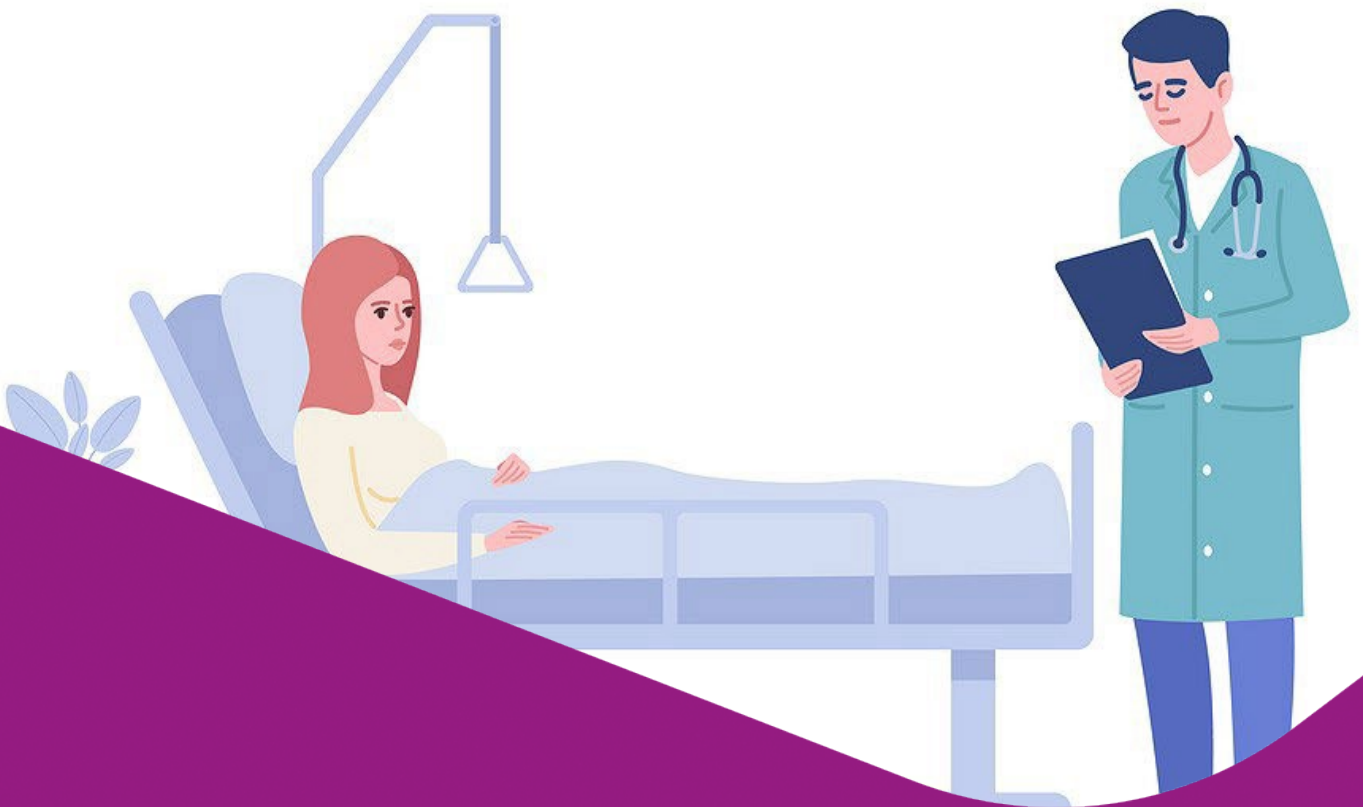


Manager's Guide to Preventing and Managing Sickness Absence



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Document Control

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Purpose

This guidance outlines Derbyshire County Council's approach to preventing and managing employee sickness absence. It sets out manager responsibilities to utilise available wellbeing resources in a consistent way to either prevent employees from becoming absent from work, or to assist them to return to work in a timely manner. It complements the Attendance Management and Ill Health Capability Procedure.

Scope

This guidance applies to all employees of Derbyshire County Council except those employed in schools where the Governing Body or Academy Trust is the employer, who are covered by the relevant policies for those schools.

This guidance has been produced as part of the Council's health and safety arrangements. Whilst recognising that some departments/services will have specialist requirements over and above this guidance which necessitate additional specialist arrangements, it sets out the minimum health and safety requirements required across all departments to ensure the Council can implement the stated aims of its Safety Policy and comply with its Statutory Requirements. All managers and employees should therefore make themselves familiar with the requirements of this guidance and ensure they are followed



Introduction

Our employees are our most valuable asset. Preventing employees from being absent due to ill health or helping them to return to work quickly can benefit both the employee and the Council. For the employee, it can improve their physical and mental wellbeing, and for the Council, it can help to maintain productivity and reduce the cost of absenteeism. Additionally, having a culture that promotes employee health and wellbeing can lead to increased job satisfaction, employee engagement, and employee retention.

The Council has a comprehensive and growing portfolio of wellbeing interventions which cover most of the primary causes of preventable sickness. Timely signposting and referral to these services can prevent employee's health deteriorating to the point where they need to take sick leave. Equally where an employee has become ill and taken sick leave appropriate and timely engagement with the wellbeing services offered can promote a swift recovery and return to work.

Roles and Responsibilities

Managers / Supervisor's


- To include employee wellbeing as part of regular catch up / 121 / Supervision/PDR meetings
- To be aware of and keep up to date with the wellbeing support that is available to them and employees.
- To promptly refer to Occupational Health or signpost employees to support available to them as soon as they become aware of any health issues which could affect attendance.
- To consider any recommendations provided through referral to maintain attendance or promote an employee's recovery.
- To seek further clarification on how to implement recommendations where they are unsure.
- To follow up with employees to ascertain whether they have engaged with wellbeing interventions and what effect this has had.
- To further refer employees if additional support is required.
- To ensure all sickness is recorded and monitored in accordance with the Attendance Management and Ill Health Capability Procedure.

Employees

- Report any health issues that could affect attendance at work as soon as possible.
- Be aware of the wellbeing support available and which offer a self-referral process.
- Engage with any wellbeing intervention signposted to or referred to (including self-referral)
- Ensure attendance at all appointments.
- Follow any advice given or utilise any support and/or equipment provided.
- Report any concerns with any of the support given or its effectiveness especially where health continues to deteriorate.
- Report any sickness immediately in line with the Attendance Management and Ill Health Capability Procedure.

Wellbeing Resources Intervention Matrix

The following matrix gives a quick overview of the support that is available for each of the primary sickness categories. Each of the interventions is explained in more detail underneath the matrix. It may be that a combination of interventions is appropriate to support an employee, however where an employee indicates they have a health condition which could affect attendance then an early referral to Occupational Health should always be undertaken.

| <div> <div>Support Options Available</div>  </div> <div> <div>Ill Health Type</div>  </div> | Occupational health Referral | Counselling | Cognitive Behavioural Therapy | Employee Assistance Programme | Mental Health First Aiders | Physiotherapy Sessions | Specialist Aids and Adaptations | Menopause Support | Stress Guidance and Risk Assessment | DSE Guidance and Assessment | Eyesight / DSE related | Manual Handling Guidance | Support with Risk Assessment | Signposting to JUCD etc., pathways | Signposting to Live Life Better Derbyshire |
|---|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Back & Neck | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Other Musculo Skeletal Disorders | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cancer | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Chest & Respiratory | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Eye, Ear, Nose, Mouth & Dental | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Genito-Urinary & Gynaecological | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Heart, Blood Pressure & Circulation | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Infections | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Neurological | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Stress, Depression, Mental Health & Fatigue | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Stomach, Liver, Kidney & Digestion | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

The following pages give details and signpost to resources available in this matrix.

Occupational Health Referral

Occupational Health has a team of experienced nurses and doctors who specialise in occupational health issues, supported by a dedicated administrative team. They offer specialist advice and support and provide a chance to ask questions.

Occupational Health will work with employees and the Line Manager to look for reasonable ways of helping with any health problems and support employees to remain at work or return to work as soon as possible. Occupational Health records are strictly confidential.

Referrals to the Occupational Health team should be made by the Line Manager.

You can contact the Occupational Health Team for advice. The service is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm - 01629 536943 or email occupational.health@derbyshire.gov.uk

Information regarding Occupational Health and the Occupational Health referral form can be found on the following links.

- [Occupational health](#)
- [Occupational Health Referral Form](#)

Workplace Counselling Service

The self-referral service gives employees a place to talk about issues that trouble them, allowing them to find their own solutions to problems or develop better ways to manage issues. It is not about giving advice, but about providing a non-judgmental, empathic and accessible means to allow employees to find a way forward.

The areas where Occupational Health cannot assist are with legal and financial issues. There are organisations such as Citizens Advice who can help with these issues. In addition, most trade unions also offer support for members.

The counsellors are also available to advise and support you as managers when you are dealing with difficult issues.

Each member of staff will be offered up to 6 face-to-face counselling sessions based on their individual circumstances.

Information regarding the service can be found on the following link [Employee counselling service - Our Derbyshire](#)

The Counsellor is based in Occupational Health at County Hall, Matlock and can normally be contacted during office hours from 8.30am and 5pm,

- email employee.counsellor@derbyshire.gov.uk or telephone: [01629 536954](tel:01629536954)

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (a talking therapy that can help manage problems by changing the way you think and behave), can be offered following an Occupational Health Assessment. This is funded from your departmental budget so you would need to authorise this funding for your employee.

Please use the following link to contact occupational.health@derbyshire.gov.uk

Information regarding Occupation Health can be found on the following link

- [Occupational health](#)

Health Surveillance

This is a key and statutory intervention for those employees whose role potentially exposes them to certain health risks to not only establish a baseline level of health when employees join us but to monitor that their health is not being adversely affected over time and the risk control measures the Council have in place are effective.

To meet this duty DCC has a health surveillance scheme of regular health checks which is used to monitor the health of employees whilst at work. In addition, our employees also have a mandatory responsibility to attend health surveillance appointments to enable DCC to monitor employee's health.

Managers are responsible for identifying employees who should attend health surveillance in accordance with the DCC scheme and ensuring they attend any appointments as required. For further details please contact Occupational Health on 01629 536943.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

An EAP is a confidential employee benefit designed to help deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life, or work life, health and general wellbeing. The EAP service provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues.

The EAP service is provided by an external organisation. Support and advice is completely confidential.

Employees can call the confidential care line as often and for as long as required to discuss issues that require support. Employees can also get a referral for structured counselling, if the employee and the telephone advisor decide that may be helpful.

In addition to emotional support, employees can also get practical support in a number of specialist areas. [Employee assistance programme - Our Derbyshire](#)

Mental Health First Aiders

Mental Health First Aiders can provide support and reassurance if employees feel that talking to someone about mental health would help. Mental Health First Aiders can also guide employees with the support they need. Managers can also access support and reassurance from Mental Health First Aiders. [Mental health first aiders - Our Derbyshire](#)

Physiotherapy

Where employees have musculoskeletal injuries, however caused which could affect their attendance at work the employee can be referred to Occupational Health to access Physiotherapy via a specialist physiotherapy company. Employees can have 6 sessions of physio per year aimed at promoting recovery and keeping people well at work and managing any conditions that could lead to sickness absence. Managers should refer their employees using this form:- [Physiotherapy Referral Form](#)

Advice and Provision of Specialist Aids and Adaptations

The Occupational Health Team can support and guide you in relation to specialist aids and adaptations for employees. A workplace assessment can be requested using the referral form detailed below.

- [Occupational health](#)
- [Occupational Health Referral Form](#)

Menopause support

Derbyshire County Council as part of Joined Up Care Derbyshire (JUCD) recognises that perimenopause and menopause can bring issues for individuals which can impact upon their work. It is to the benefit of us all that we support staff in these circumstances to find mutually beneficial arrangements, maximising staff retention and wellbeing.

- [Occupational Health Referral Form](#)
- [Balance app](#)

A webinar regarding the Menopause can be found on the following link. The password is **UniHDerby**

- [Welcome to Balance](#)

Stress Guidance and Risk Assessment Tool

Referrals can be made to Occupational Health for support regarding stress - [Occupational Health Referral Form](#)

Employees can also [Get help with stress](#) on the NHS website.

Employees who are feeling stressed, worried or anxious then you can call the [Derbyshire Mental Health Helpline and Support Service](#) for free, any time day or night, telephone: 0800 028 0077.

And there's also lots of advice online at the [Derby & Derbyshire - Emotional Health & Wellbeing](#).

Managers should be aware of the council's [The management of stress in the workplace guidance - 2024](#).

Managers can also access other health and safety information via [Health and safety policy and guidance - Our Derbyshire](#)

Click on the links below for the Stress Risk Assessment Tools

- [Stress General Risk Assessment Form](#)
- [Guide for Employees Wellness Action Plan \(WAP\) - Mind Charity](#)
- [Guide for Line Managers Wellness Action Plan \(WAP\) - Mind Charity](#)

DCC employees can talk to one of our [mental health first aiders](#) - a team of trained colleagues who can provide reassurance and help to guide you to the support you need

DSE (Display Screen Equipment) Guidance and Assessment

Eyesight Tests for DSE Users

Free DSE Related Glasses / Voucher

All employees, who are required to use Display Screen Equipment as a significant part of their work, have a statutory entitlement to an appropriate eye examination for display screen work prior to the employee becoming a user of the equipment for the first time and at regular intervals whilst the person is employed in such a capacity. When an employee chooses to exercise their entitlement, the examination(s) should be carried out by an affiliated optician of the eyecare voucher scheme.

- [Display screen equipment assessment](#)
- [How to set up a workstation](#)

Manual Handling Guidance

Manual handling injuries are part of a wider group of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The term 'musculoskeletal disorders' covers any injury, damage or disorder of the joints or other tissues in the upper/lower limbs or the back. Guidance on manual handling can be found on the following link.

- [Guidance on manual handling of loads and moving and lifting of people in the workplace](#)
- [Course: Manual Handling \(learningpool.com\)](#)
- [Manual Handling Risk Assessment](#)

Support with Risk Assessments – Our Derbyshire

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team can offer support in relation to risk assessments. Please contact the Team at the following email address.

- HealthandSafety.Enquiries@derbyshire.gov.uk

Signposting to JUCD, etc Pathways

As part of a Joined-Up Care Derbyshire (JUCD) initiative, employees can take advantage of a number of free activities that can help with overall wellbeing - [Free wellbeing support from Joined Up Care Derbyshire - Our Derbyshire](#)

Live Life Better Derbyshire

Live Life Better can offer support and advice to help achieve employee goals for feeling fitter, losing weight or quitting smoking - [Live Life Better Derbyshire](#)

Non-Compliance with the Guidance

Directors will be responsible for ensuring all managers comply with the terms outlined in this guidance. Where an employee refuses to comply with this guidance, advice should be sought from the HR (Human Resources) Advice and Support Team in the first instance.