

UK Specifics under the Global Health and Wellbeing Policy



UK Specifics under the Global Health and Wellbeing Policy.

1.0 UK Procedures

The following procedures (set out below) apply to **UK employees only**. Staff based in or employed by other international offices should refer to their local terms and conditions or staff handbook for further information.

1.1 Entitlement to Sick Pay

Employees may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if they satisfy the relevant statutory requirements. Qualifying days for SSP are the employee's normal working days, or as set out in the employee's employment contract. The rate of SSP is set by the government in April each year, it starts on the first day of absence and is payable for up to 28 weeks.

Sightsavers runs an enhanced sick pay scheme that exceeds the statutory minimum sick pay. Employees must comply with this policy in all respects and meet the reporting requirements including providing Fit Notes where necessary in order to receive enhanced pay for sickness absence. Payments of enhanced sick pay will be covered for the following periods on a rolling 12-month basis:

Employees are entitled to 26 weeks full pay in any rolling 12-month period. This entitlement is pro-rata'd for part-time employees based on their normal weekly working hours. This payment is over and above the statutory sick pay entitlement and is therefore inclusive of SSP.

Subject to eligibility criteria, staff with a long-term sickness absence may qualify for additional group income protection payments once their occupational sick pay entitlement has come to an end. When an employee's sickness absence may qualify for this benefit, a Senior HR Business Partner or a member of HR working under their direction will discuss this with an employee's line manager in the first instance.

Further payments of enhanced sick pay (if any) are at the entire discretion of Sightsavers.

If a period of sickness absence is or appears to be occasioned by actionable negligence, nuisance or breach of any statutory duty on the part of a third party, in respect of which damages are or may be recoverable, they must immediately notify their manager of that fact and of any claim, compromise, settlement or judgment made or awarded in connection with it and all relevant particulars that Sightsavers may reasonably require. If Sightsavers requires the employee to do so, the employee must co-operate in any related legal proceedings and refund to Sightsavers that part of any damages or compensation the employee recovers that relates to lost earnings for the period of sickness absence as Sightsavers may reasonably determine, less any costs the employee incurred in connection with the recovery of such damages or compensation, provided that the amount to be refunded to Sightsavers shall not exceed the total amount Sightsavers paid to the employee in respect of the period of sickness absence.

1.2 Certification Requirements

If you are absent due to sickness for less than 7 days, you must confirm the reason to your manager who will in turn ensure that the HR System is updated or that the HR Operations Team are notified of the dates and reason so that records can be updated and payroll advised accordingly.

If you are away sick for more than 7 consecutive days (including weekends) you must obtain a certificate (a “Statement for Fitness to Work” or ‘Fit Note’, previously referred to as a ‘sick note’) from your GP or hospital doctor, registered nurse, occupational therapist (not occupational health), pharmacist, physiotherapist. Thereafter, Fit Notes must be provided as often as required to cover all of the periods beyond the first absence. Failure to provide such certificates may result in the organisation ceasing to pay any sick pay including payment of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

Sightsavers may require employees to ‘self-certify’ any absence, by completing, in conjunction with the line manager, the **‘Return to Work Discussion and Record’** found on Sightsavers internal intranet, under HR useful resources page, within forms and templates.

Sightsavers may, at its discretion, require you to provide a Fit Note for absences of less than 7 days; in which case you will be reimbursed for the cost of the Fit Note on production of a receipt if a fee has been charged to obtain the note.

1.3 Line Manager Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for recording all episodes of sickness absence either through the HR System (where available) or by notifying the HR Operations Team, via the HR Service Desk, of the absence dates and reason. Managers are required to raise any concerns about illness, injury or absences with their Senior / HR Business Partner.

Managers are advised to complete the **‘Return to Work Discussion and Record’** when an employee returns to work following an absence. Part A is to be completed by the employee and should be discussed with the Manager who will then complete Part B.

1.4 Sickness absence and pregnant employees

Pregnant employees are subject to the Health and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures if they are absent during their pregnancy. However, if a pregnant employee is absent due to a pregnancy related illness after the fourth week before their expected week of confinement (EWC), they will not be paid sick pay but instead will automatically move onto maternity leave and receive maternity pay if applicable. Please refer to the UK Specifics under the Global Maternity Policy.

1.5 Sickness during annual leave

If an employee becomes ill during a period of booked holiday, they can potentially treat the period as sick leave and reclaim the holiday if:

- they notify their manager of their incapacity immediately; and

- they provide written confirmation or certification is submitted from the employees' doctor confirming the period of sickness.

Employees will continue to accrue their annual leave entitlement when off work due to ill health; consideration may be given to employees using holiday, if during longer term sickness absence, they exhaust entitlement to sick pay.

Employees are deemed to have taken their statutory entitlement to holiday under regulation 13(1) of the Working Time Regulations 1998 (WTR) first when taking holiday in a holiday year. Additional holiday entitlement under regulation 13(a) of the WTR and any additional contractual holiday entitlement are taken thereafter.

If an employee's period of sick leave extends into the next holiday year, or if there is not enough time left in the current holiday year to make it practicable for the employee to take their remaining holiday entitlement, they may carry unused holiday entitlement over to the following holiday year. Carry-over is limited to four weeks' holiday per year less any leave taken during the holiday year that has just ended. Any such carried over holiday which is not taken within 18 months of the end of the relevant holiday year (whether or not the employee has returned to work) will be lost.

We work with partners in low and middle income countries to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

www.sightsavers.org