



Attendance and Sickness Absence Policy

Document Reference:	POL037	
Document Status:	Approved	
Version:	V8.0	
DOCUMENT CHANGE HISTORY		
Initiated by	Date	Author (s)
People Services	1 July 2010	Policy Lead
Version	Date	Comments
V7.1	June 2024	Policy reviewed, modernised, and updated by Head of HR Policy
V7.2	9 July 2024	Reviewed and updated following comments by HRBP, Wellbeing, OH and Resource Planning Teams.
V7.3	26 July 2024	Further review and update by Head of HR Policy
V7.3	12 August 2024	Reviewed and updated at HR Policy Subgroup

POL037 – Sickness Absence Management Policy

Version	Date	Comments
V7.4	5 September 2024	Approved at SPF
V8.0	30 September 2024	Approved at CRG
Document Reference	People Services	
Recommended at Date	SPF 5 September 2024	
Approved at Date	CRG 30 September 2024	
Valid Until Date	30 September 2027	
Equality Analysis	Completed 12 August 2024	
Linked procedural documents	Attendance and Sickness Absence Procedure Occupational Health Policy Reasonable Adjustments Policy Disability Policy Redeployment Policy and Procedure Pay Protection Policy Flexible Working Policy Terminal illness and Death in Service Policy Leavers Policy Special Leave Policy Maternity Leave and Pay Policy Drugs, Alcohol and/or Other Substance Misuse Policy Disciplinary Policy	
Dissemination requirements	All Trust employees by intranet	
Part of Trust's publication scheme	Yes	

POL037 – Sickness Absence Management Policy

The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) has made every effort to ensure this policy does not have the effect of unlawful discrimination on the grounds of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity. The Trust will not tolerate unfair discrimination on the basis of spent criminal convictions, Trade Union membership or non-membership. In addition, the Trust will have due regard to advancing equality of opportunity between people from different groups and foster good relations between people from different groups.

All Trust policies can be provided in alternative formats.

Contents

Paragraph		Page
1.	Introduction	6
2.	Purpose	6
3.	Scope	7
4.	Duties	7
5.	Definitions	9
6.	Maintaining attendance at work/early intervention	10
7.	Attendance and Sickness Absence Procedure	11
8.	Letting us know when you are unwell	12
9.	Staying in touch	13
10.	Notifying your return to work (Fit for duty)	13
11.	Evidence of sickness absence	14
12.	Sick pay	15
13.	Injury at work / NHS Injury Allowance	16
14.	Return to work meetings	16
15.	Triggers to hold a health review meeting	16
16.	Health review meetings	18
17.	Pregnancy related sickness absence	22
18.	Disability and long-term health conditions	22
19.	Time off for treatment / medical appointments	23
20.	Terminal illness	23
21.	Sickness absence and annual leave	23
22.	Working elsewhere whilst on sickness absence	23
23.	Sickness absence during suspension	24
24.	Additional support	24
25.	Policy review	25

POL037 – Sickness Absence Management Policy

Paragraph **Page**

Appendices

Appendix A	Equality Impact Assessment	26
Appendix B	Monitoring Table	30

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At EEAST we recognise the positive impact that regular attendance at work has on individual employees, their colleagues, and the patients we serve, and we are committed to supporting health and wellbeing to ensure that our employees can attend work on a regular basis.
- 1.2 We understand that there will inevitably be occasions when employees cannot attend work, or undertake their substantive role, because of illness, injury, or other health related reasons. When this happens, we commit to take the appropriate action to support them to return to work and/or their substantive role as soon as possible.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy and the related procedure is to:
 - provide guidance on employees' responsibilities when they are unable to attend work due to ill health or injury,
 - provide employees with guidance and assistance in accessing the appropriate support,
 - outline a process for managers to support and proactively manage both short- and long-term absence with empathy, and in a timely and consistent manner,
 - ensure employees are given the opportunity to improve their attendance at work,
 - ensure a consistent and supportive approach if, due to ill health and/or injury, employees are unable to meet the required standards of attendance in either their substantive role or in the workplace.
- 2.2 In applying this policy and the related procedure we will have due regard to both our operational needs by actively reviewing and managing attendance, and the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all EEAST employees. It does not apply to casual or agency workers, who should refer to the Casual Worker or Agency Worker Policies.
- 3.2 If an employee is in their probationary period and is absent from work because of illness, injury, or another health reason, this will be managed in conjunction with the Probationary Policy.

4. Duties

4.1 **Line managers** have a responsibility to:

- manage employee's attendance, absence and return to work, as appropriate and in line with this policy and related procedure,
- communicate appropriately with absent employees about their absence, the reason for it, and seek to identify ways to assist the employee to improve their attendance in the future,
- provide support and advice using occupational health (OH) services where appropriate,
- keep in mind EEAST's duty to make reasonable adjustments, in line with other relevant policies, e.g., Reasonable Adjustment Policy,
- ensure GRS is kept up-to-date and accurate with all information, including but not limited to certification, welfare calls, review meetings,
- review GRS absence reports on an ongoing basis and take appropriate action, recognising that high levels of sickness absence are a financial risk to EEAST,
- comply with Health and Safety requirements, Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR) and other relevant legislation, e.g., the Equality Act 2010.

4.2 **Employees** have a responsibility to:

POL037 – Sickness Absence Management Policy

- ensure regular attendance at work,
- familiarise themselves with this policy and related procedure,
- follow the relevant procedure and timeframes for notifying absence,
- be prepared to give a clear reason for absence (i.e., the nature of the illness or injury), and estimate how long they think the absence will last,
- continue to communicate appropriately with their manager when absent from work,
- co-operate fully with this locally agreed policy and procedure, including, but not limited to, engaging with their line manager, OH where appropriate, and attending workplace meetings.

4.3 **The HR representative** has a responsibility to:

- provide advice and guidance to employees and managers at formal meetings,
- ensure appropriate records are maintained of formal proceedings.

4.4 **Managers, HR representatives and Trade Union Representatives** are responsible for:

- providing advice and guidance to employees on the application of this policy and procedure,
- regularly monitoring and reviewing arrangements to identify where and how the policy can be improved.

5. Definitions (for the purposes of this policy)

Name	Definition
Absence	When an employee is absent from work and/or from their substantive role due to illness, injury, or another health reason.
Short-term absence	Any period of absence lasting up to 27 calendar days.
Long-term absence	Any continuous period of absence which lasts (or is expected to last) for 28 calendar days or more.
Disability / long-term health condition	See Disability and Long-term Health Conditions Policy. When disability is referred to, it also refers to any reported long-term health condition(s).
Attendance	Is interpreted in the wider sense of being available for work and covers employees working on or off site.
Self-certificate	A form an employee must complete, on return to work following every episode of sickness absence, which details the dates and reason for absence for up to 7 calendar days.
Fit Note	A form issued by a medically qualified practitioner to determine whether an employee is 'not fit for work', or 'may be fit for work' taking account of specific advice.
Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)	If eligible, SSP is payable for the days the employee would have worked (qualifying days only) for up to 28 weeks in any one period of sickness absence, at a weekly rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year.
Occupational Sick Pay (OSP)	If eligible, OSP is intended to supplement SSP to provide additional payment during sickness absence, in line with the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook (AFC).
Review period	A defined period during which an employee is required to follow actions within the mutually agreed Attendance and Sickness Absence Support Plan. For example, to show an improvement in sickness absence levels, or a successful and sustained return to work.
Unauthorised absence	A period of absence where an employee fails to report that they will not be attending work (except in exceptional circumstances). This includes periods of absence not covered by a self-certificate or Fit Note.

6. Maintaining attendance at work / early intervention

6.1 You are encouraged to approach your manager to discuss any health or personal issues which may impact your attendance so that you and your manager can discuss any adjustments and/or support available at the earliest opportunity.

6.2 Mental ill-health

6.2.1 EEAST is committed to supporting mental health in the same consistent way that physical health is supported, and we recognise that honest mental health conversations that do not stigmatise can be an important part of this.

6.2.2 If you let your manager know that you are experiencing mental ill-health, they may wish to seek advice, information, or assistance as appropriate from internal or external resources to support you at work.

6.2.3 The Wellbeing Team can provide quick and easy access to support, e.g., Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), Time for Me app. They can also signpost to the most appropriate service for numerous aspects of wellbeing, including domestic violence, finance, sleep, smoking, among many more. There are also a network of Wellbeing Champions and Mental Health First Aiders.

6.3 Musculoskeletal conditions

6.3.1 If you have a musculoskeletal injury or related absence which is impacting your ability to do your job, your line manager will make an OH referral as soon as possible once you have let them know. Where appropriate you may be offered a short course of physiotherapy (up to three sessions in a 12-month period).

7. Attendance and Sickness Absence Procedure

- 7.1 You and your line manager should always refer to the **Attendance and Sickness Absence Procedure (POL037-01)** together with this policy. The procedure, templates and other related documents can be found on the [Attendance and Sickness Absence Hub](#).
- 7.2 The Attendance and Sickness Absence Procedure will be referred to throughout this policy as **the procedure**.

8. Letting us know when you are unwell

- 8.1 If you cannot come to work, you need to let us know as soon as possible before you are due to start work.
- 8.2 Some business areas may have different notification procedures for operational reasons; therefore, you must follow the correct sickness absence reporting arrangements for your area (local reporting procedure) by referring to **the procedure**.
- 8.3 Failure to follow the correct local reporting procedure may result in your absence being regarded as unauthorised, which could affect your entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and/or Occupational Sick Pay (OSP). In this situation, managers can refer to **the procedure** for further information.
- 8.4 Managers must also refer to **the procedure** for the actions to take to record absence appropriately.
- 8.5 **If you become unwell at work (duty sick)**
- 8.5.1 If you become unwell or are injured whilst at work you should follow your local reporting procedure (**see Section 8.2**) as soon as possible. If this is not possible your colleague may do so on your behalf. Your manager will consider the need to risk assess the situation, and where appropriate inform your next of kin.
- 8.5.2 An update will be made to the 'sickness' section on GRS as follows:

POL037 – Sickness Absence Management Policy

- if you have already started work, the time you notify us will be recorded to show part-attendance for that day/shift, and this will not be counted as absence for the purpose of sick pay.
- if you have not started work, the whole day/shift will be recorded, and this will count as absence for the purpose of sick pay.

8.5.3 For the purposes of monitoring attendance, an episode of duty sick will be counted, together with other episodes of sickness absence, for the sickness absence triggers outlined in **Section 15**.

8.5.4 You must follow your local reporting procedure to let us know whether you are well enough to return to work for your next working day/shift or whether you intend to continue your absence.

8.5.5 Return to work meetings will be held for every episode of duty sick and/or sickness absence in line with **Section 14**.

9. Staying in touch

9.1 During the time you are off work you need to stay in touch with your manager. You and your manager should discuss how often you will keep in touch and who will contact who.

It is recommended that contact will be at least weekly, however, your manager will be sensitive to your individual circumstances, e.g., medical condition, when agreeing the frequency and method of contact.

9.2 Your line manager will update the note field on GRS with both the agreed frequency of contact and all relevant information discussed during the agreed contacts. They will always consider the confidentiality / sensitivity of your information before including, and where appropriate record this information elsewhere, e.g., personnel file.

10. Notifying your return to work (Fit for Duty)

- 10.1 You must follow your local reporting procedure e.g., by contacting your line manager / central scheduling team prior to your first day / shift, to confirm when you intend to return to work, i.e., to 'book fit for duty'.
- 10.2 SSP and OSP is calculated and paid using calendar days, and because we operate on a 24-hour basis, sickness records are calculated over seven calendar days. Therefore, sickness recording on GRS reflects actual calendar days regardless of when you are due to work. You should therefore report that you are fit to return as soon as you are, even if this is not due to be a workday.
- 10.3 If you do not book fit for duty and subsequently run into a non-working day, e.g., a rest day, your sickness absence will continue to be accumulated throughout this period and will require the appropriate certification (see Section 11).
- 10.4 You will remain recorded on GRS as being on sickness absence until the date and time that you 'book fit for duty'.

11. Evidence of sickness absence

- 11.1 You must provide certification for each day of absence (including non-working days, e.g., rest days / weekends) as follows:
 - **If you are absent for seven calendar days or less**, you must complete and sign a self-certification form setting out the dates of your absence and the nature of your illness or injury. You must also do this if your absence continues, and your fit note does not cover the first seven calendar days.

Your line manager can access a self-certificate from GRS and will ask you to complete this during your return-to-work meeting.

- **If you are absent for eight consecutive days or more, you must provide your line manager with a fit note for your entire period of absence from this date onwards.**

You should provide this as soon as possible, but no later than seven calendar days from when your first fit note is due, or seven calendar days from the end of the previous fit note.

- 11.2 Any uncertificated dates, i.e., 'gaps' between the first seven days of the self-certification period and the first date of your Fit Note or between the dates on each subsequent Fit Note, will be considered unauthorised absence, and OSP may be withheld accordingly. (Line managers should refer to **the procedure** for the process to be followed.)
- 11.3 Your line manager will arrange for all absence certificates to be entered against your sickness absence record on GRS.
- 11.4 If your fit note states that you 'may be fit for work', while there is no legal obligation to follow the recommendations, your line manager will take the recommendations seriously and give fair consideration, in consultation with OH and/or HR where appropriate, as to whether any of the changes recommended can be accommodated.

12. Sick pay

- 12.1 OSP is intended to supplement SSP to provide additional payment during periods of sickness absence, and, subject to the conditions within the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook (AFC), you will receive OSP in accordance with the scale below:

Length of Service	OSP period
During first year of service	One month's full pay and two months' half pay
During second year of service	Two months' full pay and two months' half pay

POL037 – Sickness Absence Management Policy

Length of Service	OSP period
During third year of service	Four months' full pay and four months' half pay
During fourth and fifth years of service	Five months' full pay and five months' half pay
After completing five years of service	Six months' full pay and six months' half pay

12.2 We reserve the right to withhold or suspend OSP, and may do so where:

- you have failed to provide sickness certification for each day of absence (**see Section 11**),
- you have failed to comply with notification, reporting and referral procedures in line with this policy,
- your absence was caused by an accident due to active participation in sport as a profession,
- where contributable negligence is proved,
- you are absent as a result of an accident, and you receive damages from a third party. If this is the case, then any sick pay you received must be repaid to the Trust.

12.3 Abuse of EEAST's sick pay scheme will be considered serious misconduct and may result in further action under the Disciplinary Policy and/or the Local Counter Fraud / HR Liaison Policy.

12.4 For further information on OSP, including how sickness absence may affect unsocial hours payments, you should refer to **the procedure**, your Principal Statement of Terms and Condition of Employment (contract of employment) and AFC.

13. Injury at work / NHS Injury Allowance

- 13.1 Injury allowance may be paid if you are on authorised sickness absence, or on a phased return to work with reduced pay or no pay, where you have sustained a work-related injury, illness, disease, or other health condition that is wholly or mainly attributable to your NHS employment.
- 13.2 Where eligible, injury allowance tops up OSP (or earnings when on phased return on reduced pay) and certain other income, i.e., contributory state benefits, to 85% of pay. This allowance is restricted to a period of up to 12 months.
- 13.3 You and your line manager should refer to **the procedure** for the process to be followed, including completion of an **Application Form for Review of Absence Pay (POL037-02)**.

14. Return to work meetings

- 14.1 When you return to work your manager, or an alternative manager if yours is not available, will meet you on your first day back, or as soon as reasonably practicable. Ideally the discussion will be carried out face-to-face but if this is not feasible, due to remote working/operational demand, it is also acceptable to hold the discussion remotely, e.g., via MS Teams.
- 14.2 You and your line manager should refer to **the procedure** for the actions to take during your meeting, including to update GRS.

15. Triggers to hold a health review meeting

- 15.1 So that we can ensure a consistent approach to managing attendance your line manager will monitor all absence over a rolling 12-month period in line with the following triggers:

Absence Triggers	Meeting arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When any single episode of absence has lasted, or is	Informal health review meeting*

Absence Triggers	Meeting arrangements
expected to last, for 28 calendar days or more (long-term absence), and/or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a return to work after a third period of short-term absence (including duty sick). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any continued long-term absence lasting, or expected to last, for a further 28 calendar days after the last health review meeting, and/or Following a return to work after 4 or more episodes of absence (including duty sick). 	Formal health review meeting

****If you are already attending formal health review meeting(s) at the short- or long-term sickness absence stage, you will remain at the formal meeting stage for any new short- or long-term absence.***

15.2 The short- and long-term absence health review meetings are not mutually exclusive, therefore if you have reached a trigger under the short-term process then have a period of long-term absence (or vice versa) the management of your absence will be considered in its entirety.

15.3 **When we will review and adapt triggers**

There may be circumstances where, whilst it is always necessary to appropriately manage, review and support periods of absence, your manager will have the discretion to set attendance thresholds based on your individual circumstances, by taking into account the following:

- disability related absence,
- pregnancy related absence,
- accident and/or injury at work related absence.

You and your manager should refer to the relevant section of this policy and/or **the procedure** for the process to be followed.

16. Health review meetings

16.1 After the return-to-work meeting, your manager may maintain ongoing discussions with you about your general wellbeing and attendance. However, there are occasions, i.e., if you have met an absence trigger, or if your manager is concerned about your attendance for any other reason, when a more structured management intervention in the form of health review meetings may be required.

16.2 Your manager will write to let you know when and where a health review meeting will be held.

16.3 You and your manager should refer to **the procedure** for the separate processes to be followed for short- and long-term absence.

16.4 Attendance and Sickness Absence Support Plan

16.4.1 During your health review meeting your manager will complete an Attendance and Sickness Absence Support Plan with you.

16.4.2 The support plan will include details of how both you and your manager can contribute to you either achieving regular attendance at work, or a return to work and/or your substantive role. The support plan will be based on your individual circumstances and must be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based).

16.4.3 The following templates are available on the Attendance and Sickness Management Hub:

POL037 – Sickness Absence Management Policy

- Attendance and Sickness Absence Support Plan (for short-term absences) **(POL037-03)**
- Attendance and Sickness Absence Support Plan (for long-term absence) **(POL037-04)**.

16.5 Occupational Health (OH)

16.5.1 During any period of absence, your line manager may refer you to OH to ask for their advice on your condition and any adjustments that may help you return to work or to your substantive role, and/or to support you and prevent future absence. Your manager will let you know in advance of making a referral, so you know that OH will be contacting you.

While managing your absence your manager may choose to make more than one OH referral to ask for updated advice.

16.5.2 You must let your line manager and/or OH know at the earliest opportunity if you are unable to attend an appointment, and every effort will be made to reschedule this as soon as possible.

16.5.3 If you need to travel to an OH appointment, you can submit a mileage claim in line with the 'reimbursement of travel costs' section of AFC. If you are not currently on sickness absence or a reduced hour phased return to work, and the appointment is outside your normal working hours, your line manager will support you with an overtime claim for the time taken to attend the appointment, excluding any travel time.

16.5.4 As detailed in your contract of employment, OH are an important part in supporting you. Please be aware that if you do not engage with referrals to OH, or do not give permission for the OH report to be shared with your manager, they will only be able to support you and make decisions based on the other information that they have available to them.

16.5.5 You and your manager should also refer to the Occupational Health Policy for further information.

16.6 Reasonable Adjustments

16.6.1 If you have a disability or long-term health condition your manager will consider whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to support you to do your job.

16.6.2 You and your manager should refer to both **the procedure** and the Reasonable Adjustments Policy and toolkit for further information, including when to complete and review a Health and Wellbeing Passport.

16.7 Temporary and/or permanent redeployment

16.7.1 Where this will support a return to your substantive role, and where it is available, your line manager with HR advice, may be able to support you with temporary redeployment when you:

- are not yet fit to return to your substantive role, or
- have not yet been absent from work due to your medical condition, but your manager and OH have identified that you are unable to complete your substantive role on a temporary basis.

To undertake temporary redeployment, you should also have a medical / OH report which confirms that you may be fit for work in some capacity and have a specified date / timeframe when you will be able to return to your substantive role.

16.7.2 If a medical and/or OH report confirms that you are permanently unable to undertake your substantive role, or it is likely that you will not be able to return to your substantive role in the foreseeable future, your manager will talk to you about engaging in the permanent redeployment process.

16.7.3 You and your manager should refer to the Redeployment Policy and Procedure for when temporary or permanent redeployment would be appropriate and for the process to be followed, including timeframes.

16.8 Early retirement on the grounds of ill-health

16.8.1 If you are considering leaving work because of your permanent ill-health, and you would like to consider your options under the NHS pension scheme, you and your line manager should refer to **the procedure** for further information on the process to follow.

16.9 Final Formal Review Hearing

16.9.1 A final formal review hearing will be held:

- when all other avenues have been exhausted and it becomes apparent that you are unlikely to return to your substantive role or be able to achieve an acceptable level of attendance, and/or
- before 12 months of continuous sickness absence.

16.9.2 The final formal review hearing can have one of two potential outcomes:

- to agree a review period,
- to terminate your contract of employment.

16.9.3 The final formal review hearing will be chaired by a senior manager, who should be either:

- a substantive manager (AFC Band 8c or above).
- a seconded manager (AFC Band 8c or above, who has gone through the normal/full recruitment and selection process). This does not apply to managers who are covering an 8c role as a development opportunity.
- a substantive AFC Band 8b manager, with the agreement of the joint chairs of SPF.

16.9.4 The short-term or long-term absence procedure to be followed is detailed within **the procedure**.

16.9.5 **Appeal**

16.9.6 Following the final formal review hearing outcome, you have the right to appeal within 7 calendar days if you believe that your dismissal was not handled correctly, or that the reason to dismiss was unfair or unjustified.

16.9.7 **The procedure** sets out what you need to do and how we will deal with your appeal.

17. **Pregnancy related sickness absence**

17.1 If you have let your manager know that your absence is related to you being pregnant, they will still hold a return-to-work meeting with you to ensure you are well enough to return and to put in place any reasonable adjustments you may need.

17.2 Pregnancy related absence will be excluded when calculating absence triggers at **Section 15**.

17.3 To ensure that you are fully supported, your manager will arrange to meet with you, but the first and any subsequent meeting will be held at an informal level.

17.4 During return-to-work or health review meetings, you and your line manager should review your Maternity Support Plan to ensure that any changes to your health are identified and/or any agreed actions can be implemented.

17.5 Further information can be found in the Maternity Leave and Pay Policy and Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

18. **Disability and long-term health conditions**

18.1 Disability-related sickness is a form of absence that is directly or indirectly due to an individual's disability or long-term health condition. We would encourage you to let your manager know as part of the reporting procedures if your absence is disability related.

18.2 You and your manager should refer to **the procedure**, Disability Policy, and Reasonable Adjustments Policy for further information.

19. Time off for treatment / medical appointments

19.1 You and your manager should refer to **the procedure** for the process to follow if you need to take time off for planned or emergency treatment and/or medical appointments.

20. Terminal illness

20.1 We recognise that if you have been diagnosed with an illness that may be terminal this should be managed sensitively, supportively and without unnecessary delay.

20.2 Your line manager will continue to support you in line with this policy and procedure but may vary their approach accordingly by referring to our Terminal Illness and Death in Service Policy.

21. Sickness absence and annual leave

21.1 When you are on sickness absence, you continue to accrue statutory annual leave.

21.2 You and your line manager should refer to **the procedure** for further information on how your absence may affect your entitlements, including when and how you can take your leave.

22. Working elsewhere whilst on sickness absence

22.1 During any period of sickness absence, you must not work elsewhere, including any previously approved secondary employment, without first speaking to your line manager.

22.2 There may be exceptional circumstances where your line manager, with advice from an HR representative, will agree for your secondary employment to continue, e.g., where the work is substantially different to your duties with EEAST

and/or where medical evidence supports that the work could be considered helpful to aid your recovery.

- 22.3 Any decision for you to continue secondary employment will be reviewed during health review meetings and may be reversed if OH advice indicates that it may be impacting on your return to work.
- 22.4 Undertaking alternative or additional paid employment whilst you are on sickness absence may be classed as fraudulent activity and an abuse of EEAST's sick pay scheme. This will be investigated, with HR advice, in line with **Section 12.3**.

23. Sickness absence during suspension

- 23.1 If you are unwell during a period of suspension you must contact the appropriate person detailed in your suspension letter to let them know. Your period of suspension will be paused on GRS, and you will be shown on sickness absence instead, however the conditions of suspension will remain in place.
- 23.2 Sick pay entitlements will be in accordance with this policy and AFC, and your sickness absence will be managed in line with this policy and procedure. This is a separate process and does not affect any decisions made about action under the relevant alternative EEAST policy, e.g., Disciplinary Policy.
- 23.3 When you let us know that you would be fit for duty, the suspension will be restarted unless there has been a material change in circumstances which means that suspension is no longer required.

24. Additional support

- 24.1 EEAST has a number of established staff equality networks e.g., Disability Support Network which aim to promote and support the needs of our employees. Further information on all our networks is available on the intranet.

POL037 – Sickness Absence Management Policy

24.2 We also have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) who can provide you with support. The EAP is free, independent, and totally confidential; up to date contact details are published on the intranet.

25. Policy review

25.1 This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or amended in the light of new employment legislation and/or relevant case law.

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment

EIA Cover Sheet		
Name of process/policy	Attendance and Sickness Absence Policy	
Is the process new or existing? If existing, state policy reference number	Existing (POL037)	
Person responsible for process/policy	HR	
Directorate and department/section	People Services	
Name of assessment lead or EIA assessment team members	HR Policy Subgroup	
Has consultation taken place? Was consultation internal or external? (please state below):	Internal consultation through HR Policy Subgroup members	
The assessment is being made on:	Guidelines	
	Written policy involving staff and patients	X
	Strategy	
	Changes in practice	
	Department changes	
	Project plan	X
	Action plan	
	Other (please state)	

Equality Analysis																			
<p>What is the aim of the policy/procedure/practice/event? The aim of this policy is to provide guidance on employees' responsibilities when they are unable to attend work due to ill health, provide employees with guidance and assistance in accessing the appropriate support, and outline a process for managers to support and proactively manage both short- and long-term absence with empathy, and in a timely and consistent manner.</p>																			
<p>Who does the policy/procedure/practice/event impact on?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">Race</td> <td style="width: 5%; text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 25%;">Religion/belief</td> <td style="width: 5%; text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 25%;">Marriage/Civil Partnership</td> <td style="width: 5%; text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Disability</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Sexual orientation</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Gender re-assignment</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Pregnancy/maternity</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion/belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marriage/Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender re-assignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy/maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion/belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marriage/Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>														
Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>														
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender re-assignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy/maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>														
<p>Who is responsible for monitoring the policy/procedure/practice/event? HR</p>																			
<p>What information is currently available on the impact of this policy/procedure/practice/event? All episodes of sickness absence are recorded on GRS and ESR. GRS is used for internal reporting purposes, and the ER Tracker can be used to report on any concerns raised in relation to any unintended negative impact of this policy. Having reviewed and updated the policy and completed a full consultation process, no negative impact was raised, and with the evidence available there is no negative impact.</p>																			
<p>Do you need more guidance before you can make an assessment about this policy/procedure/ practice/event? No</p>																			
<p>Do you have any examples that show that this policy/procedure/practice/event is having a positive impact on any of</p>																			

POL037 – Sickness Absence Management Policy

the following protected characteristics? Yes/No, if yes please provide evidence/examples:

Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion/belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marriage/Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender re-assignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy/maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please provide evidence:

This policy is designed to be inclusive of all employees who are unable to attend work, or undertake their substantive role, due to illness, injury, or a long-term health condition / disability.

The Trust are aware of their responsibilities under the Equality Act and the policy aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

Are there any concerns that this policy/procedure/practice/event could have a negative impact on any of the following characteristics?

Yes/No, if so, please provide evidence/examples: **No**

Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage/Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender re-assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy/maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide evidence:

Having reviewed and updated the policy and completed a full consultation process, no negative impact was raised, and with the evidence available there is no negative impact.

Action Plan/Plans – SMART

Specific

Measurable

POL037 – Sickness Absence Management Policy

Achievable

Relevant

Time Limited

Evaluation Monitoring Plan/how will this be monitored?

Who – see Monitoring Table

How

By

Reported to

Appendix B - Monitoring Table

What	Who	How	Frequency	Evidence	Reporting arrangements	Acting on recommendations	Change in practice and lessons to be shared
Audit of attendance, employee experience, and that the policy and procedure is being applied consistently, fairly, and accurately for all employees.	Head of HR People Partnering	Monitor GRS, ESR and ER Tracker data	Annually, or as required	GRS reports, ESR data and any ER Tracker casework reports.	Reported to and discussed at People Committee where required	Head of HR People Partnering will address any actions or changes required.	Any change in practice will be identified and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • process updated with HR People Partnering team • HRBP / line manager training implemented • policy updated where required.