

# A brief guide to the Attendance Agreement (Royal Mail Group).

- **When should a 'Welcome Back Meeting' take place following a sick absence?**

Welcome Back Meetings should take place on the day you return to work. This meeting is designed to allow you to raise any concerns regarding your recent illness on your return, ensure that the details of the absence are correct and properly recorded and discuss the need for any 'Informal Review' meetings.

- **What are the 'Informal Review' Meetings?**

An Informal Review Meeting may take place at the request of either a manager or yourself if there are any concerns about your attendance record. The meeting can also be used to discuss any underlying medical condition or illness which may affect your attendance and to seek active support, including Occupational Health Service (OHAssist) referral if required—the approach of these discussions should be sympathetic and supportive.

These meetings can be called for at short notice, but you are entitled to seek sufficient time to prepare, including time to consult with your local CWU representative prior to the meeting.

- **What are 'Attendance Review Prompt' meetings'?**

Attendance Review Prompt meetings are the formal meetings under the Attendance Agreement when the standard has not been met and the manager feels it is appropriate to hold such a meeting.

You should be given a minimum of three working day's written notice for such a meeting. At the meeting you are able to raise your previous attendance record and put forward mitigating factors for consideration which need to be recorded in the interview notes.

Following the meeting the manager should reflect before making a decision whether to issue a formal notification or not. Everything put forward by way of an explanation on your attendance record must be taken into account along with your previous record. The manager needs to set out their rationale for their decision in writing replying all the mitigation raised.

***You should always seek CWU representation at these Attendance Review Prompt meetings.***

- **When can I have a copy of my attendance record?**

You can request a copy of your individual attendance record at any time and this information should always be provided to you in advance of either an 'Informal Review' or 'Attendance Review Prompt' meeting.

- **What are the attendance standards?**

The 'attendance standards' as set out in the Attendance Agreement are now based on a "six-month review timeline" (as opposed to the former 12 month rolling period) if you are issued with a Review 1 or a Review 2 prompt.

- **How should I keep in contact with my Office when ill?**

As normal you should notify your Office of an absence as soon as possible. This should also include the reason for the absence and if possible the likely duration.

Where the absence may last more than a few days then you and the manager should agree how you will remain in contact during the period of absence. This will include the level of contact, how often and the method by which contact will take place. For example, this could be by email or by phone.

Where the absence is not likely to last more than a few days further contact should not normally be necessary. Where the absence is longer term however, it is suggested that contact should be maintained on a weekly basis throughout the period of absence.

In the case of possible long term absences the Attendance Agreement has an automatic review meeting process at 28 days, at 12 weeks and at 22 weeks. This is designed to be supportive and review the illness and seek further Occupational Health Service advice as necessary.

If you feel unable to attend such meetings due to your illness, and following Occupational Health Service advice, such meetings can again be carried out remotely over the phone, in writing, or by your CWU representative attending on your behalf.

***You should always seek CWU representation and assistance when attending these meetings.***

- **What absences are normally discounted from the attendance standards?**

Absences due to accidents at work and due to a disability will normally be discounted in terms of the attendance standards. If not the manager concerned will need to seek advance advice from Royal Mail Human Resource Advice Centre and will need to set out in writing the reasons for this decision. Part day absences should also be normally discounted in terms of the attendance standards. Absences arising from maternity will be discounted against the attendance standards.

- **Can I request a meeting with a manager of the same sex?**

Yes. A request can be made for an interview with a manager of the same sex at either the informal or formal review meetings and will be treated sympathetically. Equally, the same consideration will be given in terms of CWU representation on advance request.

- **What if the advice provided by the Occupational Health differs to that from my GP?**

If the advice provided by the Occupational Health Service (OHAssist) differs to that of your GP then an Occupational Health practitioner will contact your GP to discuss any issues and come to a mutual consensus.

- **What if I am on sick leave and then due to go on holiday?**

If you are unable to take holiday due to being ill you should notify your manager at the first opportunity and the sick absence should be recorded as continuous.

If your holiday follows a period of sick absence and you are able to return to work you should again inform your manager of this and that you are fit to return to work, however you are resuming onto annual leave. The manager will then record the absence as closed.

- **What if I need to return to work on phased/modified arrangements?**

If you return to work on phased or modified duties you should have a clear plan on what these arrangements are from the Occupational Health (OHAssist) and should attend a meeting with your manager to talk over the plan in advance of returning to work. CWU representation and assistance should always be sought in line with a return to work on phased/modified arrangements.

- **Leaving due to ill health?**

Leaving on the grounds of ill health should only be considered if all other options have been exhausted. In all such cases you should seek advice from your local representative who in return will refer your case to the relevant senior union representative for assistance.

This is only a brief overview of some of the key parts of the Attendance Agreement and members are reminded of the need to always seek advance advice, assistance and representation when contacted formally or informally in regard to attendance matters.