



Supporting attendance

1 What this policy covers

There may be times when you cannot attend work because of illness or health-related reasons. When this happens GHC wants to ensure that you are properly supported and treated fairly, so you can return to work as soon as possible. But there is also a need to review and manage your absence to minimise the impact on GHC.

This policy explains how sickness absence should be reported, the effects of sickness on your pay and annual leave and how short- and long-term absences are managed. If you are in your probation period and take time off work because of sickness, your manager will review this using both the Supporting Attendance and Probation policies.

For this policy, the following definitions apply:

- **short-term sickness absence** – absence of fewer than 28 consecutive days, usually odd days or a few days at a time, throughout the year
- **long-term sickness absence** – absence of more than 28 consecutive days
- **underlying health condition** – an illness or injury that has a substantive and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities or attend work, which may be reduced through treatment, how you manage it and/or reasonable adjustment by GHC if necessary.

2 Principles

GHC's management of sickness absences is based on the following principles:

- you should make every reasonable effort to attend work if you are well enough to do so
- if you are unable to attend work, it should be reported and recorded

- your manager will consider your health needs based on your individual circumstances
- if you have an underlying medical condition, your manager will work with you to try to support your attendance at work, seeking Working Well advice and making reasonable adjustments, where necessary and feasible
- your manager will listen to you during meetings and take account of any mitigating factors
- all managers are required to consistently and proactively support staff to attend work and manage staff sickness absence due to the significant impact of sickness absence on GHC services
- short and long-term sickness absences are not mutually exclusive, so, in certain situations you may be managed under the processes for both short and long-term absence.

3 Responsibilities

You are responsible for:

- following the correct reporting procedures if you are unable to attend work
- not remaining at work if you are too unwell to be there
- informing your manager at the earliest opportunity if you are aware of changes to your health and wellbeing that may impact your ability to do your job
- attending Working Well appointments and meetings with your manager
- adhering to this policy; if you fail to do so it may result in your absence being recorded as unauthorised and unpaid leave.

Your manager is responsible for:

- managing the sickness absence of the team fairly and consistently
- encouraging and supporting you to maintain good attendance using this policy
- ensuring that your sickness absence is recorded



- supporting you to recognise if you are not well enough to attend work.

Working Well is responsible for:

- providing impartial professional medical advice to you and your manager about your health, wellbeing and the potential interaction with your job role.

4 Reporting and recording absence

4.1 Reporting absence

You must personally notify your manager by telephone as soon as possible on the first day of your absence. This should be before the start of your shift/normal working day or at the latest within one hour of your normal starting time. Keep trying to contact your manager (or their nominated deputy) until you speak to them directly. You should:

- explain the nature of your sickness (highly sensitive and personal information need not be disclosed)
- advise how long you think you may be absent, if known
- tell them if you intend to see a GP or medical practitioner
- tell them if your sickness absence is related to a workplace incident
- agree with your manager how you will keep in contact to update them of progress and how they can contact you.

While you are absent your manager may contact you for an update on how you are feeling and to find out when you expect to return to work.

Diarrhoea and vomiting-related sickness requires you to be symptom-free for 48 hours before returning to work. Your whole absence will be recorded as sickness absence, but only the actual sickness period will count towards any absence triggers. The symptom-free 48 hours will not count towards absence triggers, because this is only required for infection-control purposes.

If your absence is pregnancy-related it will be recorded as sickness, but it will not count towards any absence triggers.

If you leave work due to sickness part-way through the working day it will be recorded as follows:

- if you have completed half or more of your working day's hours before your absence starts – a whole day worked, but your manager will make a note of the time and reason you left work
- if you have completed less than half of your working day's hours before your absence starts – a full day of sickness absence
- if a pattern emerges of you going home sick part-way through your working day – a full day of sickness absence.

If there is concern regarding the number of times you go home part-way through the day, your manager will address it with you, seeking advice from HR as appropriate.

4.2 Sickness absence certification

For any sickness absence you must provide the following certification:

- **for absences up to seven calendar days (including non-working days)** you need to complete a self-certification form
- **for absences of eight calendar days or more (including non-working days)** you can complete a self-certification form for the seven calendar days if needed, after this you must provide your manager with a medical certificate (also known as a Fit Note). Medical certificates must be submitted within seven calendar days of being required, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. You may be able to return to work before your medical certificate expires if you feel fully recovered. In some instances you may be referred to Working Well to ensure any support required is considered before your return.

4.3 Return to work and wellbeing meeting

Following any period of sickness absence, your manager will ask you to attend a return to work and wellbeing discussion. Ideally this should take place before you start any shift or duties, either before or on your first day back to work. This is to:

- welcome you back to work and better understand the reason for your sickness absence
- check that you feel fit to be at work and discuss any agreed support and/or reasonable adjustments



- ensure that your absence has been recorded correctly
- consider if any support could be offered to help improve your future attendance, including whether a referral to Working Well may be beneficial
- advise you of the dates, frequency and pattern of your absence and if you have met a trigger for managing short-term absence
- inform you of what may happen if further absence(s) arise (eg attend an absence review meeting)
- review any reasonable adjustments that have been made for you or that are required
- update you on anything new or that may have changed during your absence
- confirm any agreed phased return plan already agreed in advance if you are returning from long-term sickness absence.

Your manager will complete a return-to-work form, which is the record of the discussion, and you should give your manager any outstanding medical certificates. A copy of the form will be placed on your personal file and you can ask for a copy.

5 Representation

You are entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at all formal meetings identified in this policy, except return-to-work and wellbeing discussions.

6 Short-term sickness absence

6.1 Absence triggers

The triggers for a short-term sickness absence meeting are:

- three episodes of absence in a rolling six-month period or less
- five working days in total of absence in a rolling six-month period or less
- five episodes in a 12-month rolling period or less
- 10 working days in a 12-month rolling period or less
- any patterns of absence that give cause for concern or significantly impact your role or service.

Where you have tried to return to work, but a further absence relating to the same illness occurs, this will be considered as one episode where this happens within two days of returning.

6.2 Short-term sickness management

There are four stages in the management of our short-term sickness absence:

- informal absence review
- first formal absence review
- second formal absence review
- final formal absence review.

6.3 Informal absence review

If you have sickness absence and breach a trigger, your manager will speak to you about your absences to:

- advise you that you are being placed on the informal stage of the absence management process
- explain that this means your attendance will be monitored for three months
- remind you of the absence triggers and confirm what may happen if you continue to breach the triggers set.

The discussion may take place as part of supervision or one-to-one sessions, a return-to-work and wellbeing meeting, or at an informal meeting arranged specifically. As part of the discussion the following may be covered:

- if you are receiving any further treatment or support from your GP or other medical professional
- what support may be beneficial, such as a Working Well referral, fast-track physiotherapy or other services you could access
- if there may be an underlying health condition and if so, how you can best be supported in managing this at work.

At the end of the informal review period your manager will speak to you again. During this discussion your absence level in the informal review period will be looked at and you will be informed of any next steps. There are three possible outcomes:

- no further action if you have no further absences or you are within the triggers. However, if further absences occur within three months of this discussion taking place, the informal review stage will be re-invoked
- informal review stage is extended if your absence level has improved but there are still some concerns (the extension will normally be for three months)
- proceed to first formal absence review stage if the absence triggers set have been exceeded.



6.4 First formal absence review

If you have further sickness absence and breach a trigger, your manager will arrange a first formal absence review meeting. You will be given at least seven calendar days' written notice of the meeting.

At the meeting your manager will talk through your absences to ensure that you are aware of your absence levels and what this means. They will listen to anything you would like to say and will discuss with you potential ways to improve your attendance. As part of the discussion, the following may be covered:

- if you are receiving any further treatment or support from your GP or other medical professional
- what support may be beneficial, such as a Working Well referral, fast-track physiotherapy or other services you could access
- if there may be an underlying health condition and if so, how you can best be supported in managing this at work
- any impact that extra hours, bank or overtime or secondary employment may have on your health and attendance
- any personal issues that may be contributing to your health and wellbeing, and if there is any support available that you could access
- any further ongoing concerns your manager has regarding your health and wellbeing or further information that may need to be sought.

Your manager will then:

- advise you that you are being placed on the first formal stage of the absence management process
- explain that this means your attendance and absences will be monitored for six months, in line with the triggers for managing short-term absence
- advise you if any restrictions will be placed on your working additional hours
- inform you that a review meeting will take place at the end of the monitoring period
- confirm what may happen if you breach a trigger again during the monitoring period.

Your manager will send you a letter within seven calendar days of the meeting confirming the main points discussed.

Your manager may arrange a midpoint check-in after the first three months if there are reasonable adjustments in place, to review if they working or if you have continued to have episodes of sickness absence.

At the end of the first formal review period your manager will invite you to a meeting. During the meeting your absence level in the first formal review period will be looked at and you will be advised of any next steps. Your manager will send you a letter within seven calendar days of the meeting confirming the main points discussed. There are three possible outcomes:

- no further action if you have no further absences or are within the triggers. However, if further absences occur within six months of this discussion taking place the first formal review stage will be re-invoked
- first formal review stage is extended if your absence level has improved but there are still some concerns about it. The extension will normally be for six months
- proceed to second formal absence review stage if the absence triggers set have been exceeded.

6.5 Second formal absence review

If you have continued to breach triggers during the first formal review stage, a second formal absence review meeting will be arranged. Your manager will take you through the same process as set out in the previous stage. This will include advising you at the meeting:

- that you are being placed on the second formal stage of the absence management process
- your attendance and absences will be monitored for six months, in line with the triggers for managing short-term absence
- if any restrictions will be placed on your working additional hours
- what may happen if you breach a trigger again during the monitoring period.

You will be asked to attend Working Well at this stage, if this has not yet already happened, to ensure that you are fully supported and your manager can make informed decisions about your health condition and other factors. If you do not consent to the Working Well report being released the process will continue and decisions regarding your health and wellbeing may be made without the benefit of their medical advice.



Your manager may arrange a mid-point check-in after the first three months if there are reasonable adjustments in place, to review if they working or if you have continued to have episodes of sickness absence.

At the end of the second formal review period your manager will invite you to a meeting. During the meeting your absence level in the second formal review period will be looked at and you will be advised of any next steps. Your manager will send you a letter within seven calendar days of the meeting confirming the main points discussed. There are three possible outcomes:

- no further action if you have no further absences or you are within the triggers. However, if further absences occur within six months of this discussion taking place the second formal review stage will be re-invoked
- second formal review stage is extended if your absence level has improved but there are still some concerns. The extension will normally be for six months
- proceed to final formal absence review stage if you have continued to breach the absence triggers.

6.6 Final formal absence review (capability hearing)

A final formal absence review will be arranged if your absences have continued to breach absence triggers during the second formal stage and when any other options available have been explored with you. The meeting will be heard by a panel of two managers, who will be supported by HR.

Before the meeting your manager will write a report outlining your absence history to date, the absence management process followed, any support you have had and any adjustments that have been made to enable you to carry out your duties. Your manager will attend the meeting to present a summary of their report. You will be able to respond and the panel will listen to what you say.

The panel will consider whether:

- the policy has been followed fairly
- you have been given the opportunity to respond and say everything you would like to say
- there are any mitigating circumstances that may not yet have been considered
- the service can continue to support your levels of absence or not, and the reasons behind this

- any actions taken have been proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances
- any actions taken are consistent with previous similar cases within GHC.

If you or your representative can't attend for reasonable circumstances beyond your control, a further date will be arranged. If you cannot attend the rearranged date you will be asked to confirm why. The panel will consider whether to hold the meeting virtually, to allow you to submit a written response for them to consider or to go ahead in your absence. If you have a representative, they may agree to attend on your behalf in your absence. In the case of non-attendance without any mitigating circumstances submitted ahead of the meeting, it will be held in your absence.

Your meeting invite letter will be sent seven calendar days before the meeting. You will also be sent a copy of your manager's report ahead of the meeting. If you wish to submit any documents for the panel to consider, you must send these at least three calendar days ahead of the meeting, so they can be shared and reviewed in advance.

Once they have considered all of the information presented, the panel will determine if you should be dismissed on grounds of capability due to ill health. The outcome will be confirmed in writing within seven calendar days of the meeting. It will include information about any agreed actions or if you have been dismissed your notice period.

6.7 Right of appeal

Following a final formal review hearing, if you have been issued with a formal warning or dismissed, you will have a right of appeal. The appeal must be made in writing, setting out the grounds of the appeal to the Director of HR & OD, in line with GHC's appeal process.

6.8 Stage of entering the process

The process will usually start at the informal stage. However, there may be circumstances when it is appropriate to start after the informal stage, for example, if you have been taken off an absence review stage within the last three (informal)/six months (formal stage) or if there is a pattern of your absences being managed under the short-term sickness absence process.



6.9 New employees

If you are in your probation period, sickness absence will be managed in accordance with GHC's Supporting Attendance and Probation policies. If you have completed your probation but have less than two years' service and your sickness levels are high, your manager may decide to refer the matter to a final formal review meeting before the process for managing short-term sickness absence has been exhausted. Your manager must seek advice from HR before making this decision. At the meeting the panel may consider your dismissal.

6.10 Patterns of sickness absence

There may be situations where a pattern of absence seems unacceptable, for example, regular absences on certain days/shifts, before or after annual leave, around school holidays, public holidays or certain times of the year. If your manager has concerns about the pattern of your sickness absence, they can manage your attendance in accordance with the process for short-term absence.

Very occasionally the discussions may be able to take place at your home if your illness means you are unable to attend any other venues. You can also speak to your manager about your health and wellbeing at any time outside this process if you have any concerns.

The purpose of the health and wellbeing discussion is to:

- see how you are feeling
- understand your current prognosis, recovery or situation
- find out about any planned treatment or appointments
- organise or discuss a Working Well referral
- discuss the latest medical information and fitness to work advice
- find out if there is anything further that can be done to support your return to work
- provide you with an update on the team and any recent changes
- remind you of the health, wellbeing and emotional support available
- agree next steps (eg contact, meeting dates, return to work).

7 Long-term sickness absence

Long-term sickness is any absence of more than 28 consecutive calendar days. This may include absences due to illness or injury, planned or unplanned hospitalisation and underlying health conditions (including disability).

Long-term sickness absence will be kept under review by your manager from an early stage and will require regular and ongoing reviews. Your manager will contact you to arrange regular informal health and wellbeing discussions while you are off. You may also be required to attend formal health and wellbeing meetings while you are off. If you are too ill to attend these in person, alternative arrangements will be considered, including Teams or telephone calls.

7.1 Informal health and wellbeing discussions

It is important that your manager maintains regular contact with you during your absence, to ensure that you are properly supported while you are off work. Therefore, your manager or their deputy will arrange to meet or speak to you every four weeks, unless you agree to have more regular contact. These discussions could take place at your place of work, by Teams or a telephone call, at another GHC site or a neutral place.

It is often helpful to have Working Well advice to inform the discussion around any planned return to work, including a phased return or reasonable adjustments to enable you to carry out your role. Your manager should tell you when they make a Working Well referral. If you do not consent to the Working Well report being released, it may be necessary to make decisions regarding your health and wellbeing and any return to work without the benefit of medical advice.

If after six months you continue to be unwell and there is no foreseeable return to work, or your health condition significantly impacts your ability to carry out your role, your manager will arrange a first formal ill-health meeting with you to explore your options. This may include considering if you are able to continue your employment. A second formal ill-health meeting will take place after nine months if you are still absent from work.

The formal ill-health meetings may take place sooner if medical advice indicates that you are unlikely to return to work or your health condition will significantly affect your ability to do your role.



7.2 First formal ill-health meeting

A first formal ill-health meeting will be arranged if you have been absent from work for six months, or earlier if medical advice indicates that you are unlikely to return to work or your health condition will significantly affect your ability to do your role. You will be invited in writing at least seven calendar days before the meeting date.

At this meeting your manager, supported by HR, will review the latest Working Well advice, the possibility of a return to work and any arrangements to support this. The following may be discussed with you:

- any reasonable adjustments already in place
- whether there are any further reasonable adjustments that could be considered
- redeployment to another role, where this is an option, including whether this can be accommodated with reasonable adjustments
- ill-health retirement, where this is an option
- mutual agreement to end your employment, if this is something you wish to consider
- keep in touch arrangements if you are not well enough to return to work at this time.

After the meeting the main points discussed will be confirmed in writing.

7.3 Second formal ill-health meeting

A second formal ill-health meeting will be arranged if you have been absent from work for nine months, or earlier if medical information indicates that you are unlikely to return to work or your health condition will significantly affect your ability to do your role. You will be invited in writing at least seven calendar days before the meeting date.

At this meeting your manager, supported by HR, will review the latest Working Well advice, the possibility of a return to work and any arrangements to support this. The following may be discussed with you:

- any reasonable adjustments already in place
- whether there are any further reasonable adjustments that could be considered
- redeployment to another role, where this is an option, including whether this can be accommodated with reasonable adjustments
- ill-health retirement, where this is an option
- mutual agreement to end your employment, if this is something you wish to consider.

Where possible, your manager will plan your return to work with appropriate support and discuss this with you.

Having considered all available options, if there is no likelihood of you returning to work at that time or in the immediate future a final ill-health meeting will be arranged, unless you wish to pursue one of the other options discussed.

7.4 Final ill-health meeting (capability hearing)

A final ill-health meeting will be arranged when the options discussed the previous meeting have been considered and rejected, if following the second formal ill-health there is no likelihood of you returning to work, and/or where the service is unable to support your ongoing sickness absence. The meeting will be heard by a panel of two managers, who will be supported by HR.

Before the meeting your manager will write a report outlining your absence history to date, the absence management process followed, any reasonable adjustments considered or already in place and the impact of absence on your team/the service that have been made to enable you to carry out your duties.

Your manager will attend the meeting to present a summary of their report. You will get the chance to respond and the panel will listen to anything else you wish to say, including whether there has been any significant change in your circumstances, before a final decision is made.

The panel will consider whether:

- the policy has been followed fairly
- you have been given the opportunity to respond and say everything you would like to say
- there are any mitigating circumstances that may not yet have been considered
- the service can continue to support your levels of absence or not and the reasons behind this
- any actions taken have been proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances
- any actions taken are consistent with previous similar cases within GHC.



If you or your representative are unable to attend for reasonable circumstances beyond your control, a further date will be arranged. If you cannot attend the rearranged date you will be asked to confirm why. The panel will consider whether to hold a virtual meeting, to allow you to submit a written response for them to consider or to go ahead in your absence. If you have a representative, they may agree to attend on your behalf in your absence. It will be held in your absence in the case of non-attendance without any mitigating circumstances submitted ahead of the meeting.

Your meeting invite letter will be sent seven calendar days before the meeting. You will also be sent a copy of your manager's report ahead of the meeting. If you wish to submit any documents for the panel to consider you must send these at least three calendar days ahead of the meeting, so they can be shared and reviewed in advance.

While it is hoped you will return to work and resume normal duties, it is recognised that this may not be possible. Therefore, the panel will consider if your employment should be ended because of a lack of capability caused by ill health. The outcome of this meeting will be confirmed in writing within seven calendar days of the meeting, including information about your notice period and right of appeal, if appropriate.

7.5 Right of appeal

Following a final ill-health hearing, if you are issued with a formal warning or dismissed, there will be a right of appeal. The appeal must be made in writing, setting out the grounds of the appeal to the Director of HR & OD, in line with GHC's appeal process.

7.6 Recurrent long-term absences

You may have ongoing health-related issues that cause you to have repeated long-term sickness absences. Your manager will seek to support you, however, they also must address the negative impact unexpected, prolonged and/or repetitive long-term absences can have on the quality and continuity of service provision.

If you have three or more long-term absence episodes within a period of 24 months or less your manager will arrange a formal meeting to consider and review your ability to attend work regularly. You will be invited in writing and given at least seven calendar days' notice of

the date. At this meeting your manager, supported by HR, will discuss with you:

- what reasonable adjustments have been made and how effective they are
- the latest Working Well advice
- how you might be further supported to attend work regularly
- if redeployment to another role might be appropriate.

After this meeting has taken place, if you have a further episode of long-term sickness within six months, your manager will arrange a second formal meeting. You will be invited in writing and given at least seven calendar days' notice of the date. At this meeting your manager, supported by HR, will discuss with you any remaining options to help you sustain regular attendance that may be available. If it is determined at the meeting there are no remaining options to explore and you are likely to continue being unable to sustain regular attendance, a final ill-health meeting will be arranged, in line with the process described in section 7.4.

8 Key guidance during short- and long-term absence

8.1 Working Well

You should be asked to attend Working Well during either the short or long-term sickness absence procedures if:

- you continue to breach triggers under the short-term sickness procedure
- you have been off work because of sickness for 28 days or more or if a date of return has not been indicated
- you have suffered an illness or injury that may impact on your ability to carry out your role
- your absence is due to work-related stress or musculoskeletal problems and in your role you are required to undertake breakaway, physical intervention activities or manual handling duties
- you, your manager or a medical practitioner requests a change of duties on medical grounds
- you wish to be considered for ill-health retirement
- an assessment is required following an injury sustained at work.



You do need to attend Working Well appointments if you are referred by your manager. If you have any concerns about this you can contact Working Well in advance of your appointment

Working Well may provide recommendations about changes to your workplace, working pattern or work practice to help you return to work or improve your attendance. All recommendations will be considered by your manager, taking into account the impact on service delivery and other team members. If necessary, Working Well may ask for consent to contact your GP or specialist for a medical report. Confidentiality will be maintained in line with the consent you give.

8.2 Outcome following Working Well advice

Once your manager receives your Working Well report you will usually be asked to a meeting with them to discuss it. This may be as part of health and wellbeing/ ill-health meetings or it may take place outside of these. The discussion will review the advice and discuss options for supporting you in work, back to work, or where you are not yet fit to return to work, your manager will talk you through the next steps.

8.3 Phased return to work and temporary alternative duties

To help and support you to return to work following long-term sickness, Working Well may suggest a phased return involving either temporary adjustments to certain duties or a temporary reduction of working hours over a short period. This will normally be supported for two weeks on full pay if your absence has been for three months or longer. After two weeks, any non-worked time of your phased return will be recorded as annual leave, accrued TOIL or in exceptional circumstances authorised paid leave (for a maximum of a further two weeks).

A phased return to work will usually be completed within four weeks. In some circumstances, Working Well may advise a phased return should be longer than four weeks. Your manager will consider and discuss the options to support this extended phased return with you, up to a maximum of eight weeks on an exceptional basis, following advice from HR and authorisation from the Service Director (or equivalent). Any extensions beyond this must be approved in advance by the Director of HR and OD.

When returning on a phased basis you will be expected to work at least 50% of your contracted hours and return to your full contracted hours at the end of the phased return.

Working Well may advise a short period of alternative duties on your return to help you to build up to the full duties of your role. Alternative duties can be agreed for a maximum of eight weeks, after which you must be able to return to completing your full duties.

Alternative duties may involve temporary adjustments to your role or you working in another role or at another site for an agreed period of time. In each case there must always be a genuine need for those alternative duties to be carried out.

Alternative duties cannot be extended beyond eight weeks without the express agreement of both the Service Director (or equivalent) and the Deputy HR Director. Any agreement to an extension of alternative duties must include a review date of the arrangement.

8.4 Disability-related sickness absence

If you have a long-term health condition protected under the Equality Act 2010, the Trust has a duty to consider reasonable adjustments that enable you to return to work and/or effectively carry out your role. Therefore, you should let your manager know about any condition that requires reasonable adjustments to be considered. Proposed adjustments will be individual to each person, their health need and the requirements of their role. Examples of potential adjustments that may be considered could include, but are not limited to: authorised leave for specialist treatment, equipment or bespoke accessibility requirements, additional time to complete key objectives.

According to the Equality Act 2010: "A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". "Long-term" means the condition must last, or be likely to last, for more than 12 months, or is likely to last for the rest of the person's life. People with cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV/AIDS are defined as disabled from the date of diagnosis, regardless of the illness's impact on their life at the time of diagnosis.



“If you are sick on a bank holiday you will receive sick pay as normal, but you will not be given a substitute leave day for that bank holiday”

8.5 Reasonable adjustments

Sometimes to support you back to work or to stay in work if you have a long-term health condition, your manager may consider temporarily or permanently adjusting your duties or work pattern, specialist equipment or temporary or permanent redeployment. This could be a reduction in hours, a change to specific tasks, a change to working hours, a different work environment, additional support, training or redeployment. Where reasonable adjustments are put in place, they will be confirmed in writing and a copy placed on your personal file.

If it is advised by Working Well, consideration may be given to adjusting the absence monitoring triggers as a reasonable adjustment. This can only be agreed by your manager after they have sought HR advice. Absence monitoring triggers can usually only be adjusted once.

8.6 Management of injuries and diseases

If you have been injured because of an accident at work or an incident while on duty, if you have contracted a disease in the course of your GHC employment or if you have developed a condition attributable to your work, you must tell your manager and ensure that it is recorded appropriately.

If your manager determines the disease or injury was caused through your work, the episode will still be recorded as sickness absence and sick pay will be paid as appropriate. Your manager may need advice from Working Well to determine this. The work-related nature of the absence may be taken into consideration as mitigation when managing absence under this policy, if advice is sought from HR.

8.7 Injury allowance

Employees working under NHS terms and conditions may be eligible for injury allowance where the criteria are met. This is a top-up payment to sick pay or reduced earnings when on a phased return to work, to 85% of pay for up to 12 months.

This is payable if you are off work and on authorised sickness absence or an agreed phased return with reduced pay or no pay due to an injury, disease or other health condition that is wholly or mainly attributable to your NHS employment. If you believe you may be eligible for injury allowance you need to speak to your manager.

8.8 Mutual agreement to end employment

If you are on long-term sickness absence and believe there is no prospect of a return to work within a reasonable timeframe, you may request a formal ill-health meeting or bring forward your next one to discuss your options in relation to your ongoing employment, including mutually agreeing to end your employment.

If it is mutually agreed to end your employment, this will be on the basis that you are no longer able to fulfil the duties of your role on grounds of ill health, effective from the date of the meeting. You will receive notice pay in lieu, together with any outstanding accrued annual leave entitlement or other payments accrued to the date of dismissal. This will be confirmed in writing within seven calendar days of the meeting.

8.9 Ill-health retirement

If you are a member of the NHS Pension Scheme with at least two years' service, are below the normal retirement age for the scheme and have been advised by a medical practitioner you are unlikely to be able to return to work because of ill health, you may be eligible to retire on the grounds of ill health. The decision about if you get ill-health retirement is made by NHS Pensions, not GHC. If you wish to explore this option you should talk to your manager.

8.10 Redeployment

Where Working Well advice is that you are unable to return to work in your current role on a long-term or indefinite basis for health-related reason, use of the redeployment process may be considered to help you find a permanent suitable alternative role within GHC.

8.11 Cosmetic surgery

If you need time off for cosmetic surgery related to a medical or psychological condition which is supported by a medical certificate (eg to correct a disfigurement sustained in an accident), this can be treated as sick leave. Any pre-appointments should be treated as a medical appointment.



If you have cosmetic surgery because you wish to change your appearance (eg a face-lift or weight-loss surgery not supported by a medical certificate), you will need to take the time off as annual leave, TOIL or unpaid leave. If that treatment results in you becoming unfit for work, the usual sickness absence provisions will apply.

8.12 Working while absent

You should not undertake any paid or unpaid employment, including voluntary work, while on paid or unpaid sick leave. This includes work completed through staff bank. If you are found to do so, disciplinary action may be taken. It may also be investigated as fraudulent activity by the Local Counter Fraud Service.

8.13 Medical special leave (suspension)

If you are unwell while at work and as a result your manager believes your health, safety or welfare or that of others may be at risk, they have a duty to talk to you about their concerns and suggest you go home. If you refuse to go home your manager will seek advice from HR to consider if medical special leave needs to be implemented. Medical special leave has to be approved by HR and the Service Director (or equivalent).

If you are placed on medical special leave:

- your manager will make an urgent referral to Working Well
- you will be paid your normal rate of pay until advice is received from Working Well or your GP on the suitability of your return to work.

If the medical advice received is that you are fit to return to work, the medical special leave should end with immediate effect and a return to work date agreed. The period of medical special leave will not be recorded as sickness absence and will not count towards any triggers for managing absence.

If the medical advice is that you are fit to return to work but your manager has concerns about you returning due to the specific nature of your role, your manager will contact HR to seek further advice. Temporarily redeploying to a different role or area and the possibility of you remaining on medical special leave may be considered, if it is appropriate.

If the medical advice received is that you are not fit to

return to work, the medical special leave will end with immediate effect and the whole period of absence, including the period of medical special leave, will be recorded as sickness absence. You will need to provide medical certificates to cover the absence in line with normal reporting arrangements. If you fail to submit medical certificates in these circumstances, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, unpaid absence.

8.14 Authorised paid leave and suspension

If you are on authorised paid leave (including special leave) or suspended in accordance with the Disciplinary policy and subsequently become unwell, you must follow the normal sickness absence-reporting procedures for the period of your ill health. The period will be recorded as sickness absence and you will be paid in line with your contractual sick pay entitlement until you are declared fit to return to work.

8.15 Confidentiality

Information shared during the sickness management process will be protected in line with legislation.

9 Effects of sickness on your terms and conditions of employment

9.1 Sick pay

Any sick pay entitlement will be paid in accordance with your contract of employment and current national/local terms and conditions. You must follow the reporting and certification process to ensure that you receive any sick pay entitlement.

9.2 Annual leave

If you are sick while on annual leave, you will be eligible to reclaim those days affected as long as you followed the proper absence-reporting procedures during the period you were unwell and have provided the appropriate medical certificates to cover the period of your sickness (eg self-certification form and/or fit note).

If you are sick on a bank holiday you will receive sick pay as normal, but you will not be given a substitute leave day for that bank holiday. Your manager will need to deduct the bank holiday from your leave entitlement.

If you have a period of pre-booked leave for a planned holiday during sickness absence, you should discuss with your manager if you still intend to take this time as leave.

You can take annual leave while you are signed off sick and it will not break the period of sickness absence. You will need to inform your manager of the dates you wish to book which will be recorded as annual leave rather than sickness absence. You may need to provide confirmation from a medical practitioner or Working Well that taking this annual leave will not be detrimental to your recovery.

You will continue to accrue annual leave during periods of sickness. If you are unable to take all of your annual leave entitlement because of long-term sickness, you will be entitled to carry over your remaining statutory accrued annual leave into the next leave year.

If you have an annual leave request declined and are subsequently sick on the date(s) for which the leave was requested, you may be required to provide medical certification.