



## Sickness Absence Management Programme

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this controlled document is to outline the strategic intent of AzSPU in improving the cost and management of the impact of sickness absence on resource planning and in creating a safe and healthy working environment - "No harm to people". Absence from work can place a strain on resources within the company, for the individual and their colleagues. It is important therefore that as an organization, we provide standards for managing the resources of the organization to ensure business continuity during any absences. The standards and procedures that are set out in this document are aimed at improving our organizational data on sickness and injury in AzSPU, to design more effective health interventions, improve performance conversations between Line Manager and their employees and to increase the overall health of the workforce in AzSPU.

### **Scope**

The scope of this policy targets national employees in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. This document explains the action required to be taken by Line Managers and employees who are absent from work for any reason other than entitled leave and special authorized leave, and the follow-up action (where necessary) to be taken on return to work from long-term absences. This policy does not cover sickness absence for Agency or 3<sup>rd</sup> party Contractors. Procedures for resource planning for Agency and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> party Contracts are outlined in their respective service agreements and should be managed accordingly by the Line Manager

### **Definitions**

Definition	
Employee	Individual hired directly by BP on Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey payroll.
Line Manager	Supervisor, team leader or manager that has accountability for one or more direct reports.
Occupational Health (OH)	BP AzSPU Health representatives – Health Manager or designee; shall act as the SPU's technical authority on any health/medical aspects for case management related to fitness to work.
Human Resources (HR)	HR Advisor/HR Manager assigned to Teams or Performance Units with AzSPU.
Confidentiality	Identification of employee information deemed 'private' and subject to the guidelines issued in the data privacy act for the handling and management of the information.
Short-term absence	Any absence greater than 1 day and less than 15 calendar days.
Long-term absence	Greater than 15 calendar days of continuous absence. All long-term sickness absence should be referred to OH.
Self-certification period	Up to a maximum of 2 days sickness absence without submitting a sick leave certificate (bulletin).
Case Management & Return to Work	The goal of medical case management is to provide optimal quality care in cost effective manner to obtain positive health outcomes for the employee. Return-to-work interviews need to be carried out by managers after every long term absence.
Rehabilitation	The process that offers a range of facilitative services to an employee in support of their restoration to improved health and former capabilities.
Adjustment (work conditions and tasks)	A sub-process of rehabilitation that caters to employees who are fit to work and need temporary or permanent modifications to their task or working conditions.

### **Key Roles and Responsibilities**

Sickness absence management requires a streamlined approach for sustained success. Having clear roles and responsibilities for each key stakeholder supports the need for a common practice and approach for how sickness absence is managed in the AzSPU. The key stakeholders for sickness absence management in AzSPU are:

- Employee
- Line Manager
- Human Resources
- Occupational Health
- Company Medical Provider

#### **a. Employee**

Employees are responsible for notifying their line manager while absent as a result of sickness or injury immediately upon feeling unwell. This provides the business with the required information to ensure continuity. It allows the line manager and the employee to talk about support whilst absent (where necessary) and for subsequent re-entry. These are specific responsibilities which employees must undertake in case of sickness:

- Inform line manager within first two hours of start time or at time of incident on expected period of absence and tasks that are critical and require continuity during employee absence. Employees working on sites are required to provide early notification of their sickness absence so that site management can effectively and efficiently re-arrange manning, flights, etc.
- Open medical certificate if sickness absence exceeds self-certification period of 2 days and notify line manager on estimated length of absence. Please note that for example, under Azerbaijan Health Ministry regulations some clinics are not allowed to provide medical sick leave certificates for out-patient treatment. Therefore, prior visiting a medical facility, employee must contact Medical Insurance Company to check on medical sick leave provision at that facility.
- Report sickness absence via company tool on the first day upon employee returning back to workplace.
- Submit original medical certificate to Health System Coordinator on the first day upon returning back to workplace. However, when sickness absence continues on the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day becoming a long-term absence, employee must inform the Health System Coordinator about it and also submit the sick leave certificate to the Health System Coordinator as soon as the sick leave certificate has been issued and while being on the sick leave. This is required for managing sickness absence related payments in reference with the Legislation requirements.
- Complete return to work assessment for long-term absence of 15 or more consecutive calendar days upon request and participate in return to work interview with line manager.

#### **b. Line Manager**

Resource planning is a fundamental activity for a line manager, which includes but is not limited to those employees that are absent as a result of sickness or injury. The line manager is the first point of contact for the employee and maintains accountability for the following:

- Ensuring that all sickness absence has been reported via company tool by on the first day upon employee returning back to workplace.
- When sickness absence continues on the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day becoming a long-term absence, manager must inform the Payroll (Vadim Osadchiy) about it and also request employee to submit the sick leave certificate to the Health System Coordinator at the first opportunity while being on the sick leave. This is required for processing sickness related payments.
- Referring all long-term sickness cases (sickness absence greater than 15 consecutive calendar days) to OH to initiate return to work assessment process. All work related injury or illnesses must be referred to OH (via task check list and OH Referral Form).
- Regularly checking-in with employees who are absent for periods greater than 15 consecutive calendar

days.

- Conducting brief return-to-work interviews when employees have been out for periods greater than 15 consecutive calendar days to ensure a smooth re-entry.

**c. Human Resources Manager/Advisor**

HR's role is to support the line manager in meeting their short and long term goals for efficient resource management including the following:

- Coaching line managers and employees on matters relating to sickness absence policy and its application.
- Regular meet with Line Managers and OH to establish long term absences and immediately provide Payroll (Vadim Osadchiy) with the individual information (name of the person who is on sick leave longer than 15 calendar days, sick leave dates) for managing sickness absence related payments in reference with the Legislation requirements.
- Advising at absence review meetings re: return to work and/or rehabilitation considerations.
- Implementing final recommendations on employee fitness and return to work from Health Team.

**d. Health Manager/Occupational Health Advisor**

The role of the OH Advisor is to assess employees and provide independent and impartial advice to help the line manager make better resourcing decisions. The opinion of the Company Health Manager/OH Advisor is to be accepted on all employment health matters during the sickness absence management process:

- Providing Line Managers and HR with final recommendation regarding employee's health and return to work (long term illnesses).
- Advising line managers on case management findings and resolution options. Identify and certify Company Medical Providers and Facilities.
- Reviewing and updating this document periodically with HR management.
- Providing written case report to Line Manager and HR on prognosis, expected return to work date if known and next contact date for long term sickness only.

**e. Health System Coordinator**

Act as AzSPU single point of accountability regarding all Health Systems issues including but not limited to:

- Monitoring of individual sickness absence data accuracy against policy received from employees and identify non compliance.
- Data input and tracking of all sickness absences across AzSPU via Sickness Absence Management system.
- Upon receiving sickness absence notification without subsequent receipt of the sick leave certificates, request employee to provide sick leave certificates immediately.
- Generating and preparing regular report on short and long term sickness absence cases.
- Analysing sickness absence based on lost time rate, frequency rate and short term absence trend on monthly basis.
- Communicating reports to line manager, HR and OH as required.
- Monitoring and reporting trigger points cases on short and long term sickness cases to HR, Line Manager and Health Manager.
- Facilitating the arrangement of post-illness and/or injury assessments on request from line manager.
- Arranging return to work assessment for employees as required.

**f. Company Nominated Medical Provider**

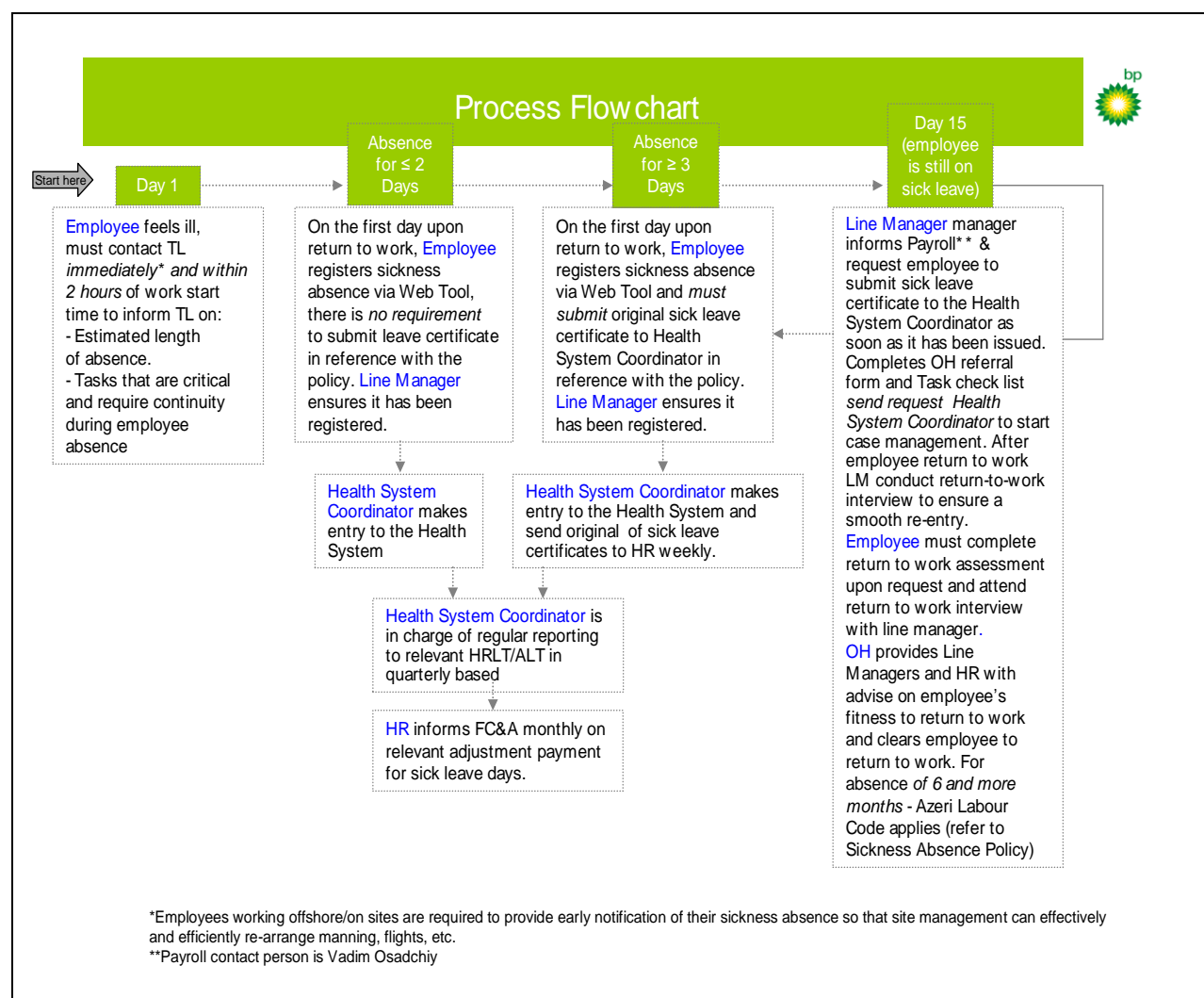
The role of the Company Medical Provider is as follows:

- Completing post illness health assessments requested by OH in line with the purpose of assessment and the status of the employee's health (required documents: closed sick leave certificate and

- completed task check list).
- Complete the requested assessment using relevant BP Medical Examination form(s) or their bilingual equivalents and forward promptly all FIT certificates to Health.
- Liaising with OH Advisor for guidance on health assessments for employees.

### Process Flowchart

Every line manager must ensure that the SPU's procedures are followed to ensure that employees are performing at their best and to manage workplace health risks that can prevent employees from developing work related illnesses. To this end, OH and Human Resources are committed to working together with the Line to manage all sickness absence as outlined below:



## ***Return To Work***

Depending on the duration of absence and the nature of an employee's illness or injury, it may be necessary to formulate a programme that suitably supports the employee's re-entry to work. Return-to-work interviews need to be carried out by line managers after every instance of a long-term absence. The interview provides an opportunity to explore how best to support the employee while meeting the needs of the business. A return-to-work interview is a lever to improve individual/team performance and is considered a critical element in positively managing resource planning and productivity in the SPU – line managers will be held accountable for the quality of those discussions and its impact on team performance. The line manager, OH, Human Resources will liaise with the employee to develop a suitable plan for re-entry that might include one or all of the following:

- Complete return to work assessment
- Modification of duties for an earlier return to work
- Individual tailoring along with impact reviews
- Consideration for an alternate role (where necessary and possible)

### ***a. Absence review meetings***

The purpose and style of the meeting should be a positive and constructive one. The discussion should be focused on exploring the root cause of the absence with the aim of implementing practical steps to improve the employee's health. From a process standpoint:

- Line manager makes a request to Health Systems Coordinator for an assessment of short-term absence trend for employee(s).
- Health analyses the data and provides a summary of their findings and recommendations to the line manager to support a quality conversation between the line manager and the employee.
- The line manager conducts the meeting with an aim of helping and encouraging the employee to be open about the level of support they need to improve their health and to understand the impact of frequent sickness absence.
- The employee and line manager agree to key action and timeline for next review.
- If at the next review there is no improvement in the frequency of absence or performance, the line manager engages HR to start disciplinary procedure with the employee in accordance with the company disciplinary policy.

### ***b. Counselling Referral***

In some instances, counselling may be beneficial and as a BP employee you have access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This service is confidential and is provided for any employee and/or their immediate family members. OH will, in all referrals of stress, depressive or mental health issues, advise the employee to seek support from the EAP. Where necessary, counsellors will provide OH with advice on treatment requirements and return-to-work (RTW) considerations. Counselling referral should be considered in the following situations:

1. Long-term absence.
2. Following review by OH, progress is found to be slow, usually less than 1 month.
3. EAP has been recommended but not pursued by the employee, found unsuitable or is not aiding progression.
4. Any other situation where the OH deems a referral necessary.

Funding for counselling assessment and treatment that is deemed beneficial to recovery and will result in an earlier Return To Work (RTW) will require approval by the line manager

### ***c. Rehabilitation and Adjustment***

Rehabilitation and adjustment is a collective process that offers a range of appropriately determined facilitative services that support an employee while their health and capabilities are being restored to its former state. This code of practice covers the arrangements for the return to work and rehabilitation of



employees following long-term sickness/injury absence and of disabled employees. “Long term sickness” is defined as more than 15 consecutive calendar days of uninterrupted from work due to illness or injury.

Adjustments can be temporary or made on a permanent basis.

Examples of adjustments to working arrangements include:

- allowing a phased return to work
- changing individual's working hours
- providing help with transport to and from work
- telecommuting
- allowing an employee to be absent from work for rehabilitation treatment.

Examples of adjustments to work location include:

- moving tasks to more accessible areas;
- making alterations to the premises.

Examples of adjustments to a job include:

- providing new or modifying existing equipment and tools
- modifying work furniture
- providing additional training
- modifying instructions or reference manuals
- modifying work patterns and management systems
- arranging telephone conferences to reduce travel
- providing a buddy or mentor
- providing supervision
- reallocating work within the team;;
- providing alternative work assignments

It's possible for an illness or injury to render an employee unfit for their role whereby, they are absent for long periods. E.g. according to article 74 of the Azeri Labour Code, the employment contract may be terminated by the reason that the employee cannot perform his/her duties or labour functions for more than six months because of complete loss of ability to work (except for some sicknesses when the law sets a longer period). It should be noted that complete loss of ability to work is determined by a written certificate from the State Medical Commission.

### **Medical Reports**

As part of the assessment process, OH may require a detailed medical report from the employee's General Practitioner (GP) or specialist. Prior to making a request, OH will seek the employee's permission to access his/her medical report from their General Practitioner (GP) or Specialist. In general, it will be appropriate to get a report from the individual's GP before taking any significant action in respect of absence frequency. Having obtained the GP's report, therefore, it might also be appropriate to get further expert input, particularly if the medical considerations aren't clear, for example in cases that are stress-related or which appear to have some non-physical causes.

The process for accessing an employee's medical report is as follows:

1. OH provides clarity on the data required and confirms how it will be used (confidentiality maintained).
2. Employee agrees and signs consent form.
3. OH makes request for medical report.
- 4.



**Key Document Tool References**Staff HandbookFitness for Task Management ProgrammeSubstance Abuse PolicySubstance Abuse Management ProgrammeStress Management ProgrammeMedical Case Management Programme**Revision/Review Log**

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