

**HR Guide:
Conducting Return to Work
Interviews
Version: 2.1**

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North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

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Version Number	Effective Date	Details of Last Revision
2.1	18.07.14	Updated onto new policy template

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 North Ayrshire Council requires that Managers **must** conduct a 'Return to Work' (RTW) interview with all employees on their return to work after sickness absence, regardless of length of absence or their current/historic sickness absence record.
- 1.2 The purpose of the meeting is to establish the well-being of the employee and if there are any supports which could be put into place to help improve attendance at work. It is an opportunity to discover if there are any underlying reasons for the absence and to identify if the employee is likely to hit a trigger under the Maximising Attendance Procedures where they will be met at a formal stage of the procedure and/or if it is appropriate and they met the requirements, to apply for discretion to the Head of Service.

Section 2: Preparing for the Return to Work Interview

- 2.1 The manager should ensure that they have a copy of the employee's absence record prior to the meeting and a 'Return to Work Acknowledgement Form' available on Navigate, on which to record the RTW discussion.
- 2.2 Prior to the RTW discussion the line manager should review the employee's absence record to look for any sickness absence patterns (e.g. Monday/Friday, before/after holidays) and check if the employee has reached any of the management action sickness absence triggers.

Section 3: The Return to Work Interview

- 3.1 The RTW interview should take place as soon as possible after the employee's return to work. The discussion should take place in a private space with no interruptions. In circumstances where it is not possible to meet face to face, the line manager can conduct the discussion over the telephone, in a private space. When discussing the absence line managers should indicate their concern and interest in the welfare of the employee, and try to explore any underlying reasons for the absence. Ways of improving attendance and determining if there is any need for a visit to occupational health, counselling, guidance or other support should also be discussed.
- 3.2 If the line manager can see an absence pattern emerging they should explore this in the RTW discussion and give the employee an opportunity to explain any patterns which may have emerged.
- 3.3 The line manager should summarise the discussion and reflect back to ensure mutual understanding to establish a clear plan of action; Complete the 'Return to Work Acknowledgement Form' and ask the employee to sign at the end of the discussion (or at a later date if the discussion took place over the telephone). The employee should also complete and sign a 'Self Certificate of Absence Form' if the absence has been for 7 days or less