

Return to Work Meeting

Prepare

- Invite the employee to attend an informal meeting on his/her first day back at work.
- The interview should be held in a private and confidential area free of interruptions including telephone calls.
- Check absence records and whether the employee has reached a trigger point.
- Be prepared to discuss trends or patterns of absence
- Note action points arising from previous return to work interviews

Purpose of the Meeting

- Welcome the employee back to work and confirm they are fit to return;
- Update the employee on any work related issues/news
- Understand the reason/cause of the absence. It is important to know why an employee is sick, the cause could be work-related, or reasonable adjustments may be needed to help the employee return to work, as well as organise appropriate cover for the absence, if needed. Analysing sickness absence records can uncover any notable patterns or reasons for absence that could be caused by or exacerbated by work. Early intervention can increase the chances of a quicker return to work and minimise disruption caused by absences. Monitoring of sickness absence records will facilitate an early identification of any potential problems. Give the employee the opportunity to raise any issues (work related or otherwise);

The interview

(Suggested points for discussion)

- The purpose of the meeting is to provide support to the individual on their return to work
- Review attendance records/previous RTW meetings
- What support is the employee currently receiving from GP/counselling?
- Are there any work related or underlying personal problems?
- For personal problems suggest the Employee Assistance Helpline.
- For work related problems you will need to understand the issue(s). Seek advice from HR after the meeting in relation to possibly undertaking a work stress risk assessment
- Explain the effect that absence has on colleagues and the ability to deliver the service/meet objectives
- Establish expectations regarding attendance (reporting)
- Remind the employee of mutual obligations – individuals responsibility/contractual obligation to attend work. Employer/manager responsibility for employees wellbeing
- Discuss next steps within the absence management procedure, set targets and a review meeting
- USE the RTW form to capture relevant factual information