

ABSENCE POLICY

Version: 31st March 2026

ABSENCE POLICY – ALL STAFF	
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Division	Senior Management Team
For use by	Staff
Purpose	To ensure consistent monitoring and supportive management of staff absence
Key related documents	Other HR policies
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DOCUMENT CONTROL			
DATE	EDITS	EDITOR / REVIEWER	CHANGE CONTROLLER / DOCUMENT OWNER
23rd December 2023	Update new absence reporting procedure	Vanessa Brown Head of Corporate Services	Vanessa Brown Head of Corporate Services
27 th March 2024	Reformat and review of Policy for SMT sign off	Vanessa Brown Head of Corporate Services	Vanessa Brown Head of Corporate Services
17 th April 2024	Approved at SMT for sign off and distribution	SMT	Vanessa Brown Head of Corporate Services
26 th April 2024	Amendment to Section 3.3 regarding self-certification period and sick note requirements	Vanessa Brown Head of Corporate Services	Vanessa Brown Head of Corporate Services
30 th April 2024	Amendments approved and policy recirculated	SMT	Vanessa Brown Head of Corporate Services
18 th July 2024	Amendment in Appendix 2 to reflect qualification for CSP from 3 months' service in line with probation and as agreed at SMT 20 th December 2023	SMT	Vanessa Brown Head of Corporate Services
30 th July 2024	Review and <i>EDITOR</i> formatting check	Ann Donkin, Chief Executive (Interim)	Ann Donkin, Chief Executive (Interim)
March 2025	Reformatted	Jasmine Toombs Head of Corporate Services	Jasmine Toombs Head of Corporate Services
2 nd March 2026	Updates to absence notification, medical appointments, sick pay, long term	Laura Hawkie-Chapman, Support Services Manager	Jasmine Toombs Head of Corporate Services

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	sickness, bereavement absence, time off for dependents, domestic emergencies, carers leave, <i>Bradford Factor</i> - considerations		
12 th March 2026	Review & <i>EDITOR</i> check pre SMT approval	Ann Donkin, Chief Executive	Jasmine Toombs Head of Governance & Finance
31 st March 2026	Inclusion of Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave	Jasmine Toombs Head of Governance & Finance	

DEFINITIONS

1. Employees, workers and self-employed individuals have rights and entitlements that differ in employment law. ACAS has produced guidance on this here: [Types of employment status - Employment status - Acas](#)
2. This policy applies to employees unless otherwise stated.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Age UK Norfolk (AUKN) is committed to providing a working environment that supports the health and well-being of employees. AUKN values the contribution employees make to our success, so when any employee is unable to be at work for any reason, we miss that contribution. This policy applies to all employees at AUKN.

2 KEY PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 AUKN's Absence Policy is based upon the following principles:
- Regular, punctual attendance is an implied term of every employee's contract of employment
 - AUKN asks each employee to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance
 - Accurate records of all absences and actions taken must be recorded and monitored on a regular basis
 - AUKN asks each employee to maintain the appropriate level of communication if there are factors which affect attendance.
- 2.2 AUKN will support employees who have genuine grounds for ill health. This support includes:
- a flexible approach to the taking of leave for appointments associated with the management of an employee's health such as access to Occupational Health advice
 - Rehabilitation programs in cases of long-term ill health absence.
- 2.3 AUKN will use an Occupational Health Service where appropriate to:
- Help identify the nature of an employee's illness
 - Advise the employee and their manager on the best way to support the employees' health and well-being in the workplace.
- 2.4 AUKN's Disciplinary Policy will be referred to where an explanation for absence is not given or is thought to be unsatisfactory, and where there is no improvement in the rate of absence.
- 2.5 AUKN respects the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's ill health.
- 2.6 The Bradford Factor and its trigger points (Appendix 1) is used to measure and manage absenteeism.

3 ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

- 3.1 All employees who are absent from work must follow the organisation's absence notification procedure in paragraph 3.3. This excludes any pre-arranged absence such as holiday or training.
- 3.2 Text messages are not an acceptable form of notification.
- 3.3 The employee should:
- Call the AUKN absence line **01603 787111 Ext 107** at least 1 hour before the start of their period of work. The employee should normally make the call personally. Where this is not reasonably practicable due to the nature of the illness or circumstances, notification may be made by another person on the employee's behalf. This call will go automatically to voicemail. The voicemail will be sent via email to the Senior Management Team and HR. The employee should leave their name and reason for absence. If the employee would prefer to speak directly to their line manager with a reason for absence, they should state on the message that they would like a call back from their manager.
 - Contact the absence line daily before 9am, unless a Fitness to Work (FIT note) has been provided, to update on any changes relating to their reason for absence, and any other information that may affect the anticipated length of time they have been absent.
 - If applicable, send FIT notes within two working days of receipt from their GP or medical practitioner via email to HR humanresources@ageuknorfolk.org.uk and their line manager.
 - Attend a return-to-work interview with their line manager upon return. An ill health self-certificate (on PeopleHR) will need to be completed for any absence up to 7 calendar days.
 - A FIT note will be required if sickness absence continues consecutively beyond the 7 calendar days i.e. from calendar day 8 onwards for the same sickness incidence.
- 3.4 If an employee does not arrive at work at their normal start time or following a period of annual leave, and no contact has been made by the employee explaining the circumstances for their absence, the line manager will attempt to contact the employee.
- 3.5 Employees who are absent from work for long-term ill-health issues will be contacted by **HR** or their line manager at regular intervals as agreed with them.

4 NOTIFICATION OF ILL HEALTH ABSENCE WHILST ON ANNUAL LEAVE

- 4.1 An employee who is ill whilst on holiday must follow the Organisation's absence notification procedure as above.
- 4.2 Only upon receipt of a FIT note will the number of days' holiday to which the certificate applies be treated as sickness. Failure to follow the procedure will result in holiday entitlement not being adjusted upon their return from holiday.

5 MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

- 5.1 Medical and dental appointments should be made outside normal working hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, it is anticipated that appointments will be made at the beginning or end of a period of work to minimise disruption to the team.
- 5.2 There is no general statutory right to be paid time off for routine medical or dental appointments however, employees will be granted paid time off for antenatal appointments which is required by law. Reasonable paid time off will also be considered for disability-related medical appointments as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010.

6 PREGNANCY RELATED ILL HEALTH

- 6.1 Pregnancy-related ill health should be recorded separately and should not be considered when looking at trigger points.

7 CERTIFICATION

- 7.1 Employees are responsible for ensuring that they follow the correct certification procedures.
- 7.2 If an absence continues past the date of the fit note, further fit notes must be provided to cover the extended period of absence to ensure the continuation of sick pay.
- 7.3 An employee whose period of absence is not covered by an appropriate fit note or signed self-certificate will not be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay and AUKN reserves the right, if applicable, to withhold Company Sick Pay

8 STATUTORY SICK PAY

- 8.1 If an employee is absent through ill health for a total of 28 weeks or less for one period of sickness absence, they may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from the organisation provided they are eligible to receive it and have followed the correct reporting procedure.
- 8.2 Statutory Sick Pay will be paid from day 1 of absence from 6th April 2026
- 8.3 Statutory Sick Pay will be paid in accordance with employment law and rates in force at the time of absence [Statutory Sick Pay \(SSP\) : Overview - GOV.UK](#).

9 COMPANY SICK PAY

- 9.1 An employee's entitlement to Company Sick Pay (CSP) is outlined in Appendix 2.
- 9.2 An employee's entitlement to receive CSP is subject to having followed the reporting procedure.
- 9.3 Failure to comply with the absence reporting procedure may result in CSP not being paid.

10 LONG TERM SICKNESS

- 10.1 Long-term sickness is more than four weeks continuous absence.
- 10.2 The line manager should maintain regular contact where possible with the employee in order to reduce feelings of isolation, to keep them up to date with organisational issues and to remain informed about the likely duration of the sickness absence and possible support that may be appropriate.
- 10.3 HR may make a referral to Occupational Health to gain advice on the employee's fitness for work, likely date of return and where relevant a rehabilitation programme.
- 10.4 The manager, in consultation with HR and other relevant parties, e.g. the Occupational Health Service will determine how to take the issue forward (possibly in the form of a case management meeting).
- 10.5 Where there is a prospect of recovery within a reasonable timeframe, with or without reasonable adjustments, the employee should be supported in that recovery which should be agreed at any return to work meeting. In such cases, a return to the workplace plan should be developed and reviewed in discussion with the employee, and where appropriate a risk assessment undertaken.

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- 10.6 The line manager will be responsible for ensuring that the return-to-work plan is put into place. The employee will also be responsible for cooperating with the implementation of the plan.
- 10.7 Before any decision is made regarding termination of employment on grounds of ill-health capability, the organisation will ensure that a fair and reasonable process has been followed. This will normally include:
- obtaining appropriate and up-to-date medical evidence, including advice from Occupational Health where appropriate
 - consulting fully with the employee regarding their health, prognosis and ability to return to work
 - considering reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
 - considering temporary or permanent redeployment to suitable alternative roles where available
 - allowing the employee to be accompanied at formal meetings in accordance with the organisation's policies.

Dismissal on grounds of ill-health will only be considered as a last resort where there is no reasonable prospect of a return to work within a reasonable timeframe.

- 10.8 In some cases, Occupational Health may recommend that a rehabilitation programme and / or redeployment is not appropriate. In such circumstances, the organisation may consider whether continued employment is viable on grounds of ill health. This will be reviewed with HR and a senior manager at a final sickness review meeting, at which there will be a full review of the case. The employee will be involved in this process and any decision will be made having due regard to the Equality Act 2010.
- 10.9 Employees who are ill due to a recurring illness or for a prolonged period may be referred to Occupational Health for further information or the organisation may request a medical report from the employee's own doctor or medical practitioner.
- 10.10 At the organisation's request employees will consent to see Occupational Health or a Medical Practitioner for them to assess fitness for work either during a period of sickness absence, following a return to work or at any other time should the organisation consider it necessary.
- 10.11 The organisation recognises that some health conditions, including menopause, long-term conditions and disabilities, may affect attendance. Where absence is related to a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments may be considered and absence triggers may be reviewed to ensure fair treatment.

11 RETURN TO WORK

- 11.1 Every employee who returns from any length of absence (excluding any pre-arranged absence such as holiday or training course attendance) must have a return-to-work interview with their line manager.

- 11.2 It should be noted that if the reason for the employee's absence is of a highly confidential nature and they do not wish to discuss this with their line manager, they may ask to see someone from HR in confidence.

12 COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

- 12.1 The primary purpose of compassionate leave is to help employees come to terms with the death of an immediate family member (spouse, civil partner, parent, child, stepchild sibling or grandparent), a serious illness or injury involving an immediate family member, or a serious personal problem (see section 17 for domestic emergency where unpaid leave may be more appropriate).
- 12.2 Employees should contact their line manager as soon as reasonably practical in the event of the death of a member of their immediate family to request compassionate leave. The employee may receive, at the line manager's discretion, up to five days paid time off for bereavement. To ensure consistency and fairness, additional days will be at the discretion of the line manager and in agreement with HR, depending on the circumstances.
- 12.3 In the event of the death of another close relative (who is not the employee's dependent), for example aunt, uncle, cousin, parent-in-law or a close friend, the employee may request unpaid leave or may request to use his / her holiday entitlement to attend the funeral.
- 12.4 In the event of the death of a child, the employee is entitled to Statutory Parental Leave set out in section 13.
- 12.5 The reason for absence (i.e. compassionate leave) will be completed on PeopleHR under other events by their line manager, with authorisation for this to be paid or unpaid.
- 12.6 The treatment of other exceptional events in respect of compassionate leave which are not classed as a domestic emergency, will be at the discretion of the line manager.

13 PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

- 13.1 In the event of the death of a child under the age of 18 or stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy employees are entitled to 2 weeks Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave.
- 13.2 To qualify for Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave the employee must be the:
- biological parent
 - adoptive parent if the child was living with them person who lived with the child and had responsibility for them, for at least 4 weeks before they died

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- intended parent - due to become the legal parent through surrogacy
- partner of the child's parent, if they live with the child and the child's parent in an enduring family relationship.

- 13.3 Employees have this right from the first day of employment.
- 13.4 Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave can be taken in the 56 weeks following their child's death.
- 13.5 The leave must end within 56 weeks. The child's death is the first day of the 56 weeks.
- 13.6 The employee can choose to take 1 or 2 weeks' leave. If they take 2 weeks this can be taken in one block or as 2 separate weeks.
- 13.7 A week is the same number of days normally worked in a week.
- 13.8 Any member of staff classed as a worker and not an employee is not entitled to Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave but they might be entitled to 2 weeks' Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay for the time they take off.
- 13.9 Employees must give notice to take Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave. To give notice the employee must inform their line manager when they intend to start the leave, whether they wish to take 1 or 2 weeks and the date their child died.
- 13.10 Employees can give verbal notice or send an email. Notice is not required by form or formal letter.
- 13.11 Employees do not need to give proof of death or stillbirth.
- 13.12 If the leave is to be taken in the first 8 weeks of the child's death it can begin as soon as notice is given.
- 13.13 If the leave is to be taken more than 8 weeks after their child has died the employee must give their line manager 1 weeks' notice to begin the leave or to cancel the leave.

14 STATUTORY PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE PAY

- 14.1 Employees and workers are entitled to 2 weeks' Statutory Bereavement Pay if:
- a. their child dies under the age of 18 or is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy
 - b. they were employed when their child died
 - c. they had worked for their employer for at least 26 weeks, on the Saturday before the child's death
 - d. they earn at least the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance contributions, in accordance with current statutory requirements.

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- 14.2 Employees and workers must ask their employee to claim Statutory Bereavement Leave confirming their name, their entitlement, the start and end date of the leave, the date of their child's death and their relationship to the child. If 2 separate weeks are taken the employee must give notice for each week.

15 Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave (BPPL)

- 15.1 Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave (BPPL) is a statutory entitlement for employees whose partner (the child's primary carer) dies on or after 6 April 2026.
- 15.2 BPPL applies where the death occurs within the first 52 weeks of a child's Birth or adoption placement.
- 15.3 Employees may take up to 52 week's leave to care for the Child.
- 15.4 Where the death occurs within the final 14 days of this 52-week period, employees may still take up to 14 days' leave.
- 15.5 Employees should notify their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable.

16 JURY SERVICE

- 16.1 In the event of an employee being called up for jury service, they should contact their line manager as soon as possible.
- 16.2 The employee should provide their line manager with a copy of the Court summons And any other relevant documentation.
- 16.3 If an employee's services are not required for any part of a whole Court day, they will be expected to return to work for the remainder of the working day.
- 16.4 If the employee's jury service ends before the expected period, the employee will be expected to return to work for the remainder of the period.

17 TIME OFF FOR PUBLIC DUTIES

- 17.1 Employees who wish to hold certain public positions and be allowed reasonable time off to perform duties associated with them will be required to seek the permission of their Line Manager and the Chief Executive.
- 17.1 The Chief Executive will take into consideration the nature of public duty, the impact the time allowed will have on the organisation and any development opportunities the public duty may bring to the employee.

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17.3 If the Chief Executive agrees to this request, the time off will be paid.

18 TIME OFF FOR DOMESTIC EMERGENCIES

18.1 AUKN recognises that employees will from time-to-time experience emergencies at home such as flood, fire or burglary.

18.2 This policy is intended to allow those who experience genuine domestic emergencies to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with the emergency.

18.3 It does not apply to planned events such as domestic repairs, building work or deliveries.

18.4 In the event of a domestic emergency, the employee should notify their line manager as soon as possible explaining the nature of the emergency and how much time off work is required.

18.5 There is no statutory entitlement to receive pay whilst taking time off for domestic emergencies therefore the organisation does not pay employees for time off for domestic emergencies.

18.6 Paid time off is at the discretion of the employee's line manager and in agreement with HR to ensure consistency and fairness.

18.7 The employee should:

- Notify their line manager of the emergency as soon as reasonably practical
- Take only the amount of time off work that is necessary to resolve the immediate emergency (this will normally be a day or less).

18.8 If further time off is necessary once the immediate emergency has been taken care of the following applies; the employee will be expected to take it as holiday

- a. Full time employees will be expected to take holiday or to use TOIL (if available) or take unpaid leave.
- b. Part-time employees will be expected to take holiday or to rearrange their working days/hours.

18.9 Time off for dependents under statutory provisions will take precedence where applicable.

19 TIME OFF FOR DEPENDENTS

- 19.1 All employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on them.
- 19.2 Provided the reasons for such a request are genuine and AUKN is informed as soon as possible an employee will be allowed reasonable **unpaid** time off work to deal with such emergencies.
- 19.3 For the purpose of this policy a dependent is defined as: a spouse, civil partner, child, step-child, parent, a person that lives with the employee (other than as their employee / tenant / lodger) or any other person who would reasonably rely on the employee for assistance if they fell ill or was injured or if they would rely on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care.
- 19.4 The right to take time off only covers emergencies. If it is known in advance that time off is needed, another form of leave could be arranged with the organisation such as parental, maternity, paternity or adoption leave.
- 19.5 An emergency is an unexpected situation that arises where someone who depends on you:
- is ill and needs your help
 - is involved in an accident or assaulted
 - needs you to arrange their longer-term care
 - needs you to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care, such as a childminder or a nurse failing to turn up
 - goes into labour.
- 19.6 An employee can only take off as long as it takes to deal with the immediate emergency. Employees may take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with the immediate emergency. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances. This right is intended to allow employees to deal with the immediate situation and make alternative care arrangements.
- 19.7 An employee who needs further time off for their dependents should discuss this with their line manager as soon as possible and explain the reason for their absence and the expected length of absence. This may be taken from annual leave allowance.

20 CARERS LEAVE

- 20.1 Employees have a statutory right to unpaid Carer's Leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need, in accordance with the Carer's Leave Act 2023.
- 20.2 This is a day-one right and applies to all employees regardless of length of service.

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- 20.3 A dependant is someone who relies on the employee for care, including:
- a spouse, civil partner or partner
 - a child
 - a parent
 - a person living in the same household (other than as a tenant, lodger or employee)
 - any person who reasonably relies on the employee for care.
- 20.4 A long-term care need includes:
- an illness or injury requiring care for more than three months
 - a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010
 - care needs relating to old age.
- 20.5 Employees may take up to one working week of unpaid Carer's Leave in any rolling 12-month period. Leave may be taken as individual days or half-days.
- 20.6 Employees must give notice of at least twice the length of leave requested (for example, two days' notice for one day of leave), subject to a minimum of three days' notice.
- 20.7 The organisation will not require evidence of the care need.
- 20.8 Carer's Leave cannot be refused but may be postponed where the operation of AUKN would be unduly disrupted. In such cases, AUKN will consult with the employee and agree an alternative date within one month of the original request.

APPENDIX 1

Bradford Factor

The formula that AUKN uses to measure absenteeism across all of its business is the Bradford Factor as follows:

S (Spells of absence) x S (spells of absence) X D (total number of days absence in the period)
= Bradford Factor score

e.g. five spells of absence with each spell lasting one day will have a score of $5 \times 5 \times 5 = 125$

Bradford Factor trigger scores

The following Bradford Factor trigger points have been defined by the organisation as a guideline to manage absenteeism. The triggers are applied over a rolling twelve-month period and will be used for consideration of different levels of action:

51 - 200 points is a trigger for consideration of an absence counselling review
201 - 399 points is a trigger for consideration of a first written warning
400 - 599 points is a trigger for consideration of a final written warning

Review stages

The organisation 'managing absence' procedure has the following stages:

- **Stage 1 - Absence Counselling Review**

This is triggered at the point an employee's Bradford score reaches 51 points. This is the first stage of the absence review stages and is an initial meeting to discuss the absence and to agree an improvement plan.

- **Stage 2 - First Written Warning**

This is triggered at the point an employee's Bradford score reaches 201 points. The warning will give details of the absence and in appropriate circumstances the improvement required. It will advise on the right of appeal. A copy of this written warning will be retained on file, but it will be spent for disciplinary purposes after twelve months.

- **Stage 3 - Final Written Warning**

This is triggered at the point an employee's Bradford score reaches 400 points. The warning will give details of the absence and in appropriate circumstances the improvement required. It will advise on the right of appeal. A copy of this written warning will be retained on file, but it will be spent for disciplinary purposes after twelve months.

- **Stage 4 - Dismissal**

Consideration for dismissal is triggered at the point an employee's Bradford score reaches 600 points.

All employees have the right to appeal. If they wish to avail themselves of that right they should do so in writing, detailing the grounds of the appeal, within 5 working days of receipt of written confirmation of the decision. The grounds for appeal should be directed to the member of management who carried out the meeting.

Other Considerations

If an employee receives a final written warning and there is a further spell of absence during the following 12-month period, they will be considered for dismissal.

The organisation reserves the right to skip levels of formal action depending on the severity and the circumstances of each case.

Failure to follow the correct ill health absence reporting procedure will be treated as misconduct under the Organisation's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, which may lead to disciplinary action.

If an employee suffers from a disability, the triggers may be modified at the discretion of HR.

The organisation will not apply trigger points automatically. Individual circumstances will always be considered, including disability-related absence, pregnancy-related absence, menopause-related absence, and any other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

APPENDIX 2

Company Sick Pay (CSP)

The CSP allowance, paid by AUKN, equal to full or half pay, based on basic salary, is dependent on your duration of absence and length of service as indicated in the table below.

Length of service at beginning of period of absence	Sickness allowance	
	Number of weeks* at full pay	Number of weeks* at half pay
Up to 3 months	0 weeks	0 weeks
3 months to 2 years' service	2 weeks	4 weeks
2 to 3 years' service	6 weeks	6 weeks
3 to 5 years' service	8 weeks	8 weeks
Over 5 years' service	12 weeks	12 weeks

**A week is the same number of days normally worked in a week as per the planner on People HR*

Company sick pay allowance in respect of any period of absence will be calculated by reference to your length of service on the start day of your period of absence. Any periods during which you have received company sick allowance in the 12 months immediately preceding any sickness absence will be counted against your entitlement to sick pay allowance.

An example calculation is shown below:

- employee A began employment with AUKN on 01/06/2022; they had 3 weeks of sickness (27/05/2024 returning to work week commencing 17/06/2024; the employee will receive 2 weeks full pay and 1 week half pay.