



PCS DWP North West Region

Attendance Management Crack-Down

Management are having a crack-down on Attendance Management causing perverse behaviour, senior management interference, the denial of natural justice and standardisation of decisions which can only be fairly made by taking individual circumstances into account.

PCS is challenging the way management are dealing with this issue with some success.

Disabled Employees' Trigger Points

PCS is aware that a manager produced a secret paper containing guidance on this issue. The guidance stated that members could only ever have double the usual trigger point unless their line manager was prepared to "debate" the matter with a more senior manager. Even then to get the top increase, members would have to prove that their disability was "extreme and exceptional" and affecting them at home as well as work. To get any increase members would have to demonstrate debilitating and multiple effects of their disabilities and the whole process involves a yearly review and a check by a Grade 6.

When PCS asked senior management if a blanket approach was being used, the response was that it wasn't. The managers dealing with the issue more locally seem to be clear that there is one, which we can confirm to be correct because we have seen a copy of the policy document.. In practice some managers appear to be applying it to the letter, while others are under the impression that it acts only as a vague guide.

PCS is clear that disabled members, like all members should be treated as individuals and the Attendance Management procedures should be applied fairly based on individual circumstances. No one should be expected to prove that their disability has an effect over and above the definition applied in the Equality Act. If you have any problems with this issue please contact your rep immediately.

Exemption Reports

We know that line managers are expected to fill out a form if they do not want to give an attendance management warning or refer a case to a decision maker to consider dismissal. We know some line managers are doing this and insisting that their decision be supported. However we know that others have stopped bothering because they know they will be pressured and over ruled.



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When we discuss this issue with senior management we always get the same response

- that line managers can choose not to give a warning under the procedures,
- that all they have to do is explain why they aren't giving a warning and they will be supported in their decision
- and that if a senior manager expresses a view that a warning should be given, their opinion is just advice which the line manager can choose to accept or disregard if they consider other evidence to carry more weight.

We have significant anecdotal evidence that managers are being pressured in these circumstances and that although management assure us that more senior managers are just giving advice, in reality it is an instruction. We have therefore written to management and said that we believe that appeal managers must be a higher grade than the most senior manager involved to ensure that members have the right of appeal to a manager more senior than the one who really made the decision.

In the meantime we will support all members who are line managers who want to make decisions not to issue warnings or make referrals to the decision maker.

Provision of information

We have had managers around the region refusing to provide documents to members in Attendance Management cases. We have raised this with regional management and they have assured us that managers will pass on all documents including any HR advice and if they have chosen to ignore the HR advice they have to provide an explanation why. Since we had this assurance we have become aware that some managers don't know about it. If you have any problems with this issue, make sure your rep refers it on so we can go back to regional management.

Keeping in Touch

We want to remind all members of your rights when you are off sick. Any keeping in touch arrangements when you are off sick should be reasonable and should be agreed between you and your line manager. We are aware that some senior managers appear to be issuing blanket instructions that staff who are off sick should be phoned two or three times a day. If for example you have a doctor's appointment on a day when you have already spoken to your manager and you want to ring after it and update them, that is fine. However if they want to speak to you repeatedly when you won't have any new information, that is harassment. PCS is pointing out this difference to management.