



Banc Ceannais na hÉireann  
Central Bank of Ireland

Eurosystem

# Absence Management & Sick Leave Policy

January 2023

# Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Purpose.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Scope .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Policy Statement .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Early Intervention.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Identifying Attendance Patterns .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Engaging with Colleagues.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Understanding Drivers of Sick Leave Absence(s).....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Occupational Health Specialist (OHS).....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Reasonable Accomodation(s).....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).....</b>	<b>7</b>

# Introduction

The Central Bank's Absence Management & Sick Leave Policy demonstrates the Central Bank's commitment to colleagues' health and welfare at work, specifically outlining our overall approach to absence management.

This Policy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of colleagues, Line Managers and the People Directorate in the effective management of attendance. It also clearly outlines the functions of the Occupational Health Provider and the Employee Assistance Programme in assisting the Central Bank to support staff wellbeing. Practical guidance is also provided for Line Managers on promoting a positive culture of attendance in the workplace and managing sickness absence.

Our Health & Wellbeing Policy Statement states our commitment to supporting the holistic health and wellbeing of our people enabled by wellbeing programmes, events and our Employee Assistance Programme.

The Central Bank applies Circular 07/2018: Recovery of Salary, Allowances, and Expenses Overpayments made to Staff Members/ Former Staff Members/ Pensioners in instances where any colleague is overpaid by the Central Bank as a result of a sick leave absence.

## Purpose

- The purpose of this policy is to:
  - provide guidance to managers and colleagues on their responsibilities in relation to managing sick leave absence(s);
  - foster reduced absence levels through early identification of trends & introduction of interventions; and
  - provide information on how sick leave is paid by the Central Bank.

## Scope

This policy applies to all Central Bank employees.

# Policy Statement

Absenteeism and sick leave absences can impact the individual, the broader team and the organisation:

- **The Individual** experiencing the illness must prioritise self-care for a period of time. The nature of their illness may impact their physical, mental and/or emotional wellbeing and may result in (increased) anxiety, particularly when returning to work following illness;
- **The Team** can often be impacted by an increased workload or increased uncertainty if priorities/ tasks must be re-assigned during periods of sick leave absence; and
- **The Organisation** - the health and wellbeing of our people is paramount and we must ensure that colleagues feel supported and the appropriate steps are taken to enable them return to work when they are ready to do so. In addition, the Central Bank is impacted financially depending on the level of sick leave payment that applies to the particular circumstances<sup>3</sup>.

This policy is complimented by the following organisational supports:

- early intervention/ engagement where sick leave patterns are identified;
- return to work conversations (see below for further information);
- referral (as appropriate) to our Occupational Health Specialist;
- application of reasonable accommodations in the workplace that may be required to support colleagues manage an illness or disability; and
- access to our Employee Assistance programme.

## Early Intervention

### Identifying Attendance Patterns

- Early intervention is necessary where attendance falls below reasonable levels to ensure appropriate action is taken by both line managers and colleagues;

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<sup>3</sup> Colleagues should refer to the Sick Leave Regulations for further information

- Absence levels will be monitored centrally and, in circumstances where levels fall below acceptable standards, the HR Advisory Team will engage with the individual and/ or their line manager to understand the issue and ensure appropriate action is taken (which may include ensuring necessary/ appropriate supports are put in place).

### Engaging with Colleagues

- Managers are encouraged to maintain regular contact, as appropriate, with colleagues while absent on sick leave through regular check-ins, to ensure they feel supported during their illness and in their recovery; and
- The frequency and method of this engagement will vary and may depend on factors such as the nature of illness, the expected duration of sick leave absence and what works best for those involved and the particular circumstances.

### Understanding Drivers of Sick Leave Absence(s)

- For the majority of colleagues sick leave absences will only be required on occasion, when experiencing temporary illness and, in general, absences of this nature will not have a significant impact on their overall attendance;
- Colleagues with serious or chronic, enduring health issues may record higher levels of sick leave absence and the organisational supports outlined will be important in these circumstances;
- Colleagues experiencing an illness or managing a disability that may result in sick leave absence should engage with their manager and/ or the HR Advisory Team to ensure any necessary/ appropriate supports can be put in place. Such conversations, and any information disclosed, will be treated in the strictest of confidence and with the utmost sensitivity; and
- There may also be a small number of cases where a high level of sick leave absence may be an indication of misuse of this policy, and the accompanying Sick Leave Regulations, and such cases while exceptional in nature may be dealt with under the Central Bank's Disciplinary Procedures.

### Occupational Health Specialist (OHS)

- The Central Bank has discretion to refer any colleague to our Occupational Health Specialist (OHS). Such referrals are initiated by either the individual's manager or

the HR Advisory Team and in general arise in cases of extended/ repeated sick leave absence, potential work-related sick leave absence or any circumstance meriting further investigation<sup>5</sup>;

- On occasion, if the nature of illness is disclosed and is deemed to warrant further investigation, an appointment with the OHS may be arranged for absences shorter than 4 weeks;
- In circumstances where a team member is injured in work it would be expected that the Central Bank will monitor their recovery through referral to the OHS;
- The Central Bank has a duty of care to ensure that the work environment is not contributing to any illnesses among colleagues (including stress) and may engage with the OHS to investigate any circumstances where this is suggested;
- Colleagues may also request an OHS referral (via their manager) in circumstances where they believe their work environment is impacting their health; and
- The OHS will engage with the HR Advisory Team during their assessment process<sup>6</sup> and this may include seeking to engage with the individual's GP<sup>7</sup> (to request further information etc.) and/ or to refer the employee to an independent medical specialist.

## Reasonable Accommodation(s)

- In circumstances where an individual indicates that their sick leave absenteeism is due to a medical condition the Central Bank is obligated to explore whether this may be deemed a disability under Employment Equality legislation; and
- The Central Bank will generally initiate a referral to the OHS to establish the specific accommodation(s)<sup>8</sup> that will be required and will ensure that any recommended are implemented.

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<sup>5</sup> This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but rather a guide to circumstances where it may be necessary to engage with our Occupational Health Specialist – further information can be found in the accompanying Sick Leave Regulations

<sup>6</sup> including providing an assessment to HR Advisory on conclusion which may include a recommended graduated return for the individual concerned

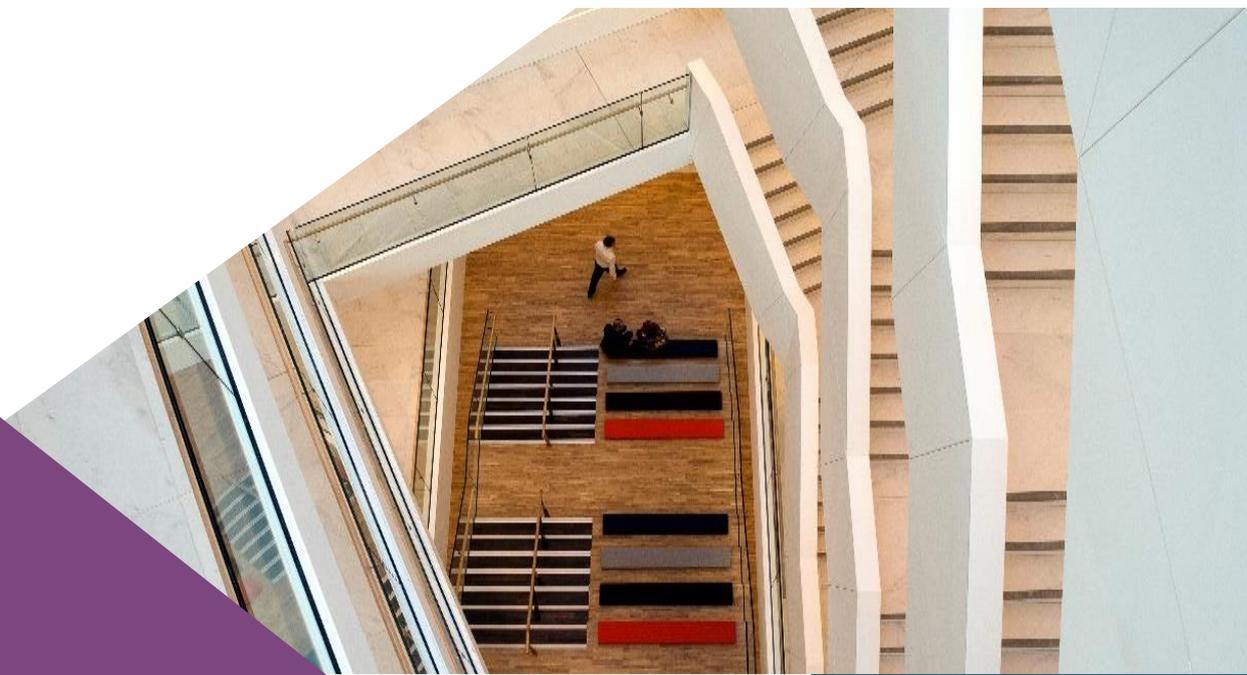
<sup>7</sup> The OHS will ensure that the individual concerned has provided their consent in advance of making contact with their GP

<sup>8</sup> Examples of reasonable accommodation(s) may include (but are not limited to):

- making adjustments to physical work station where reasonably practical;
- reassigning certain tasks;
- adjusting starting or finishing times;
- supporting colleagues in returning to work, in either a reduced hours or other part-time arrangement, either on a temporary or longer-term basis.

## Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

- Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to all colleagues –further information is available here;
- Colleagues can also speak with their manager, on a confidential basis, in relation to the supports available;
- Colleagues and/or managers may seek information, support and advice at any time, on a confidential basis, from the HR Advisory team ([hradvisory@centralbank.ie](mailto:hradvisory@centralbank.ie))



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