

If theres a valid reason

An employee who is late for work or does not come to work might have a valid reason for it. For example:

- they're unwell
- they have been delayed by travel disruption
- there's an unexpected emergency involving someone who depends on them
- someone close to them has died

The employer should:

- follow their policy for recording the absence or lateness, if they have one – this might be a general policy for absence or a specific policy for a type of leave
- remind their employee of how to report absences or lateness – if it's appropriate
- offer any support the employee needs

Find out more about:

- [disruption getting to work](#)
- [time off for dependants](#)
- [time off for bereavement](#)
- [keeping in touch during absence](#)

Checking if there are reasons for absence or lateness

An employee might not give a reason for their unauthorised absence. However, employers should consider if there's something they reasonably could know about that is causing absence or lateness. For example:

- mental health problems
- a disability
- being bullied at work

An employee might not feel comfortable telling their employer about the reason behind their absence or lateness.

Employers should try to create an open and supportive environment to discuss this. They should:

- make sure conversations are in private
- ask open questions and not make assumptions
- consider allowing the employee to bring someone with them to any meetings – this could be someone they work with or a trade union representative, if they're a member

Employees should be honest with their employer about the reasons for their absence or lateness. If the employer knows what's happening, they can offer support.

Employers and employees should talk to see if the employer can offer support to help the employee attend work. For example:

- [flexible working](#)
- [reasonable adjustments](#), if the employee is disabled

Find out more about:

- [supporting mental health at work](#)
- [supporting disabled people at work](#)
- [bullying at work](#)