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## Inside Connections Solutions CIC

### CONTROLLING ABSENCE POLICY

#### Section 1

##### POLICY

1. It is recognised by Inside Connections Solutions CIC that from time to time staff may require to be absent from their place of work due to illness. The length of time lost by employees through illness must however be monitored to ensure that each member of staff is able to do their job, effectively and without putting themselves or others at risk. It is not the intention of Inside Connections Solutions CIC to penalise the genuinely sick, however it must be recognised that an employee who is medically unfit to carry out his/her contractual duties may not be able continue in that employment.
2. Employees who become aware that they have an illness problem are encouraged to inform their supervisor / manager at the earliest opportunity. All such information will be confidential and dealt with as compassionately as possible.
3. Inside Connections Solutions CIC will consider episodes of sickness absence on an individual basis and ensure the provision of appropriate support, advice and reasonable adjustments where appropriate. However, it is recognised that in some cases, patterns / levels of absence will fall below acceptable standards and formal management action will be required.

#### Section 2

##### SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING AND CERTIFICATION:

###### Instructions to Employees

On the **first** day of absence:

4. If you are prevented by sickness or accident from reporting for duty, you must telephone your supervisor / manager as soon as possible, but no later than 9am to advise them that you are going to be absent from work that day. During this phone call the reason for and, if possible, the anticipated duration of, your absence should be given.
5. It is expected that you make this telephone call personally, but if you are unable due to incapacity, please ask someone to call on your behalf. An email or text message is not acceptable unless in exceptional circumstances and must be followed up with a phone call as soon as practicable.
6. Inside Connections Solutions CIC reserves the right for your supervisor / manager to call you during your sickness absence to check on your welfare or to query any work that needs to be carried out in your absence.
7. If you don't report for work, and do not respond to calls from your supervisor / manager, they will contact your designated emergency contact. You will also receive a letter confirming your absence as unauthorised which may result in a failure to receive any sick pay. Continued unauthorised absence will be classed as gross misconduct and will be dealt with under the Company disciplinary procedures.

On the **second and following** days of absence:

8. If you are unsure on a day-to-day basis when you will be returning to work, you must inform your supervisor / manager on a daily basis of your continuing absence, following the above procedure.

9. You do not need to inform your supervisor / manager on a daily basis if your absences is covered by a doctor's Certificate.

If you are absent for **over seven** days:

10. You must contact your doctor to receive a Fit for Work Certificate which will confirm that for a specified period, you are either 'not fit for work' or 'may be fit for work'. If this certificate states you 'may be fit for work', your supervisor / manager will discuss any changes or adjustments with you that might help you to return to work.
11. Your Fit for Work Certificate should be sent to your supervisor / manager as soon after the eighth day of absence as possible.
12. If absence continues, you must send your supervisor / manager an updated Fit for Work Certificate on, or before, the expiry of the previous one.

### **Sickness during Annual Leave**

13. If you are sick for 4 working days or more whilst on annual leave you should make your line manager aware at the time if it is practical to do this. These days will be credited to you as annual leave, provided you supply a fit note from your GP to cover the period of sickness. This period of sickness will be paid in line with our normal sick pay arrangements.

## **Section 3**

### **OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURAL STAGES FOR DEALING WITH PERSISTENT ABSENCES**

14. On return from absence all employees must be interviewed by their immediate line manager. At this interview the employee and the line manager must complete a 'Return to Work Interview' form agreeing the reason for the absence, the period of absence and, where appropriate, what course of action is required as a result of the absence. This form must be signed by both parties before being forwarded to the employees personnel file. This form also incorporates a sickness self-certification form which covers absences of 7 days or less.

#### **Stage 1**

15. In situations where an employee's sickness record is giving some cause for concern, then the employee's Line Manager will discuss those concerns with the employee, providing support and counselling where appropriate. It is essential that any message conveyed in this manner is clear and unambiguous.

#### **Stage 2**

16. If there is no obvious improvement in the health of the employee or there are signs of patterns emerging in an employee's absence (e.g. taking regular Mondays off sick) then the line manager will arrange to meet the employee to 'formally' review the employee's case. At this formal stage, the employee must be offered the opportunity for appropriate representation by a work colleague or trade union official.
17. The employee must be given the outcome of this meeting in writing and where appropriate they must be given notice that their level of absence is unacceptable and a period of time to improve.

#### **Stage 3**

18. If the employee fails to improve in the given time scale then a formal second Review Meeting must be undertaken by the manager (or if possible a more senior manager). Again, the employee must be offered the opportunity for appropriate representation by a work colleague or trade union official at this meeting.

19. In order to obtain a medical opinion on the employee's health prior to the meeting the employee may be asked to attend for an Occupational Health / Company Approved Doctor appointment, or be asked to authorise a medical report from his / her GP. The employee will be given a copy of any medical reports obtained. Where appropriate the employee will be given notice that their level of absence is unacceptable and that they are being given a period of time during which to reduce their level of absence. The employee must also be informed at this stage that any further absences may result in their employment being terminated.

#### **Stage 4**

20. If there is still no improvement within the laid down time scale a review will be held with the appropriate Senior Manager / Director in the chair. The employee must be offered the opportunity for appropriate representation at this meeting. The Director / Manager will review all the available evidence including any medical reports.
21. If there are no special circumstances the employee will be dismissed on the grounds of capability because of their inability to meet the acceptable standards of attendance required by Inside Connections Solutions CIC.

### **Section 4**

#### **APPEALS**

22. Every employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of any formal review stage of the absence procedure. The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:
  - that the Policy had not been followed correctly.
  - that the resulting action was inappropriate.
  - that the need for action was not warranted.

#### **Appeals against the formal stages of this Procedure**

23. An appeal should be put in writing to the appropriate Director / Senior Manager / Owner. The letter of appeal may be constructed by the employee or their representative. The letter should contain the grounds for appeal and should be lodged within 7 days of receipt of the issue of a formal letter. An appeal hearing should be arranged within 7 days of receipt of the appeal letter. An appeal against Dismissal will be considered in the same way, but should be heard by the owner / a Director / senior manager who, if possible, has not previously been involved in the case.

## Section 5

### PROCEDURES CHECK LIST

#### Stage 1

##### Return to Work Interview

This is an informal part of the Procedure, however in order to give the process credibility the following rules should be followed:

- Every employee should complete a 'Return to work interview' form with their immediate line manager.
- Interviews should be carried out in an area where there will be no interruptions and where both parties may feel at ease.
- The employee should always be informed of the reason for the meeting.
- The meeting should be prefaced by an indication of concern for the employee as well as the need for the Manager to be aware of the health of his/her employees.
- The employee should be encouraged to discuss any problems they may be having with their health and to actively contribute to the solution to the problem.
- Any apparent problem or patterns of absence should be brought to the employee's attention.
- All relevant absence documentation **must** be recorded on the employees personnel file.

##### Counselling

- As the first step in procedure it is vital that the message conveyed is clear and unambiguous.
- Prior to counselling, full details of the employee's absence record along with reasons should be available.
- The employee should be made aware of the date and location of the Meeting and the reasons for it.
- The employee should be given the opportunity to explain absence records and present any evidence required.
- If there are medical problems it may be necessary to adjourn the Meeting for medical advice.
- The Manager will advise the employee of the outcome of the meeting and where appropriate of the need for improvement of their current absence level. Written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting will be given to the employee and a copy recorded on their personnel files.

**Stage 2**

- Prior to calling a hearing, full details of absence record along with reasons should be made available to all participants.
- The employee should be made aware of the date and location of the Review and the reasons for it.
- In addition, they should be informed of the right to be represented at the Review.
- The employee should be given the opportunity to explain absence records and present any evidence required.
- If there are medical problems it may be necessary to adjourn the Meeting for medical advice.
- The Manager should set out clearly the improvements expected and the time scale over which these improvements must be achieved.
- The employee should be informed in writing of the requirements and the time scale and advised that the warning is to be recorded on his record.
- Any warning letter should be copied to the Trade Union Representative if present at the hearing. The employee must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision.
- Any warnings issued will remain on the record for 12 months.

**Stage 3**

- If there has been no improvement in the absence record in the period set at the first Review or there has been a further breach of policy during the lifetime of a written warning then the employee must be informed and asked to attend a Second Review. In addition, they should be informed of the right to be represented at the Review.
- Medical reports must be sought prior to the date of the Meeting and results made available to both parties.
- The employee should be given the right to present any evidence in mitigation.
- The employee should be informed of the need to improve their record and the possibility of dismissal if they do not do so. The employee must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision. (see Appeals). This should be confirmed in writing to the employee and held on their personnel file for 18 months.

**Stage 4**

- The employee must be given full details of the case and the possible consequences prior to attendance. The employee must also be informed of their right to representation at this meeting.
- All medical evidence should be taken and considered before a final decision is taken.
- If the decision is taken to dismiss the employee then this should be done by giving full entitlement to notice (even if sick pay is exhausted).
- The employee must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision. (see appeals).

## Inside Connections Solutions CIC

### RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW FORM (incorporating Sickness Self-Certificate Form)

If you're off work for seven days or less please complete this form. In addition, if you have been sick for more than 7 days you must also provide a fit note from your doctor. Please note failure to comply with this might mean you will lose any entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay.

Name	
Designation	
Department	
First Day of Absence	
Last Day of Absence	
Total number of days of sickness	
Total number of days off work	
Is absence due to an injury at work? YES/ NO	
Have you seen a doctor? YES/ NO	
Reason for absence (Please give a brief description of the illness or other reason for absence)	
Action taken (please give a brief description of any action taken to date)	
Any proposed courses of action	
I understand that if I knowingly provide inaccurate or false information regarding my absence it may result in disciplinary action	
Employees Signature	Date
Managers Signature	Date