

HOW TO STOP YOUR COMPANY SICKNESS AT WORK SCHEME BEING ABUSED

HAVING AN OCCUPATIONAL SICKNESS AT WORK SCHEME IS COMMON. HOW DO YOU SUPPORT EMPLOYEES WHO ARE GENUINELY ILL WHILST PREVENTING ABUSE OF THE PROCESS.

3 MINS READING TIME

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Having an Occupational Sickness at Work scheme is common, most employers have them. It is a valuable part of the benefits package and helps recruit and retain good staff. However, you will want to support employees who are genuinely ill whilst preventing abuse of the process.

It is a fact that sickness at work can be abused. Furthermore it is often a relatively small number of employees who take advantage of your Sickness at Work process.

Let me state clearly that Sickness is normal. Everyone gets sick sometimes, that is just a fact of life. As someone who is running a business it will cause inconvenience but you just have to get on with it. Or do you?

If someone is abusing your Sickness at Work process here are some tips you can try.

1. Reduced initial payment - Consider paying a reduced rate for the first few days of absence. Between 50% and 75% of your normal rate is common. Make sure that you do not violate national Statutory Sick Pay rules. In some countries you can pay nothing for the first few days.
2. Have a probation period before new employees can join your Occupational Sickness at Work scheme - This could be as much as 6 or 12 months.
3. Have a Sick Note rule - If someone is sick for longer than 2 days. This means that they need to see the GP to get a doctors certificate. If they need to pay for it then reimburse them through your expenses process. If they are not genuinely ill then visiting the GP will not be appealing and the hassle of reclaiming will deter any malingerers.
4. A more positive approach would be to reward good attendance - Award extra days holidays or some other kind of reward. Whatever you offer, make it worthwhile. Ensure that you do not discriminate against individuals with disabilities.
5. Most people have off days - Days where they are not sick but they

allow the employee to “Phone in not-sick” for 1 or 2 days a year. This encourages honesty and you get an early indication of any potential personal, domestic or work problem. Obviously the employee has to still inform you of their absence and their absence would make them ineligible for good attendance rewards.

If you are thinking of setting up a new scheme then consider some of these ideas. If you want to change an existing scheme then inform your employees of the change. I would suggest individual letters informing them of the planned change. Followed up with another letter detailing the change to employment terms and conditions. Make sure that you amend your absence policy. If you don't have an Absence Policy then download one free from us.

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