

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

Policy Adopted	January 2022
Last Reviewed	October 2024
Next Review Due	October 2027

Date	Reviewed by	Approved by	Date Accepted by Trustees
January 2022	Operations Manager	Policy Review Committee	31/01/2022
September 2024	Steve Judge Helen Edwards	Policy Review Committee	15/10/2024

1. PURPOSE

Triple C (Liverpool), hereafter referred to as Triple C, recognises that some illness is unavoidable and generally not a cause for concern. Continued high absence, however, can put colleagues and the service we provide under strain and impact negatively on staff morale. This policy is intended to make clear our response to managing sickness absence, confirm our commitment to supporting staff, improving health, wellbeing and attendance and reducing absence.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of Triple C.

1) Reporting absence from work

- a) If you are absent from work on account of sickness or injury, you or someone on your behalf should inform the Operations Manager by telephone or text of the reason for your absence as soon as possible but no later than 10am on the morning of the first day of absence. If you are unable to contact the Operations Manager, then ensure you speak with the Chair of Trustees. Do not leave a message with a colleague. E-mails are not acceptable for reporting your absence as they may not be accessed or received on time.
- b) You will be required to outline the nature of your absence and give the estimated length of time that you will be away from work when you report your absence. We will normally expect you to notify us personally, but if this is not possible and notification is made by someone else (for example a family member) on your behalf then you should provide confirmation of this information as soon as possible.
- c) If you are not able to return to work on the day that you estimated then you are required to contact the Operations Manager as above, before 10am, to advise of the reason for your continuing absence and when you anticipate returning to work.
- d) Absence not notified in accordance with approved regulations will constitute unauthorised absence, which may result in loss of sick pay and possibly disciplinary action, unless sufficient information is submitted to and approved by the Operations Manager.
- e) In respect of absence lasting seven or fewer calendar days, you need not produce a doctor's fit note unless you are specifically requested to do so. However, the operations manager will ask employees to complete Triple C's self-certification form immediately upon return to work after such absence.
- f) In respect of absence lasting more than seven calendar days, you **must** on the seventh calendar day of absence provide a doctors fit note stating the reason for absence and thereafter provide a note in advance to cover any subsequent period of absence.
- g) These must be sent to the Operations Manager when issued. Once you reach 28 days absence this is considered to be long term sick leave.

2) Contact with employees during sick leave

- a) If you are absent on long term (after 28 days) sick leave, then it is expected that you will keep Triple C updated regularly as to your progress. The Operations Manager will discuss with you the form this communication will take.

3) Sickness during Annual Leave

- a) At the discretion of the Operations Manager, usually up to 20% of your statutory holiday entitlement (see Annual Leave Policy) that is not used because of illness can be carried over into the next leave year. This can be discussed at your return-to-work meeting.

4) Return to Work Meeting

- a) Following any period of sick leave, you will have an informal meeting with the Operations Manager to understand the nature of your absence, and to ensure you are fit and well to safely resume your duties. The meeting will take place within the first three days back in work where possible. A discreet record of the meeting will be kept in the employee's confidential file.

5) Management of Sickness Absence

- a) Sickness and injury absence will be monitored purely for management of sickness and injury absence and will not be used in other decisions taken by Triple C such as redundancies.
- b) Sickness Absence Indicators that will trigger further action include:
 - A total of absences arising from 3 periods of absence within a 6-month period or 6 periods of absence within a 12 month period. Absence here is defined as periods of either short-term or long-term sickness.
 - Unacceptable patterns, e.g. regular Friday or Monday absences, or before or after Bank Holidays or before or after booked annual leave etc.
 - Unacceptable yearly patterns, e.g. same week each year
 - Notification procedure not followed correctly
 - A continuous absence of 4 weeks or more
- c) In any of the above situations, the Operations Manager will discuss their concerns with you, closely monitor the absences and maintain regular contact with you. These discussions will initially be held at an informal level.
- d) In the event you are unable to undertake your role due to long term sickness we will treat your case in a sympathetic and supportive way. We do, however, need to balance the effects of your absence on the work we undertake.
- e) If the indicator which has been identified does not improve, within an agreed timeframe, following informal discussions between you and the Operations Manager, then a formal review meeting will be held with the Operations Manager and a Trustee. At this meeting, a review period will be determined during which time absence will continue to be monitored, and referral to an independent medical adviser may be considered.
- f) If following this interview there is still no improvement, then a decision may be made to invoke the disciplinary procedure or consider your capability to perform your role and steps may be made to terminate your employment.

- g) Triple C reserves the right to request medical reports as to the condition of an individual at any time, in order to formulate the most appropriate response. Your permission will be sought prior to requesting any medical reports.
- h) We may need to seek advice about your likelihood of returning to work, from your GP or Occupational Health Specialist, and we will also consider various options, such as a phased return to work, redeployment to other roles, or part-time working or job-share. As a last resort, it may be necessary to terminate your employment. This will be done with due contractual notice and the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees.
- i) Any appeal made will be discussed at a hearing, at which the employee has the right to be represented. The hearing will consider relevant medical evidence and evidence of the consequences of further absence.
- j) The final decision on the matter rests with the Board of Trustees. For information as to appeals, please refer to the grievance procedure of Triple C.
- k) Triple C will not, as a matter of course, alert you regarding the number of incidents of sick leave which have occurred. However, at a return to work interview, your absences over the preceding 12 months will be discussed with you. You may request this information from the Operations Manager at any time.

6) Disability/Chronic Illness

Triple C takes an understanding approach if you have additional needs and recognises that, from time to time, there may be special considerations which need to be taken into account. These considerations may include staff who:

- have a disability
- have been diagnosed with a long-term chronic illness or disease
- are undergoing a long-term course of treatment for a chronic condition/illness

Each case will be given careful consideration by the Operations Manager and the Chair of Trustees, prior to making any agreement with the staff member.