**Absence and attendance management at work**

**Key points**

* High levels of unauthorised absence, including sick leave can cause lost or delayed production, low morale and reduce the standard of service within an organisation.
* Measuring absence can show how much time is lost, where it occurs most and how often individual employees are absent.
* Keeping individual attendance records will help monitor absence and lateness.
* Having attendance and absence policies will help employee's understand what standards are expected of them and will help managers deal with these issues in a fair and consistent way.

People are absent from work for 3 main reasons.

* They are sick.
* They feel unable to come to work because of family or caring responsibilities.
* They are on authorised leave such as holiday, maternity leave or a training course.

On average, in relation to unauthorised absence, people are absent from work for 6.5 days a year (CBI 2012 Absence Survey). Managing attendance problems often means tackling possible causes of absence, such as working patterns, job design and employment relations. This can also include addressing discipline problems such as lateness and poor time keeping. If such issues should arise, they can often be dealt with informally by the line manager in the first instance.

Unauthorised absence is normally the "odd day off" when employees give no reason for the absence. Whether paid or unpaid this type of absence can be costly to an organisation as it is unpredictable. Absence of this kind may eventually lead to disciplinary action.

**How to minimise absence and lateness**

In addition to carrying out effective return to work discussions, there are workplace issues you can address to minimise absence. These include the quality of management, working relationships, job design, employment relations, communication of information and flexible working arrangements. In addition, if workers know that absence will be noticed and investigated, they are less likely to take time off work without proper cause.

**Statutory /contractual sick pay**

Employees must satisfy certain conditions to be entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP), employers will be able to advise employees if they qualify. SSP is paid for every day that would normally be worked, but does not start until the fourth working day of sickness and lasts for a maximum of 28 weeks. Further information regarding SSP can be obtained from the [HM Revenue and Customs](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/) website.

Some employers may offer company sick pay which may give full or part pay for a set period of time. This will be found in the terms and conditions of employment and may be discretional.