

UK Sick Leave & Pay

What happens if your employees are sick?

When an employee is unable to work due to sickness for up to seven consecutive days (including non-working days) they can complete a Self-Certification Form which you, the employer, needs to issue.

After seven consecutive days of sickness, the employee will need to give you a 'Fit Note' which they will need to obtain from their Doctor.

Long Term Leave

If an employee is absent due to illness for more than four weeks, they may be considered as 'long term sick'.

An employee who is long term sick can be referred to the free Government provided service called 'Fit for Work', which assess the employee's situation and provides a return to work plan.

Eligibility

An employee who is off sick may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) provided:

- they are classed as an 'employee' and have carried out work for the employer;
- they have had a continuous period of sickness of four or more consecutive days in a row (which can include non-working days such as weekends and Public Holidays);
- days for which the employee receives SSP must be qualifying days (i.e. days they would normally work);
- their earnings must be at least £113 a week;
- they haven't already received the maximum amount of SSP (28 weeks); and
- they have given you evidence of their incapacity to work (if you require it) in the form of self-certification, a Doctor's letter or a Fit for Work referral.

Employees who don't qualify for SSP may be entitled to other financial support from the Government's UK Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) Rates

SSP starts on the fourth day an employee is unable to work due to sickness (including weekends and Public Holidays).

SSP is currently paid at the rate of £89.35 per week and is paid for up to a maximum of 28 weeks - although employers may voluntarily top this up to full or part pay.

There is no ability for the employer to recover sick pay from the Government.

Sickness Policy

You need to ensure you include your sickness policy in a written statement of employment particulars and give a copy to all employees.

This can be in an Employee Handbook or Contract of Employment.

How we can help

We are proud to provide award winning professional advice and services to employers seeking to globalise their businesses.

Whether you are already established in the UK or hiring staff for the first time, we can guide you and your business through the employee related regulatory, planning and reporting requirements.

F&L provides comprehensive HR, payroll and employee benefits support for clients.

We provide our clients with day to day operational support, implement HR software, payroll procedures and employee benefits as well as offering HR advice.

Updated September 2017. The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.

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