory and occupational sick pay arrangements and the process of managing absence. Good information allows patterns to be identified and can be an early indication of underlying health problems. The sooner these problems are identified and

acted upon – the more likely a successful conclusion for both you and us can be achieved.

Accurate recording is also an essential element in satisfying potential concerns over the fairness of any actions taken by the line managers. A manager must inform the Corporate Services Team of the absence on the first day of the absence and subsequently on the first day of any extension to the absence and it is the Corporate Services team duty to record in the staff sickness database and time management system.

5. Absence Management

This refers to dealing with unacceptable levels of absenteeism, with no reference to reasons for absence or medical condition. Cloch Housing Association will aim to secure better attendance by way of support and encouragement to the employee concerned in the first instance.

We will aim to assist you in securing a good attendance record. This will involve maintaining good records, ensuring return to work interview and helping investigate and address any identified underlying causes of absence.

Where this fails to secure a required improvement, we will invoke the terms of the disciplinary procedure. Unsatisfactory attendance reviews can result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

If at any stage during this process it becomes apparent that an underlying health issue is involved, medical information will be sought, and an appropriate action will follow.

Absence periods which are considered to be because of a protected equality status will be considered under the Equalities legislation, in terms of reasonable adjustments and other measures and considerations.

The Association will adopt a sympathetic approach to staff suffering from a long-term and/or chronic health problem. If you find yourself in such a position you should be confident that your manager will react in a supportive fashion when approached.

The following points will always be considered in relation to long-term absence:

- The nature of the illness and any contributing factors
- The likely duration and/or frequency of your absence(s)
- Any actions that can be taken by you
- Any adjustments that we could make
- Any possible redeployment opportunities
- The nature of the duties in relation to your health problems
- Our business needs and the impact that your absence is having upon these
- Your entitlement to sick pay

Unplanned absence not related to sickness will also count in Absence Management and will be monitored through the Return to Work Form. These relate to staff being unable to come to work or just not coming in to work on a day they should be in work. We will

monitor unplanned absences to see if there are underlying causes to the absence, such as child care issues or simply being out late before coming in to work the next day.

6. Return to Work

A thorough return to work will be carried out after every period of unplanned absence. This will be done by your line manager (or another manager if he/she is not available) on the first day of your return to work. The Return to Work forms will be kept in your electronic personal file and uploaded onto the Kelio system for you to access. The return to work interview forms contain confidential information and may only be viewed by authorised personnel, normally your line manager or any other manager who deals with the case and the relevant Corporate Services Staff.

If a medical professional makes suggestions for any adjustments, these will be discussed, with your consent prior to your return to work or definitely at a return to work interview, along with any suggestions that you or we may also have made. Although we are not bound by the doctor's suggestions, we will make all possible efforts to accommodate your prompt return and a good attendance, if possible. If we agree any adjustments, we will also set time scales and reviews.

The number of days you were absent will be recorded in Kelio by the Corporate Services staff. Fit Notes shall also be held in your electronic personnel folder and uploaded onto your Kelio record.

Having maintained absence records, managers will be expected to provide and discuss quarterly aggregated statistics at Leadership Team meetings and at departmental meetings with staff, if appropriate. The statistics reported are on a company or team basis and will not refer or identify any individual. The statistics reported are:

- Total days absence in a quarter
- Total No. of Incidents in a quarter
- Total count of incidents by type of absence
- Total cost of absence in a quarter
- The average number of days per incident

These statistics are reported to the Finance & Corporate Services Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis.

7. Dishonest Absence

If you are found to falsify or exaggerate your absence, this will be treated as gross misconduct. An investigation will be carried out in accordance with Cloch H.A.'s disciplinary procedure and disciplinary action may be instigated, including dismissal or future withdrawal of the company sick pay.

8. Other Provisions

9.1 Absence and holidays

If you are on annual leave and fall sick or have an accident, we may apply a sick leave instead if we believe that your illness/accident has stopped you from proceeding with

your planned holidays. We will however require a medical certificate to confirm your illness.

If you are on sick leave and want to go on holiday, you should approach your line manager in the first instance. You may be asked to use days from your annual leave entitlement or your flexi/TOIL instead of sick days. If you go on holiday during sick leave without notification and we investigate, depending on the outcome, the disciplinary procedure may be instigated.

9.2 **Doctor/hospital/dental appointments**

Doctor, hospital and dental appointments should be arranged out with working hours. If it is not possible, you should request time off from your line manager. Arrangements could include using annual leave, Flexi, TOIL or unpaid leave. Paid time off will be considered by the Director in exceptional circumstances only.

9.3 **Conduct whilst off sick**

When on sick leave, you are still bound by your contract of employment with us and all our policies including the Code of Conduct. We also expect that you do not participate in activities that would be at odds with your medical condition. Any breach in respect of this will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. This includes conduct on social networking sites and any other publicly made remarks regarding Cloch H.A., its customers, work colleagues, partners and anyone else who is connected with us.

9.4 **Cosmetic procedures**

Absence due to cosmetic procedures (whether carried out in the UK or abroad) will not fall under the sick leave or pay unless it is recommended by health professionals. Employees should, therefore, request time off and agree with their line manager how the absence will be processed, e.g. annual leave or unpaid leave.

9.5 **IVF treatment**

Absences relating to IVF treatment will not be processed as sick leave or pay. The same applies to a partner of a person that is undergoing such treatment. Instead, you should discuss with your line manager how time off for the treatment could be accommodated, e.g. annual leave, flexi time or unpaid leave. Absences relating to IVF treatment will also not be treated as relating to pregnancy unless the employee actually falls pregnant.

9.6 **Stress management**

If are off sick with stress, your manager will endeavour to find out the underlying cause so that an appropriate action could be taken (if any) and in particular to determine whether conditions at work cause or contribute to stress and whether something could be done to help the situation. If the absence is certified by a doctor, your manager will ask your doctor to clarify the underlying cause for stress. If the absence for stress is longer than 4 weeks or causes 3 shorter absences in a rolling 6 month period, your manager, on your return to work, will carry out a stress risk assessment within 1 week of the return.

9.7 Good Attendance Rewards

At the end of the Financial Year, any member of staff who has no sick days in the financial year and no unplanned absences, will be recognised for their good attendance and awarded 3 ½ hours TOIL that can be taken during the next financial year (ie. the following 12 months) and which can be taken as a whole or in smaller chunks.

9.8 Breastfeeding

Cloch H.A. will provide facilities for new mothers to rest and, if applicable, express milk (“a new mother” means a worker who has given birth within the previous 6 months or who is breastfeeding). The staff room would be utilised in this instance having access to a fridge for storing expressed milk, access to nearby sanitary provisions and comfortable seating.

9.9 Pre-Retirement

The Association will give assistance to employees who are contemplating retirement or approaching retirement age. This will consist of, but not solely be, giving time to attend any training session or workshop on “retirement/pre-retirement”. We would hope that any workshop would consist of the issues that retirees may need to consider; for example:-

- How to maximise your post-retirement income;
- Wellbeing and good mental health;
- Volunteering opportunities;
- How to keep on working (but on your terms).

Appendix 1: Absence Reporting Procedures

(see appendix 2 at end of Policy for workflow of procedure)

Reporting

If you cannot come to work, either due to illness or for any other reason, you must tell your line manager (or if not available, another manager). You should do this before you are due to start your shift and if not possible, within one hour of your starting time. You should give brief details of your reasons for absence and your expected return to work date.

Always endeavour to talk directly with your manager, rather than ask a family member or friend to contact us on your behalf. It would only be in exceptional circumstances where you should not contact us yourself. The manager will fill in a Notification of Absence Record and return this to Corporate Services team. This will be kept in your electronic personnel file and uploaded onto your Kelio record. If the absence is due to illness, you must fill in a self-certification form on your return (the Return to Work form), whether or not you are entitled to sickness allowances and whatever the length or reason for absence.

Every unplanned absence will be followed with a Return to Work Interview (RTWI).

Fit Notes

If you are off due to illness or injury for more than seven consecutive calendar days, you must provide a fit note as soon as possible and no later than 10 calendar days after the start of the absence dated back to the 8th day of the absence or before.

If the Doctor ticks the 'may be fit for work' box, you will meet with your line manager to discuss any adjustments suggested. Although employers are not obliged to follow the doctor's advice, we will do our best to help you return to work and keep a good attendance record. However, if we cannot agree about the adjustments you will remain off sick. If we agree a phased return to work, the days you are still off sick within the agreed period will count as one period of absence, although you may also want to use annual leave to supplement the return to work rather than sick leave and this should be discussed with your manager.

Keeping in Touch

You are responsible for letting your manager know the reasons for any absence and when you expect to return to work. In exceptional circumstances, if you cannot get to a phone on day one of your absence, you should make sure that someone else calls on your behalf. After this, you should contact your line manager as soon as you can and maintain regular contact by calling daily during the first week of your absence (unless otherwise agreed with your line manager) and weekly thereafter.

Where you fail to keep in contact as outlined above, we will initiate and maintain contact with you. This may require us to phone you at your house or if we cannot contact you this way, write to you. This is regardless of the length of time of your Fit Note.

We expect that you let us know the following information: the reason for your absence, when you expect to return to work and your contact details. We are entitled to request this information and therefore, if you do not give it to us, we will contact you to find it out.

The Keep in Touch procedure also allows you to keep in touch with work. Returning to work after a prolonged period of absence can be difficult, so by maintaining basic contact, this helps the return to feel less daunting.

Failure to Comply

Where you do not follow reporting, certification, or keeping-in-touch arrangements we may withhold the company sick pay. Please refer to section A4, section of 1 of EVH Terms & Conditions. Failure to comply with these requirements may also lead to a disciplinary action against you in accordance with Cloch H.A.'s disciplinary procedure. Similarly, if we suspect that you have falsified your absence or have deliberately misled us, we will take a disciplinary action against you. In serious and/or repeated cases, it may lead to dismissal.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

You are entitled to SSP irrespective of your entitlement to company sick pay. The scale of entitlement to SSP is reviewed by the Government, normally at the beginning of each tax year. It is not paid for the first three days of absence and runs for 28 weeks after that.

If you are no longer entitled to SSP, you may be entitled to an incapacity benefit. You can enquire about this at your local Department of Work & Pensions. We will tell you if you are not entitled to SSP and send you the appropriate government form, but it is then your responsibility to claim any other State Benefit which you may be entitled to.

Company Sick Pay

All employees can benefit from this scheme as long as their absence from work is due to their own sickness or injury and they keep to the requirements of section A4. However, the scheme will not apply if:

- they go off sick while taking part in a stoppage of work due to a trade dispute at their place of work;
- they go sick while on maternity leave
- on the first day of sickness they have already used up their sickness allowance entitlement in the previous 12 months; or
- the sickness or injury arises out of or in the course of following another occupation or sport as a profession.

You must also not take any other paid work while receiving sickness allowance. You may ask for unpaid leave and we will consider if we are able to accommodate this. However, if you do not tell us about these instances, we may take disciplinary action, which may lead to your dismissal.

Scale of allowances

In any one period of 52 weeks, we will pay a sickness allowance in line with the following scale.

Continuous service at the date sickness starts	Full allowance paid for:	Half allowance paid for:
Up to 1 year	5 weeks	5 weeks
Over 1 and under 2 years	9 weeks	9 weeks
Over 2 and under 3 years	18 weeks	18 weeks
Over 3 and under 5 years	22 weeks	22 weeks
Over 5 years	26 weeks	26 weeks

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is not a benefit of employment. It is quite different to the sickness allowances mentioned here, and we pay it on behalf of the Government.

The scale of entitlement to SSP is published by the Government and normally changes at the beginning of each tax year.

If you are not entitled to SSP, we will tell you by sending you the appropriate government form. It is then your responsibility to claim any other State Benefit which you may be entitled to.

Working out sickness allowances

Your allowance is worked out based on your current rate of basic pay. (See below.) We refer to this as your 'normal pay'.

- The full allowance, referred to above, equals your normal pay, and includes any Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) which you may be entitled to.
- The half allowance referred to above, equals half your normal pay plus SSP (if you have any left). However, you cannot receive more than your normal full pay.
- In working out the level and period of allowance still due, we will review the previous 12 months before the start of your current sick leave. We will add up all periods of sick leave. We will then take this from the full allowance entitlement first and then any balance from the half allowance entitlement. Anything left will be what you are still entitled to.
- We will pay you the sickness allowance according to your basic contractual hours (not including overtime).
- For the purposes of working out SSP, qualifying days are treated as Sunday to Saturday. Before paying SSP you must be unable to work for at least the first four days in a row of a spell of sickness.
- If you cannot come into work as a result of coming into contact with a notifiable infectious disease (that is reportable to RIDDOR in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act), you should tell us. You will then receive your full pay sickness allowance. We will not take the period of absence from your normal entitlement.
- If you return to work on a phased basis, we will only pay the salary for the hours and days actually worked. The days and hours that you are still off sick will entitle you to SSP and the occupational sick pay you are eligible to and

this will be taken off your entitlement. Or, you can ask to take it from your annual leave, time off in lieu or unpaid leave instead.

We work out your occupational sick pay using your basic pay. We will only consider overtime if this is stated in your employment contract. For further details, See Section A5 of EVH Terms & Conditions.

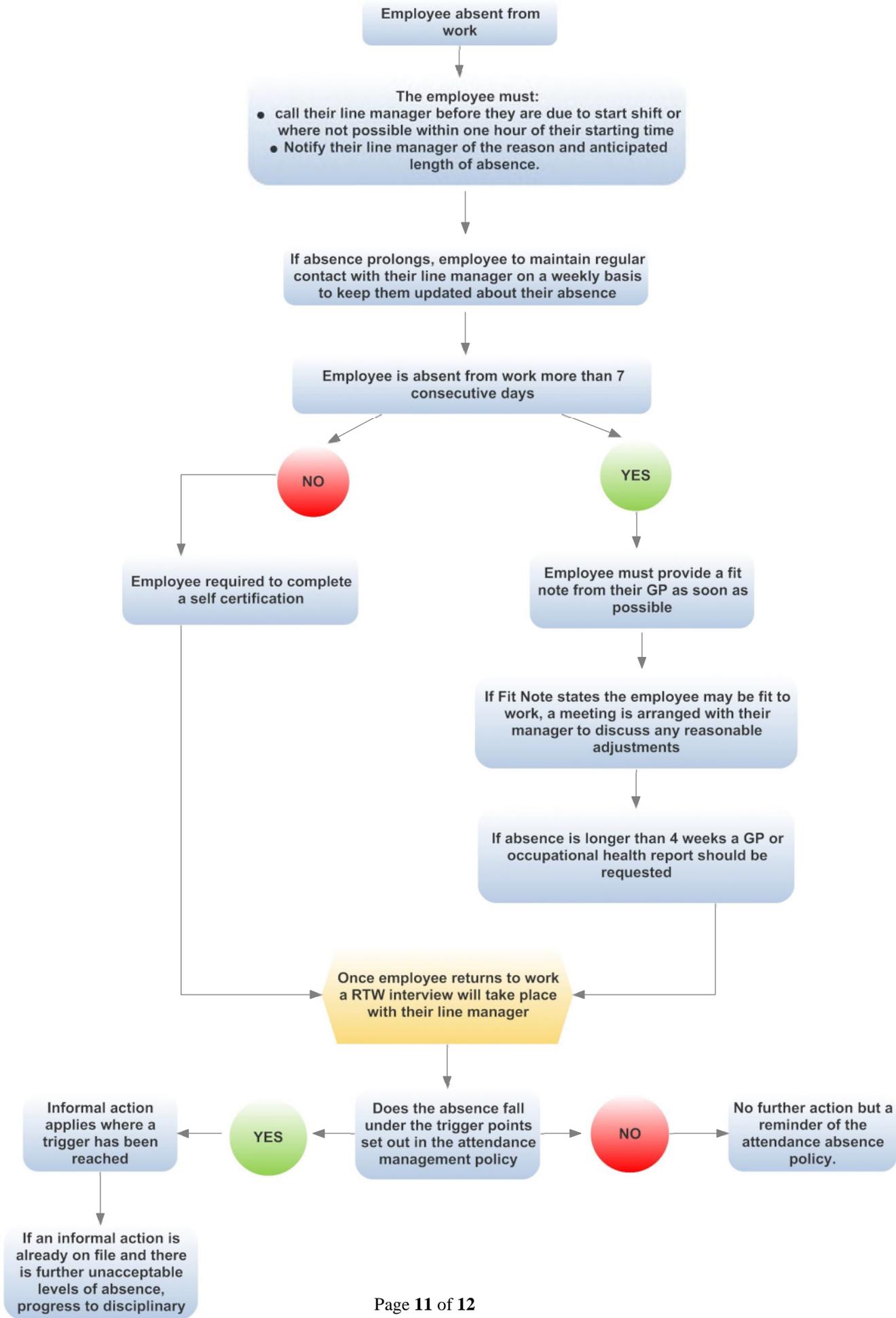
Attendance review triggers

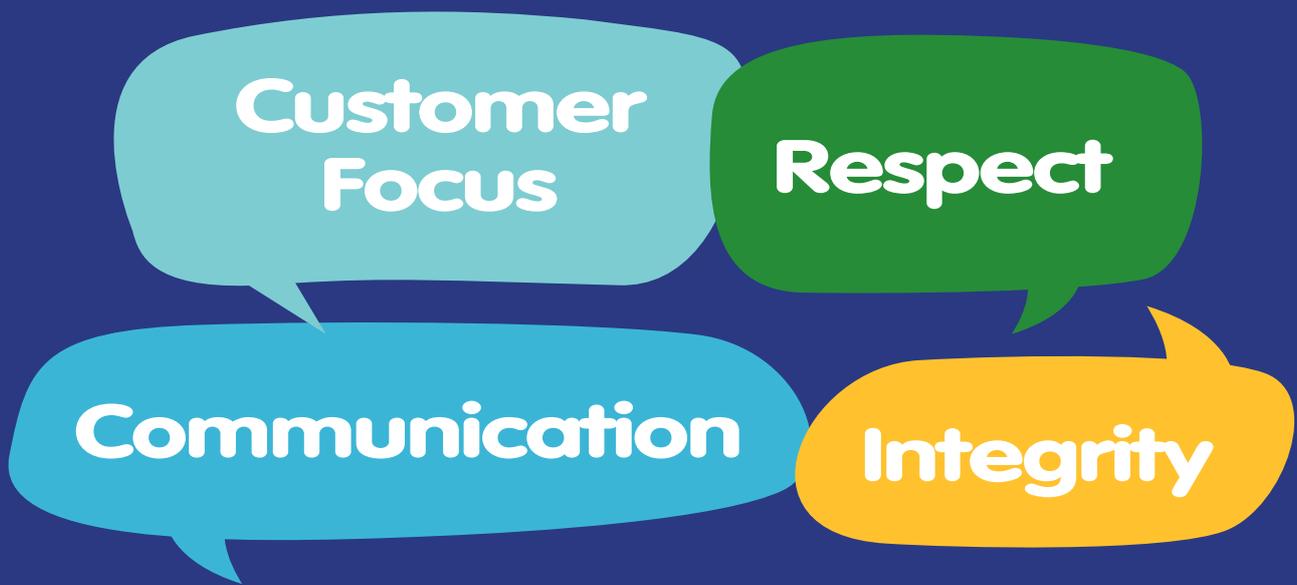
Three unplanned absences in a 6-month rolling period or 4 unplanned absences in a year will lead to an interview with your Line Manager to discuss any underlying issues. This will be identified with you at your Return to Work Interview and arranged as soon as possible after this, but no later than 5 working days.

The aim of the interviews will be to investigate what might be the underlying issues to your absences and try to identify any help the Association can offer to help you resolve the issues. At that interview recommended actions may be agreed to help alleviate the issue. These will be reviewed after a fortnight and on a regular interval thereafter.

If unplanned absences continue the pattern of three unplanned absences in a 6-month rolling period, there is a strong likelihood that this could lead to disciplinary action, particularly if the recommended actions are not being acted on. The Disciplinary Procedure is outlined in Section 13 of EVH Terms & Conditions.

Appendix 2: Absent from Work Workflow





CLOCH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD	
Policy Name	Absence Management
Policy Category	Staffing
Policy Number	001
Date Adopted	01/12/2015
This Review	12/02/2019
Next Review	February 2022
Equalities Impact Assessment Required	
Link to other policies	Conditions of Service Code of Conduct EVH Terms and Conditions
Consultation	
Need for Procedure	