HOW TO HOLD AN ABSENCE REVIEW MEETING

1. Preparing for the meeting:

- Book a private room in an appropriate location and set sufficient time aside for the meeting.
- Send a letter to the employee inviting them to the meeting, outlining its purpose and notifying them of their right to be accompanied.
- Review the employee's absence record to identify any patterns / causes for concern.
- Review notes or outcomes from any previous review / return to work meetings and reports from Occupational Health / medical practitioners.
- Establish what further information needs to be obtained at the meeting and consider, but do not pre-empt, possible outcomes.

2. Opening the meeting:

- Introduce all people present and outline their role in the meeting.
- Remind the employee of their right to be accompanied at formal meetings.
- Clearly outline the purpose of the meeting and the format it will take, and let the employee know that an adjournment can be called at any time by either party.
- Ensure the employee has been provided with a copy of the Sickness Absence Management Policy and knows what stage of the procedure they are at.
- Check the employee’s understanding of the process that has been followed to date.

3. Discussing the issues:

- Gain acknowledgement from the employee about the content and nature of their historic sickness record and attempt to fill in any gaps in the data.
- Emphasise the employee’s responsibility to regularly attend work.
- Outline why their absence(s) are causing difficulties for the department / service.
- Offer the employee an opportunity to outline the reasons for their absences, the underlying issues, what practical action they are taking to return to full fitness and what other support they are receiving.
- Discuss actions taken since the last review meeting (where applicable) and their impact on health / attendance. If there has been no improvement explore the reasons why.
- Discuss the improvements in attendance required and explore ways of improving attendance / assisting the employee’s return to work – e.g. temporary / permanent adjustments, medical support, lifestyle changes.

4. Identifying the outcomes:

- Be clear about the level or nature of improvement in attendance and the timeframe the improvement must be achieved within.
- Confirm who has agreed to do what and by when.
- Identify any temporary arrangements to be put in place pending a return to full capacity, and timeframes for reviewing these arrangements and their impact.
- Set dates for monitoring meetings to review progress / amend plans as necessary. The dates will depend upon the actions agreed.

5. Concluding the meeting:

- Confirm that notes of the meeting will be produced and circulated, where applicable.
- Inform the employee that a formal letter will be sent to them outlining the actions agreed and the decisions reached during the meeting.
- Check the employee’s understanding of the process that has been followed so far and their understanding of the next stage in the procedure, including the potential consequences of failing to improve their attendance (i.e. ultimately dismissal).
- Inform the employee what will happen after the meeting (see below).

6. After the meeting:

- Produce and disseminate meeting notes.
- Write to the employee confirming the outcome/s of the meeting.
- Issue First / Second Notice of Concern (if appropriate).
- Formalise Return to Work Plan (if appropriate).
- Arrange a referral to Occupation Health (if appropriate).
- Implement agreed adjustments / actions.
- Put agreed review dates into diaries and book appropriate meeting rooms.
- Continue to monitor the employee’ absence and the impact of any adjustments made / support provided.