

CONDUCTING A RETURN TO WORK MEETING

GENERAL

A return to work meeting should be held following each occasion of absence, ideally on the employee's first day back at work but in any event no later than 3 working days of returning to work.

The meeting should normally be an informal one-to-one discussion **in private** with the employee. Where an employee works at a remote location or from home, a return to work discussion conducted by telephone may be sufficient. However, where the return to work follows a lengthy period of sickness absence, or where the level/type of absence is causing concern, a face-to-face meeting should be arranged. Advice can be sought from Human Resources in these circumstances.

PURPOSE OF RETURN TO WORK MEETING

The purpose of a return to work meeting will be to:

- acknowledge an employee's return to work and facilitate the speedy completion and processing of a self-certification form
- bring the employee up to date on operational matters including any changes that have occurred if the absence has been for a lengthy period
- discuss any issues/problems identified by the employee regarding the nature of their illness and/or their return to work.
- highlight any areas of concern and arrange an informal absence review meeting if appropriate
- advise employee of monitoring procedures.

If any underlying reasons for the employee's sickness absence(s) are identified, the manager should explore any measures that might assist the employee improve his/her attendance. Particular attention should be paid to cases where the employee indicates that absences may be work-related so that the exact nature of the problem can be established and consideration given to how it might be resolved.

If an employee indicates that they have a health condition or a disability that may impact on their performance or attendance at work, the manager should arrange a referral to Occupational Health to identify any support mechanisms or possible adjustments required.

The return to work meeting will require to be more comprehensive where an employee has been absent for a prolonged period or where persistent intermittent absence is identified. Managers must ensure that where an employee's absence level reaches the corporate action trigger points requires an informal review meeting, that meeting is convened separately in accordance with section 5.8 of the [Policy & Procedure on Supporting Attendance at Work](#) and the supporting [Guidance on Conducting an Informal Review Meeting](#)

ACTION REQUIRED FOLLOWING A RETURN TO WORK MEETING

Return to work meetings should be carried out following **EVERY** occasion of absence even where more advanced stages of the procedure for Supporting Attendance are in place. Managers should have a [Return to Work meeting form](#) and a [Self-Certification](#) form ready for completion.

Once completed, the employee should sign the [Return to Work meeting form](#). The Manager should retain the form for monitoring purposes along with the completed [Self-Certification](#) form. Following the return to work meeting, the Manager should ensure that any actions agreed to assist the employee's return to work/improve his or attendance are implemented.

For monitoring and compliance purposes, managers are required to confirm that they have undertaken Return to Work Meetings in accordance with section 5.3 of the [Policy & Procedure on Supporting Attendance at Work](#).