

VIAMED Ltd

Company Personnel Manual

CPM 03 Absence Due to Sickness

Effective date: 27 July 2026

Review frequency: Annual, or following any relevant legislative change

1. Purpose

This policy explains the procedure employees must follow when they are unable to attend work because of sickness or injury.

It covers:

- sickness notification;
- contact during absence;
- self-certification and fit notes;
- Statutory Sick Pay;
- return-to-work arrangements;
- frequent or long-term absence;
- reasonable adjustments; and
- sickness records and confidentiality.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that sickness absence is managed fairly, consistently and sensitively while maintaining appropriate staffing and business continuity.

2. Reporting sickness absence

An employee who is unable to attend work because of sickness or injury must notify the company as soon as reasonably practicable.

Notification should normally be made before 9:00 AM on the first day of absence, or before the employee's normal start time where this is earlier. Made via telephone to 01535 634542 or 07828264378, or by message to Helen Lamb at the same mobile number. Make sure you receive a reply, if not, contact a different director.

The employee should normally make contact personally. Where this is not reasonably possible, a family member, trusted friend or other suitable person may contact the company on the employee's behalf.

3. Information and contact during absence

When reporting sickness absence, the employee should provide, where reasonably possible:

- the reason for the absence;
- the date the absence began;
- the likely duration;

- whether medical advice is being sought;
- whether the absence may be work-related;
- whether any urgent work needs to be handed over; and
- suitable contact details.

Employees do not need to disclose unnecessary private medical information. However, sufficient information should be provided to allow the company to understand the likely duration of the absence, arrange cover and consider any safety or support requirements.

Where the reason or likely duration changes, the employee must update the company as soon as reasonably practicable.

For short absences, the employee should normally provide an update each working day unless an expected return date has already been agreed.

For longer absences, a reasonable contact arrangement will be agreed between the employee and the Human Resources Controller, line manager or director.

Contact should be supportive and proportionate and may include discussion of:

- the likely duration of the absence;
- any support required;
- medical or fit-note advice;
- workplace adjustments;
- a phased return; and
- the expected return-to-work date.

4. Self-certification and fit notes

An employee may self-certify sickness absence for the first seven calendar days.

The seven-day period includes weekends, bank holidays, rest days and other days on which the employee would not normally work.

The employee may be required to complete a self-certification or return-to-work form confirming:

- the dates of absence;
- the reason for absence; and
- the date they became fit to return.

Where sickness lasts for more than seven consecutive calendar days, the employee must provide a valid fit note covering the absence from the eighth day.

A fit note may state that the employee is:

- not fit for work; or
- may be fit for work, taking account of specified advice.

Where the employee may be fit for work, the company will discuss whether reasonable arrangements can be made, such as temporary changes to hours, duties, working arrangements or the workplace.

Where the suggested arrangements cannot reasonably be accommodated, the employee will normally continue to be treated as not fit for work for the period covered.

Further fit notes must be provided where the absence continues beyond the date covered by the previous fit note.

5. Statutory Sick Pay

5.1 Changes effective from 6 April 2026

From 6 April 2026:

- the previous Lower Earnings Limit was removed;
- eligible employees may qualify regardless of their earnings;
- the previous three waiting days were removed; and
- Statutory Sick Pay became payable from the first full qualifying day of sickness absence.

5.2 Eligibility

An employee may qualify for Statutory Sick Pay where they:

- are legally classed as an employee;
- have carried out work for Viamed under their employment contract;
- are unable to carry out their work because of sickness or injury;
- are absent for at least one full qualifying working day;
- follow the company's notification requirements, or have a reasonable explanation for not doing so; and
- satisfy the other statutory eligibility requirements.

There is no minimum earnings threshold from 6 April 2026.

5.3 Amount of Statutory Sick Pay

For the 2026/27 tax year, Statutory Sick Pay is paid at the lower of:

- £123.25 per week; or
- 80% of the employee's average weekly earnings.

The company will apply the statutory rates and calculation rules in force at the relevant time.

For absences of less than a complete week, payment will be calculated using the applicable daily rate for the employee's normal qualifying working days.

Tax and National Insurance will be deducted where applicable.

5.4 Maximum period and refusal of pay

Statutory Sick Pay may normally be paid for up to 28 weeks.

Where separate sickness absences are linked under the statutory rules, they may count towards the same maximum entitlement.

Where the employee does not qualify, or where their entitlement is due to end, the company will provide form SSP1 within the required statutory period.

Unless an employee's contract states otherwise, there is no entitlement to company sick pay above Statutory Sick Pay.

Any additional payment made by the company will be discretionary and will not automatically create a contractual entitlement.

6. Returning to work and workplace adjustments

Employees should notify the company when they are fit to return.

Following any sickness absence, the employee may be required to complete a return-to-work form or attend a short return-to-work discussion.

The discussion may cover:

- confirmation of the absence dates and reason;
- whether the employee is fit to resume work;
- whether symptoms or restrictions remain;
- whether the absence was work-related;
- whether support or adjustment is required; and
- whether there is any recurring absence concern.

An employee may return before the expiry of a fit note where they feel able to do so, but should discuss the return with the company before attending work.

Where appropriate, the company may agree a temporary phased return, adjusted duties, altered hours, homeworking or another reasonable arrangement.

Any arrangement will normally be agreed with the employee, recorded and reviewed.

7. Frequent or long-term absence

The company may review attendance where there are frequent, repeated, concerning or long-term periods of sickness absence.

The company attendance-review indicator is:

More than four separate periods of sickness absence within a rolling 12-month period.

Reaching this indicator will not automatically lead to disciplinary action or a finding of underperformance.

It will normally lead to an attendance review considering:

- the reasons for the absences;
- their frequency and duration;
- whether they are connected;
- whether there is an underlying condition;
- whether the condition may amount to a disability;
- whether the absence is pregnancy-related or work-related;
- whether reasonable adjustments are appropriate;
- available medical advice;
- the employee's overall attendance; and
- the impact of the absence on the company.

Long-term absence will be managed sensitively. The company may maintain agreed contact, request current fit notes, seek appropriate medical or occupational-health advice, consider adjustments or a phased return and hold attendance or capability review meetings where appropriate.

Before seeking a medical report, the employee will normally be informed and their consent obtained where required.

Where an employee remains unable to attend work or carry out their role for a prolonged period, the company may consider formal capability action. This will only take place after consultation and consideration of medical evidence, reasonable adjustments, alternative duties and other reasonable options.

8. Disability, pregnancy and work-related absence

Where the company knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that an employee may have a disability, reasonable adjustments will be considered.

Adjustments may include changes to duties, hours, attendance-review triggers, equipment, the workplace, reporting arrangements or the return-to-work process.

Pregnancy-related sickness will be recorded separately and will not normally be included in ordinary attendance-review indicators.

Employees should notify the Human Resources Controller where sickness is pregnancy-related.

Pregnancy-related sickness during the four weeks before the expected week of childbirth may automatically trigger the start of maternity leave.

Employees should notify the company immediately where they believe that an illness or injury:

- was caused or made worse by work;
- resulted from a workplace accident;
- involves exposure to a workplace hazard; or
- may affect the safety of others.

The company may investigate the matter, review relevant risk assessments, complete accident or incident records and introduce corrective action where required.

9. Unauthorised or dishonest absence

The matter may be investigated under the disciplinary procedure where an employee:

- fails to report an absence without reasonable explanation;
- provides false or misleading information;
- falsifies a fit note or other record;
- is absent without genuine sickness or another authorised reason; or
- fails to cooperate with reasonable absence-management requirements.

The company will not assume misconduct merely because an employee undertakes an activity during sickness absence. The nature of the illness, medical advice and the circumstances will be considered.

10. Records, confidentiality and responsibilities

The company will maintain appropriate records of:

- sickness notifications;
- self-certification;
- fit notes;
- absence dates;
- Statutory Sick Pay;
- return-to-work discussions;
- attendance reviews;
- agreed adjustments; and
- decisions made under this policy.

Payroll and Statutory Sick Pay records will be retained for at least three years from the end of the tax year to which they relate.

Medical and sickness information will be treated as confidential and processed in accordance with the company's Data Protection Policy and document-retention requirements.

The Human Resources Controller is responsible for:

- recording sickness absence;
- maintaining appropriate records;
- checking fit notes and Statutory Sick Pay eligibility;
- arranging return-to-work and attendance reviews;
- considering reasonable adjustments;
- obtaining advice where appropriate; and
- maintaining confidentiality.

Managers are responsible for:

- receiving sickness notifications;
- ensuring urgent work is covered;
- maintaining appropriate contact;
- treating employees fairly and sensitively; and
- referring concerns to the Human Resources Controller.

Employees are responsible for:

- reporting absence promptly;
- providing accurate information;
- maintaining agreed contact;
- supplying fit notes when required;
- cooperating with reasonable return-to-work arrangements; and
- notifying the company of relevant changes.
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11. Equality and review

This policy will be applied fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

The company will take account of disability, pregnancy and maternity and any other relevant legally protected status when reviewing sickness absence.

The policy will be reviewed annually and whenever there is a significant change to employment legislation, Statutory Sick Pay, official guidance or company arrangements.

Where there is any conflict between this policy and a statutory employment right, the statutory right in force at the relevant time will apply.