

Creating absence policies

As an employer, you should make clear what happens when workers need time off.

You can decide whether to have one policy or separate policies to cover different types of absence.

Having absence policies can:

- help everyone understand their responsibilities
- support employers to manage absence consistently

What your absence policies should cover

Your policies should explain how you will deal with different types of absence. This includes time off for:

- [holiday](#)
- [care and support](#) – for example, family-related or bereavement leave
- [medical appointments](#)
- [sickness](#) – this includes [pregnancy-related sickness](#)
- [when there's disruption getting to work](#)

Some types of absence can usually be planned in advance. For example, holiday or some family-related leave. Others may happen unexpectedly. For example, sickness, bereavement or time off for dependants.

What to consider

In any policies about absence, you should consider including:

- how workers should book planned absences
- how workers should report unplanned absences
- how you handle [unauthorised absence and lateness](#)
- whether you use a [trigger point](#) system and how this works
- how workers should [keep in touch during absence](#)
- support available to workers while they're off
- what to do if someone needs [time off for reasons related to a disability](#)
- support available for workers [returning to work after absence](#)
- what you'll pay your worker during absence, for example if they'll get [sick pay](#) or [holiday pay](#)

For some areas related to absence you must follow what the law says. For example:

- [statutory sick pay \(SSP\)](#)
- [fit notes](#)
- [time off for dependants](#)

Consulting workers and representatives

When creating or reviewing your absence policy, you should involve any recognised trade union. Check if there is an agreement in place that requires this. If there are no recognised trade unions, you should consult worker representatives.

Supporting and training managers

As an employer, you should support managers to follow and apply your absence policies.?

You should:

- share absence policies with the whole organisation
- make policies clear and easy to follow
- provide training on the policies

Get more advice and support

If you have any questions about absence policies, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).

Acas also provides:

- [tailored support for employers](#)
- [training on managing absence](#)
- [free webinars](#) – including on sickness absence