

## Reducing absence

Effectively addressing sickness absence in your organisation can:

- reduce absence levels
- improve employee morale and wellbeing
- boost productivity
- save money

There are different steps you can take to try and reduce absence in your organisation.

## Having absence policies

Having clear absence policies can help you to manage absence in your organisation. Policies will make it clear what's expected of you and your employees if they need time off work.

You should:

- be consistent and fair when using absence policies
- make sure policies are flexible and allow you to take into account employees' individual circumstances

[Find out more about creating absence policies](#)

## Training managers to deal with absence effectively

You should train managers in how to use any absence policies you have.

Managers should know how to:

- apply policies consistently whilst being flexible to individual circumstances
- handle sensitive information, for example details about an employee's medical condition

## Promoting a good work-life balance

A good work-life balance can lead to lower levels of sickness absence.

To support a good work-life balance for your employees, you should:

- encourage them to speak up if they feel they're under too much pressure at work
- train managers to spot signs of a poor work-life balance
- offer flexible working where possible
- encourage breaks from work, including during the day and making sure employees take holiday
- regularly review workloads

- lead by example – if managers and senior leaders have a good work-life balance, this will create a culture for employees to follow

## Creating the right culture

You should create a culture at work where employees:

- feel comfortable raising problems
- trust that the issue will be taken seriously
- know they'll receive the support they need

This will mean employees are more likely to stay in work, even if there's a problem.

## Having return to work meetings

Return to work meetings can help you identify the best way to manage sickness absence. They're an opportunity for you to check an employee has the support they need to be at work.

Using return to work meetings consistently can help you identify:

- any trends in absence across the organisation
- underlying causes of absence

This will mean you can:

- explore whether you need to take any action to address absence in your organisation
- find the most appropriate way to address absence

[Find out more about return to work meetings](#)

## Understanding absence in your organisation

Understanding absence levels and trends in your organisation can help you work out the best way to reduce absence.

[Find out more about recording sickness absence](#)

## Addressing the causes of absence

You might find there are certain issues that are causing higher levels of sickness absence.

For example, employees are:

- experiencing work-related stress
- struggling to balance work with caring responsibilities
- having breakdowns of relationships at work

You should try and address these underlying causes.

For example, you could:

- provide training for managers on supporting employees with work-related stress
- offer more ways of flexible working

- explore using mediation to resolve disagreements at work

Find out more about:

- [managing work-related stress](#)
- [flexible working](#)
- [mediation](#)

## Get more advice and support

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

Acas also provides:

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