



Title:	Attendance Management Policy		
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Ownership:	Director of HR & Corporate Services		
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Version No:	1.0	Supersedes:	Pre-dated Attendance Management Policy
Key words:	Health and well-being, attendance management, sickness absence		
Other Relevant Policies:	NIAS Attendance Management Procedure NHS Terms & Conditions of Service Handbook Sections 14 & 22 and Annex 26		

1.0 INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSC Trust (hereafter referred to as 'the Trust') recognises that the health and well-being of its workforce is critical to its effective functioning and that the management of attendance is an important management issue which requires to be pursued in an open and transparent manner.
- 1.1.2 In this context, the Trust, as an employer, has a duty to support staff when they become ill, facilitating them, in so far as is reasonably practicable, to safely return to and remain in work as early as they can. The Trust also has a responsibility to actively encourage a culture of health and well-being within the workforce, while equally expecting employees to take personal responsibility for their own health and well-being.

1.2 Purpose

The Trust has a primary responsibility to provide high quality services to the population of Northern Ireland. The Trust recognises that sickness absence places additional pressure on employees who are not affected by illness and carries a significant financial cost which draws resources away from service delivery. This policy is intended to provide a framework for effective attendance management in accordance with the Regional Policy Framework for Best Practice for Managing Attendance, NHS terms and conditions, relevant legislation and evidence based best practice principles.

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 This document aims to:
- Provide the context for defining a fair, reasonable, consistent and transparent procedure for managing attendance;
 - Outline the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in attendance management;
 - ensure compliance with the Regional Policy Framework for Best Practice for Managing Attendance, NHS terms and conditions, relevant legislation and evidence based best practice principles.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Trust employees.

3.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 All employees have a responsibility in relation to attendance at work. In addition, some employee groups have additional specialist roles and responsibilities in ensuring effective attendance management.

3.2 The Trust:

- should provide a safe and supportive working environment;
- should promote initiatives that sustain the overall health and well-being of all employees;
- should support employees impacted by ill health and endeavour to retain them in their current role where possible or consider reasonable adjustments and/or redeployment to other roles where necessary.

3.3 All Trust Employees:

- should give regular and effective attendance at work;
- should take personal responsibility for their own health and well-being;
- should not remain away from work on sickness absence, where adjustments/modifications could be made to facilitate their return;
- should adhere to attendance management arrangements as they apply to them.

3.4 Senior Management:

- should demonstrate leadership in the development, implementation, monitoring and review of this policy and associated procedures, ensuring that attendance management arrangements are applied fairly, reasonably and consistently to all employees.

3.5 Line Management:

- should apply attendance management principles fairly, reasonably and consistently to all employees, taking into account individual circumstances;
- should encourage and assist employees in maintaining their own health and well-being;
- should support employees impacted by ill health to remain and/or return to work through meaningful engagement and consideration of all feasible options.

3.6 Human Resources:

- should lead the development of health and well-being initiatives and attendance management policy, procedures and practices, in consultation with key stakeholders and in accordance with the Regional Policy Framework for Best Practice for Managing Attendance, NHS terms and conditions, relevant legislation and evidence based best practice principles;
- should develop and deliver communication and training programmes to support the implementation of this policy and associated procedures;

- should provide management information reports and consistent, resolved, professional advice to Managers and employees in relation to health and well-being and attendance management issues;
- should lead the monitoring and review of effectiveness of attendance management policy, procedures and practices, in consultation with key stakeholders.

3.7 **Occupational Health:**

- Should liaise with key stakeholders in the promotion of employee health and well-being and the provision of specialist advice in relation to employee ill health and attendance management.

3.8 **Trade Unions:**

- should engage with the Trust in the development of health and well-being initiatives and attendance management policy, procedures and practices;
- should provide support to individual employees in relation to health and well-being and attendance management issues;
- should promote employee compliance with agreed attendance management arrangements.

4.0 **KEY POLICY PRINCIPLES**

- 4.1 The Trust and Trade Unions will actively promote a culture that encourages attendance at work.
- 4.2 The Trust is committed to the promotion and provision of initiatives that offer practical support and preventative measures for the health and well-being of all employees.
- 4.3 The Trust and Trade Unions will seek to identify and address the underlying causes of sickness absence where interventions in the workplace would improve employee health and well-being.
- 4.4 Rehabilitation and a focus on return to work will be a primary consideration for the Trust in attendance management arrangements, as it recognised that being out of work can progressively damage health and decrease life expectancy.
- 4.5 Targeted interventions to improve employee health and well-being, such as access to timely physiotherapy services and counselling, will be an essential component of the Trust's approach to attendance management.
- 4.6 The Trust will maximise the potential of information systems, including the Human Resources, Payroll and Travel System (HRPTS), to establish clear methods for monitoring, measuring and understanding sickness absence and to inform the development of relevant action plans.

- 4.7 The Trust recognises that early intervention and regular, effective communication by line managers are key to reducing employee absence.
- 4.8 This policy will be underpinned by comprehensive procedures which address all aspects of attendance management including:
- notification of and contact during sickness absence;
 - certification and recording of sickness absence;
 - management of short-term, intermittent and long-term sickness absence, including Occupational Health referral processes;
 - return to work arrangements, including return to work interviews, rehabilitation programmes, reasonable adjustments and redeployment processes;
 - ill health retirement and termination processes;
 - HSC Injury Allowance process.
- 4.9 Line managers and Trade Unions will receive comprehensive training and resolved professional advice and guidance in applying this policy and associated procedures.
- 4.10 Employees who are unwell will be treated with dignity and respect at all stages in the attendance management process.
- 4.11 Employees can expect that their sickness absence will be managed in a fair and reasonable manner in accordance with a shared goal of an early return to work, which is in the best interests of both the employee and the Trust.
- 4.12 The Trust will adhere to its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), including the duty to make reasonable adjustments, as an integral part of attendance management arrangements.
- 4.13 Reasonable adjustments within the scope of the DDA and other role modifications/ redeployments will be considered collaborative between all relevant stakeholders and will be implemented in a timely manner in order to support the employee in remaining in the workplace and/or prevent unnecessary delays in the employee returning to work.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

5.1 Dissemination

- 5.1.1 This policy will be disseminated to all Trust employees and will be included on the Trust's intranet site.

5.2 Resources

- 5.2.1 A comprehensive, mandatory training programme to support the implementation of this policy and associated procedures will require to be developed and delivered to line managers and Trade Unions.

5.3 Exceptions

5.3.1 There are no exceptions to this policy.

6.0 MONITORING & REVIEW

6.1 The implementation of this policy and associated procedures will be monitored to ensure compliance across the organisation. The policy and associated procedures will be reviewed in the context of organisational learning outcomes, emerging legislation and best practice to ensure continued effectiveness and fitness for purpose.

6.2 This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed every 2 years.

7.0 EVIDENCE BASE/REFERENCES

7.1 Regional Policy Framework of Best Practice for Managing Attendance

8.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

8.1 HR Terms & Conditions Group
Senior Executive Management Team

9.0 APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

9.1 None.

10.0 EQUALITY STATEMENT

10.1 In line with duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; Targeting Social Need Initiative; Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Human Rights Act 1998, an initial screening exercise, to ascertain if this policy should be subject to a full impact assessment, has been carried out.

10.2 The outcome of the screening exercise for this policy is:

Major impact
Minor impact
No impact.

11.0 SIGNATORIES

Lead Author

Date: _____

Lead Director

Date: _____