

Occupational Health Services Absence Management Programme

What Is It?

The EBS Absence Management Programme is designed for Directors and Senior Managers who want to both protect their business and maximise the productivity of their staff. The programme uses up-to-date coaching techniques coupled with experienced functional expertise to ensure that any policies and procedures used to manage all of the issues around employee absences deliver bottom line benefits for employers, whilst satisfying all of the relevant employment legislation.

Whether it is a genuine illness, or an employee throwing a "sickie", unplanned absences are both costly and disruptive to your business. A high level of sickness absence has a detrimental effect on the level and quality of service provision, places an additional burden on colleagues and can result in increased costs through the use of temporary staff to cover. However, tackling poor attendance due to ill health can be even more expensive if it is handled unprofessionally or, even worse, can be unlawful, if you go about it the wrong way.

Procedural failures can lead to automatic findings of 'unfair dismissal' at an Employment Tribunal and additional awards being increased by between 10% and 50%. However, the regulations also put responsibilities on the employee and any failure on their part can lead to either a claim at tribunal being non admissible, or any awards made being reduced by up to 50%.

By ensuring the company has a workable Sickness Absence Management Policy, you are giving your business the right medicine to put it on the road to recovery.

What are the advantages to my organisation?

- **Being Legally Compliant:** If you dismiss or discipline an employee because of their sick absences, you need to have followed a formal process that has considered whether their condition is covered under the Disability Discrimination Act. Additionally tribunals are increasingly expecting to see the involvement of health professionals in an employer's decision making process. An EBS Occupational Health professional will ensure that your current documentation meets these minimum requirements, and that you or your managers follow your process correctly.
- **Being Consistent and Fair:** Without a formal policy, it is easy to just do 'what feels right' at the time. But if the way you tackle today's issue was different to the way you tackled yesterday's, you may inadvertently have discriminated against one of your employees. One common cause of inconsistency is that different managers can apply the same procedure in different ways. An EBS Occupational Health Professional will provide a robust process that gives clear and unambiguous guidance on the steps to take.
- **Best Fit for Your Organisation:** Whilst EBS are guided by best practice, any solution we recommend will be designed around the specific needs of your organisation. If you do not have suitable policies in place, we will never try to shoehorn a standard document or policy into your organisation; we will always customise such documentation to fit. Each company's Occupational Health requirements will need to take account of both their industry and operational practices.

What Is Included?

One of our EBS Occupational Health experts will work with you to review your current policies and procedures for dealing with employee absences, and ensure you have a robust Absence Management policy in place.

Such a policy will contain the following essential elements:

- A clear procedure for absence notification and data collection
 - Who does the employee need to notify
 - How can the notification be received
 - What records should you keep
- Pre-defined trigger points for management intervention
 - What do you see as 'acceptable' absences
 - Why a consistent approach is essential
- A requirement for 'return to work' interviews
 - Many companies find return to work interviews invaluable
 - What process do you want to record such interviews
- A clear policy on Occupational Health referrals.
 - So that both managers and employees know where they stand
 - Ensuring your contracts of employment give you the right to insist on employees undergoing such referrals
 - Which staff may need regular health assessments

The EBS Occupational Health expert will ensure that your Absence Management policy also contains all of the relevant procedures for your managers to follow and all the necessary forms to ensure that the policy can be easily implemented.

The initial Absence Management Programme also includes a full consultation with you and your managers around any current absence issues you may have, and the production of an action plan to bring those individuals into the new procedures. This may include recommendations on changes to other working practices to comply with other Health and Safety legislation.

What Does It Cost?

The tried and tested EBS Occupational Health Absence Management Programme is offered at a fixed price of **£750 + VAT** for companies with 100 employees or less.

In addition, EBS Occupational Health can support you in managing specific employee referrals, but the cost of this will be dependent upon the circumstances of each case. However, our fee for Occupational Health referrals is **£75 per hour + VAT**.

About EBS Occupational Health Services

EBS Occupational Health is a specialist area of service from EBS Management Resources, a multi-disciplinary provider of business support services to companies with 15 - 100 employees. Service portfolios are provided for the key functions of Human Resources, Occupational Health, Health & Safety, Marketing, Sales and General Management. EBS clients cover a wide range of industries and include Dayla, Bucks Net Services, Nottingham Forest Football Club and Red Door Communications.

For more information on our range of Occupational Health services, please contact us on 01844 211084, or visit our website: www.ebs-oh.co.uk