CIPD Factsheet Absence Measurement and Management

What absence policies need to contain

The first step to managing absence effectively is to ensure that you have a clear policy in place that supports your organisation's business objectives and culture. Legislation requires employers to provide staff with information on 'any terms and conditions relating to incapacity for work due to sickness or injury, including any provision for sick pay'.

Effective absence policies must spell out employees' rights and obligations when taking time off from work due to sickness. The policy should:

- provide details of contractual sick pay terms and its relationship with statutory sick pay
- outline the process employees must follow if taking time off sick – covering when and whom employees should notify if they are not able to attend work
- include when (after how many days) employees need a self-certificate form
- contain when they require a medical certificate (sick-note) from their doctor to certify their absence
- mention that the organisation reserves the right to require employees to attend an examination by a company doctor and (with the worker's consent) to request a report from the employee's doctor
- include provisions for return-to-work interviews as these have been identified as the most effective intervention to manage short-term absence.