

Managing sickness absence

Recording absence

As an employer, recording and measuring sickness absence in your organisation can help you to:

- find out if there's a problem with absence levels
- compare your absence levels with similar organisations
- identify the more common reasons for sickness absence in your organisation and look at ways to address it
- explore whether absence levels are higher in certain groups of employees – for example if new starters have lots of absence, there could be an issue with the induction process
- identify underlying causes of absence and decide on the best next steps

How to record sickness absence

You should record:

- the number of absences
- the length of each absence
- the reason for each absence

Differentiating between the reasons for absence can help you identify patterns and decide what steps to take. For example, a single long-term absence with a clear reason should be treated differently to repeated short-term absences.

You can record absence as part of a 'trigger point' or 'review point' system. This can help you to effectively manage absence, if used in an appropriate way.

[Find out more about absence trigger points](#)

Avoiding discrimination

When recording absence, you must not discriminate against employees.

For example, a disabled employee might need to take time off work for medical treatment. This means their absence levels could be higher.

Recording some types of absence separately could help you avoid discrimination when you take steps to reduce absence. For example, you could record pregnancy and disability-related absence separately.

Recording these absences separately does not mean you should ignore them. You should still speak to the employee to find out how you can support them.

If an employee is disabled, you must make reasonable adjustments.

Find out more about:

- [discrimination and the Equality Act 2010](#)
- [reasonable adjustments](#)

Data protection

You should consider data protection rules and confidentiality if you're recording medical information about employees. For example, if you're recording the reasons for employees' sickness absence.

You should:

- be able to give a reason for keeping this information
- make sure you only share it with relevant people

[Find out more about data protection from the Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#)