



Craigdale
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Date of Review: 12.02.21
Date of Approval: 22.02.21
Date of Next Review: July 2024

Craigdale Housing Association can provide this document on request, in different languages and formats, including Braille and audio formats.

Craigdale Housing Association

Absence & Attendance Management Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Good attendance is an implied term of every contract of employment and should therefore be required from every employee. Craigdale Housing Association recognises that staff will, on occasions be necessarily absent from work. However, the Association also has a duty to provide a reliable service to tenants and others and we thus need to ensure that we help staff maintain the highest possible level of attendance as well as minimising the impact of such absences.
- 1.2 This policy is therefore designed to help all employees achieve good attendance and to ensure that a consistent and fair approach in managing attendance is adopted throughout the Association. This policy should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment.
- 1.3 This policy and the guidelines it contains work in conjunction with but is not limited to other policies such as discipline & grievance, dignity at work, health & safety and managing stress.

2.0 Aims of the Policy

- To manage attendance in a way that reflects genuine concern for employees and to develop a positive attitude towards attendance.
- To set clear expectations for standards of attendance that we require from our employees.
- To separate two processes: attendance and absence management and provide guidelines for employees and line managers in how to manage these.
- To identify the causes of absence and, where possible, develop a programme of supportive and preventive measures.
- To ensure training and support is available to both line managers and employees.

3.0 Principles

- 3.1 Craigdale Housing Association requires good attendance from all employees to meet its objectives.
 - If your level of attendance is unsatisfactory you will be informed what improvement is required and possible consequences of failure to do so (which may include disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal).
 - The attendance management process is not concerned with reasons for absence but with number of periods of absence/ days absent (excluding underlying health conditions protected under the Equality Act 2010).

- If you have an underlying health condition causing absence(s), then we will consider reasonable adjustments.
- Line Managers will conduct "return to work" interviews for every period of sickness absence within the spirit of this policy.
- You need to adhere strictly to our absence reporting procedures. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and organisational sick pay being withheld.
- Line Managers will maintain accurate, up-to-date attendance records for all staff to manage absence effectively.

4.0 Absence Monitoring

- 4.1 A fundamental feature of good attendance management is the accurate and timely recording of all absences. This is essential for processing the requirements of statutory and occupational sick pay arrangements and the process of managing attendance and absence. Good information allows patterns to be identified and can be an early indication of underlying health conditions. The sooner these issues are identified and acted upon – the more likely a successful conclusion for both you and the organisation can be achieved.
- 4.2 Accurate recording is also an essential element in satisfying potential concerns over the fairness of any actions taken by line managers. The responsibility for maintaining such records rests with the Senior Corporate Services Officer.
- 4.3 Absence records will be stored on the Association's payroll system held and maintained by the Finance Agent and all Line Managers are responsible for passing absence details via email to our Finance Agent promptly.
- 4.4 Having maintained attendance records, Line Managers will be expected to provide and discuss monthly aggregated statistics at management team meetings and at departmental meetings with staff.
- 4.5 The statistics listed below will be available to all staff and these will be reported on at staff meetings and quarterly Audit & Assurance Committee meetings:
1. Total number of sickness days in period
 2. Number of available days in period (all staff)
 3. Percentage Absence in Period
 4. Cumulative cost of lost working days (including cost of temporary staff required)
 5. Percentage absence to 31 March to date
 6. Percentage Absence for year to 31 March (previous year comparison)
- 4.6 The report will be a general overview and individual cases will not be discussed as they form a confidential record of each employee. The purpose of these statistics is to show whether the attendance is improving or getting worse.
- 4.7 This information will not be restricted to the Board and Senior Management, all employees will be aware of them as they help keep attendance on the organisation's agenda and focus everyone on improving it or sustaining good results.

5.0 Absence Reporting Procedures

5.1 Reporting

5.1.1 If you cannot come to work, either due to illness or for any other reason, not already authorised, you must phone and speak to your line manager (or, if not available, another manager) as soon as is reasonably possible. It is expected that you phone as soon as possible before your usual start time, if not possible, within one hour of your starting time. You are required to phone in person, unless it is not possible (e.g. you have been hospitalised or are in police custody). Messages should not be texted, left with other staff members or on the telephone answering machine.

5.1.2 You are required to provide the following information when phoning in sick.

- a) reason for absence
- b) expected duration of absence
- c) expected date of return to work
- d) contact details

5.1.3. Pre-arranged authorised absences, absences for compassionate reasons or annual leave are excluded from this procedure.

5.1.4 Per EVH Conditions of Service Section A, the Association may withhold Association sick pay should these procedures not be followed without reasonable explanation.

5.2 Certification

5.2.1 If you are off work due to an illness or injury for more than 7 consecutive calendar days or more (including Saturday and Sunday), you must provide a fit note as soon as possible to your line manager. Line Managers will email the Finance Agent in order that absence details can be promptly entered onto the payroll system. You are required to complete a self-certification form whether or not there is an entitlement to sickness allowance and whatever the length or reason for the absence.

5.2.2 If the doctor ticks the “may be fit for work” box, your line manager will arrange a meeting with you to discuss any adjustments suggested. Although we are not obliged to follow the doctor’s advice, we will do our best to help you to return to work and maintain a good attendance record. However, if we cannot agree reasonable adjustments you will remain off sick. If this situation arises you should contact us for specific advice.

5.2.3 If a phased return to work is agreed and the employee is declared fit for some work, then the days the employee remains off sick within the agreed period, will count as one period of absence.

5.2.4 An employee can come back to work at any time, even if this is before their fit note expires. They do not need to go back to their doctor first to be signed fit for work. If you come back to work before the expiry of your fit note, we will seek professional advice.

5.3 Keeping in Touch

- 5.3.1 You are responsible for phoning your line manager to let them know the reasons for any absence and when you expect to return to work. If, in the event of an emergency you cannot get to a phone on day one of your absence, you should make sure that someone else calls on your behalf. After this, you should contact your line manager as soon as you can and maintain regular contact by calling daily during the first week of your absence (unless otherwise agreed with your line manager) and weekly thereafter.
- 5.3.2 If you fail to keep in contact as outlined above, we will initiate and maintain contact with you.
- 5.3.3 We expect that you let us know the following information: the reason for your absence, when you expect to return to work and contact details which can be used to maintain contact during your absence. (If this information is not provided we will contact you to find out this information).

5.4 Failure to Comply

- 5.4.1 Where you do not follow reporting; certification; or agreed keeping-in-touch arrangements, we may withhold company sick pay (per EVH Terms and Conditions of Employment A4.1) and also initiate contact with you where appropriate or necessary. We will notify our intention to withhold company sick pay in writing.
- 5.4.2 Failure to comply with these requirements may also lead to disciplinary action against you in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Similarly, if we suspect that you have falsified your absence or have deliberately misled us, we will take disciplinary action against you. In serious and/or repeated cases, it may lead to a dismissal.

5.5 Return to Work

- 5.5.1 A thorough return to work interview will be carried out after every period of unplanned absence by the staff member's line manager (or another manager if he/she is not available) on the first day of their return to work.
- 5.5.2 Completed forms will be kept in the employee's personnel file. The purpose of a return to work interview is to establish if you are fit to return to work. The return to work interview forms contain confidential information and may only be viewed by authorised personnel, normally the staff member's line manager or any other manager who deals with the case.

6.0 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

- 6.1 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is not a benefit of employment. It is quite different to the Organisation Sickness Allowance and is paid out by the Association on behalf of the Government.
- 6.2 If eligible to SSP this is irrespective to your entitlement to company sick pay. The scale of entitlement to SSP is reviewed by the government, normally at the beginning of each tax year. It is not paid for the first three days of absence and runs for 28 weeks after that.

6.3 If you are no longer entitled to SSP, you may be entitled to an incapacity benefit. You can enquire about this at your local Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). We will tell you if you are not entitled to SSP and send you the appropriate government form, it is however your responsibility to claim any other Government benefit/s that you may be entitled to.

7.0 Organisation Sick Pay

7.1 All employees can benefit from this scheme as long as their absence from work is due to their own sickness or injury and they keep to the requirements of section A4. However, the scheme will not apply if:

- they go off sick while taking part in a stoppage of work due to a trade dispute at their place of work;
- they go sick while on maternity leave;
- on the first day of sickness they have already used up their sickness allowance entitlement in the previous 12 months; or

7.2 During your period of absence if you work for another employer this may affect your entitlement to Company Sick Pay. Your line manager will discuss this with you before any decision is made. You may ask for unpaid leave and we will consider if we are able to accommodate this. However, if you do not tell us about these instances, we may take disciplinary action, which may lead to your dismissal.

7.3 Scale of Allowances

7.3.1 In any one rolling period of 52 weeks, we will pay a sickness allowance in line with the following scale.

Continuous service at the date sickness starts	Full allowance paid for:	Half allowance paid for:
Up to 1 year	5 weeks	5 weeks
Over 1 and under 2 years	9 weeks	9 weeks
Over 2 and under 3 years	18 weeks	18 weeks
Over 3 and under 5 years	22 weeks	22 weeks
Over 5 years	26 weeks	26 weeks

7.3.2 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is not a benefit of employment. It is quite different to the sickness allowances mentioned here, and we pay it on behalf of the Government.

7.3.3 The scale of entitlement to SSP is published by the Government and normally changes at the beginning of each tax year.

7.3.4 If you are not entitled to SSP, we will tell you by sending you the appropriate government form. It is then your responsibility to claim any other State Benefit which you may be entitled to.

7.4 Working out Sickness Allowances

7.4.1 Your allowance is worked out based on your current rate of basic pay. (See below.) We refer to this as your 'normal pay'

- The full allowance, referred to above, equals your normal pay, and includes any Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) which you may be entitled to.
- The half allowance referred to above, equals half your normal pay plus SSP (if you have any left). However, you cannot receive more than your normal full pay.
- In working out the level and period of allowance still due, we will review the previous 12 months before the start of your current sick leave. We will add up all periods of sick leave. We will then take this from the full allowance entitlement first and then any balance from the half allowance entitlement. Anything left will be what you are still entitled to.
- We will pay you the sickness allowance according to your basic contractual hours (not including overtime).
- For the purposes of working out SSP, qualifying days are treated as Sunday to Saturday. Before paying SSP you must be unable to work for at least the first four days in a row of a spell of sickness.
- If you cannot come into work as a result of coming into contact with a notifiable infectious disease (that is reportable to RIDDOR in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act), you should tell us. You will then receive your full pay sickness allowance. We will not take the period of absence from your normal entitlement.
- If you return to work on a phased basis, we will only pay your salary for the hours and days actually worked. The days and hours that you are still off sick will entitle you to SSP and the occupational sick pay you are eligible to and this will be taken off your entitlement. Or, you can ask to take it from your annual leave, time off in lieu or unpaid leave instead.

7.4.2 We work out your occupational sick pay using your basic pay. We will only consider overtime if this is stated in your employment contract.

7.5 Criminal or Civil Compensation

7.5.1 If you are injured as the result of being the innocent victim of a criminal act, we will not take any sick leave from your normal entitlement.

7.5.2 If the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board grants you compensation, you will not need to refund any sickness allowance we have paid out.

7.5.3 If you are paid damages from a third party for loss of earnings due to a sickness or injury, we will ask you to repay any sickness allowance paid out but not more than the actual allowance paid or the amount of damages received for loss of earnings.

7.6 Professional / Non Professional Sport

7.6.1 If the sickness or injury arises out of or in the course of following another occupation or sport on a professional or non-professional basis and you are paid damages from a third party for loss of earnings resulting from this, we will ask you to repay any sickness allowance paid by the organisation subject to offset of any loss of earnings incurred as a direct result of the injury and / or absence.

7.7 Work-Related Sickness or Injury

- 7.7.1 We will not take a period of absence due to sickness or injury caused by an accident in the course of your employment from your entitlement to sickness allowance.
- 7.7.2 If you are still unfit for work at the end of the appropriate full allowance period, the Board will review the case to decide on any appropriate levels of allowance which should be made.
- 7.7.3 If your absence is the result of an accident at work directly resulting from your deliberate misconduct, we will withhold sickness allowance and we will also investigate it under the disciplinary procedure (see A13). If you disagree, the grievance procedure is available for use (see A14).

7.8 Unpaid Sickness

- 7.8.1 We will tell you in writing when your period of sickness allowance is going to end. After this, you will not receive any pay from us for any period of sickness. (SSP may still be due to certain employees)

8.0 Attendance Management

- 8.1 This refers to dealing with unacceptable levels of attendance, with no reference to reasons for absence or medical condition.
- 8.2 We will aim to assist you in maintaining a good attendance record. This will involve maintaining good records, ensuring return to work meetings are completed and, helping investigate and address any identified underlying causes of absence.
- 8.3 Where this fails to secure a required improvement, we will invoke the terms of the disciplinary procedure. Unsatisfactory attendance reviews can result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- 8.4 If at any stage during this process it becomes apparent that an underlying health condition is involved, medical information will be sought, and further discussion will take place prior to deciding on any appropriate action, if any.
- 8.5 Absence periods related to pregnancy or underlying health conditions classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 will not be considered for the purpose of attendance management process. This must be confirmed by employee's GP or Association Occupational Health Consultant.
- 8.6 Managing attendance is concerned with the number of spells of absence and/or number of days absent, which has become unacceptable. It is not concerned with the causes for absence and will never question whether absences are genuine or not. It does not therefore distinguish between absences certified by a doctor and those that are not. In order to manage attendance, the following standards are required:

Overview	
In a 12 month period: 12 cumulative days or 3 periods (irrespective of duration of absence)	Level 1 interview (informal) Level 1 review if required
If at level 1, one further period of absence (regardless of duration)	Level 2 interview (formal) Level 2 review if required
If at level 2, one further period of absence (regardless of duration)	Level 3 interview Level 3 review if required
If at level 3, one further period of absence (regardless of duration)	Formal action Disciplinary Stage 3 – possible dismissal

8.6.1 Guidance on moving through the Procedure

8.6.2 Each stage of moving through the procedure, from the first to the second level, from the second to the third level and from the third to the final level, has a 12 months' time limit between each stage, during which an improvement notice remains "live". Therefore, within that period of 12 months, an interview can be linked to the next stage. Where an employee successfully improves their attendance in the 12 month period, they will normally no longer be in the procedure and their record cleared.

8.6.3 However, there may be occasions where an employee's attendance is satisfactory, only to lapse very soon after the 12 month period as noted above. Where a pattern emerges, the employee's record under the Attendance Management Procedure should be borne in mind in deciding whether to repeat the previous level of the procedure or advance to the next level. Normally, after one repeat level, further evidence of a pattern will result in advancement to the next level.

8.7.1 Attendance Review Triggers

8.7.2 Conditions covered under the Equality Act 2010 or if there is an underlying medical condition, which may not be covered by the Equality Act, but still resulting in absences, will be managed on an individual basis to determine capability. This process should be followed in conjunction with Disciplinary Procedures and immediately following the Return to Work Interview where the trigger has been reached.

Level 1 (Informal Action)

3 periods of absence in 12 months or 12 working days

- Informal review meeting with employee to discuss the absence – complete informal action template, copy to employee, file in personnel file
- Establish whether there are any underlying issues relating to the absence and record/agree adjustments
- Employee's attendance to be monitored for 12 month
- Employee advised of the consequences of continued poor attendance (e.g. formal action)
- The Line Manager or any other manager dealing with the case may at this stage, request authorisation to obtain advice from the employee's medical practitioner, relative to the staff member's level of attendance and ability to continue in employment.

- The Line Manager or any other manager dealing with the case may, at this stage, request authorisation to obtain advice from the Association's Independent Medical Practitioner (Occupational Health), relative to the staff member's level of attendance and ability to continue in employment

Level 2 (Formal Action – Disciplinary Stage 1)

If currently at Level 1 and there is a further absence within the 12-month review period and/or one year reference period limits exceeded, then a formal disciplinary hearing will take place and a possible outcome may be the issuing of a first written warning.

- The Line Manager or any other manager dealing with the case will request authorisation to obtain advice from the employee's medical practitioner, relative to the staff member's level of attendance and whether this is likely to improve
- The Line Manager or any other manager dealing with the case will obtain advice from the Association's Independent Medical Practitioner (Occupational Health), relative to the staff member's level of attendance and ability to continue in employment
- Disciplinary hearing with employee to be arranged to discuss unsatisfactory attendance levels and GP/Occupational Health reports (disciplinary templates)
- Establish whether there are any underlying issues relating to the absence and record/agree adjustments
- Employee advised of the consequences of continued poor attendance (e.g. Disciplinary Stage 2 formal action, final written warning)
- The employee will be informed in writing of his/her right of appeal if disciplinary action taken.
- Employee's attendance to be monitored for a further 12 months

Level 3 (Formal Action – Disciplinary Stage 2)

If currently at Level 2, and there are more absences within the period of live warning and/or one year reference period limits exceeded, further disciplinary action could be taken (e.g., final written warning). The employee will be requested to attend a disciplinary hearing following the return to work interview.

- The Line Manager or any other manager dealing with the case will request authorisation to obtain further advice from the employee's medical practitioner, relative to the staff member's level of attendance and ability to continue in employment
- The Line Manager or any other manager dealing with the case will obtain further advice from the Association's Independent Medical Practitioner (Occupational Health), relative to the staff member's level of attendance and ability to continue in employment
- Disciplinary hearing with employee to be arranged to discuss unsatisfactory attendance levels and GP/Occupational Health reports (disciplinary templates)
- Establish whether there are any underlying issues relating to the absence and record/agree adjustments
- Employee's attendance to be monitored for a further 12 months
- Employee advised of the consequences of continued poor attendance (e.g. Disciplinary Stage 3 formal action, dismissal)
- The employee will be informed in writing of his/her right of appeal if disciplinary action taken.

Final Level – (Formal Action Disciplinary Stage 3) – Dismissal

If there is still no sustained improvement in attendance whilst a final written warning remains live, then a further disciplinary hearing will be held with the employee per the Association Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and if no acceptable explanation is forthcoming, dismissal may result.

General

Any mitigating circumstances should be established during the most recent return to work interview. These are reasons for non-attendance that the Association will not manage in line with the Policy. Some examples of mitigating circumstances may be:

- Non-attendance, which can be classed as a pregnancy, related illness
- Some non-attendance resulting from an accident at work
- Bereavement related non-attendance (will be awarded in line with Conditions of Service)

This type of leave will be recorded separately. Manager's discretion will also be used where previous attendance has been exemplary.

9.0 Absence Management

9.1 Craigdale Housing Association will adopt a sympathetic approach to employees with a long-term and/or underlying health condition. If you find yourself in such a position you should be confident that your line manager will react in a supportive fashion when approached. For the purposes of this Policy, long term absence is defined as absences that last for a continuous period of 4 weeks/20 days or more and return to work uncertain.

9.2 The following points will always be considered in relation to long-term absence:

- The nature of the illness and any contributing factors
- The likely duration and/or frequency of your absence(s)
- Any actions that can be taken by you
- Any reasonable adjustments that we could make
- Any possible redeployment opportunities
- The nature of the duties in relation to your health conditions
- Our business needs and the impact that your absence may have upon these
- Your entitlement to statutory and company sick pay

9.3 If you are absent for a prolonged period of time, you will be expected to keep in touch and advise us of progress throughout the duration of your absence per "Keeping in Touch" requirements. Your line manager will also seek to obtain medical reports and OHP assessments at appropriate junctures* during the absence and will arrange to discuss these with you when received. Where you disagree with the nature of any medical reports, you will be free to seek and offer alternative medical evidence. If you refuse access to medical records or you do not attend an independent medical assessment, the process will be managed and decisions made based on the information available. Minutes of any meetings will be taken, in order to formally record any agreed improvements or take account of any other relevant information or circumstances. Any meeting venue will be

agreed with you in advance and you may have a friend, colleague or a relative present with you, however they are unable speak on your behalf.

- 9.4 Along with considering any medical reports, your line manager will keep you fully apprised as to whether/for how long the absence can be borne by Craigdale Housing Association. Your line manager will also supply you with the contact details of the Employee Counselling Service. In cases where dismissal through medical incapacity is being considered, full discussions with you will take place first and you will be afforded the opportunity to express views on such a course of action. As alternatives to dismissal, reasonable adjustments and any vacancies that the organisation may have at the time will be considered, in line with business needs.
- 9.5 If a medical professional makes suggestions for any reasonable adjustments, these will be discussed prior to your return to work to determine if these can be accommodated, along with any suggestions you or we may also have made. Although we are not bound by the doctor's suggestions, we will make all possible efforts to accommodate your prompt return and good attendance. If we agree, any reasonable adjustments, we will also set time scales and reviews to assess if they are still required and suitable.
- 9.6 On returning from long-term absences, your line manager or any other available manager will conduct a return to work interview per the procedure. To ensure you settle back into work well and to identify where there are any (further) reasonable adjustments that could be made as well as assessing those that have been put in place, a review will take place two weeks after the return date.
- 9.7 When managing a long-term absence, it is possible that termination of employment for the reason of ill health capability may be considered where all other options have been exhausted, and the organisation can no longer sustain the absence.

N.B If this outcome is being considered we will seek professional advice.

* As a guide, medical reports (GP/OH) may be requested at the following junctures, or as required:

- 1) After 4 weeks' absence
- 2) After 12 weeks' absence
- 3) After 26 weeks' absence
- 4) As required up to 52 weeks' absence

- 9.8 If you are off on long-term sick leave of more than 6 months, we may reduce your annual leave pay to the statutory minimum entitlement of 5.6 weeks, including statutory holidays, in line with the Association's Terms and Conditions of Employment. We would only do this after taking account of all the facts. (The standard paid annual leave entitlement is 8 weeks of annual leave for full-time employees, including public holidays).
- 9.9 We will ensure that we seek the appropriate advice if and when necessary.

10.0 Dishonest Absence

- 10.1 If you are found to falsify or exaggerate your absence, this will be treated as gross misconduct. An investigation will be carried out in accordance with our disciplinary procedure and disciplinary action may be instigated, including dismissal or future withdrawal of the company sick pay benefit.

11.0 Other Provisions

11.1 Absence and Holidays

- 11.1.1 If during an authorised period of annual leave you fall ill, and you produce a self-certificate or fit note we may count the period as sick leave and not as annual leave. You must speak to your manager on the first day of your return to work or earlier if possible and provide them with the necessary certification.
- 11.1.2 If there is a public or general holiday during your period of sickness, and you provide a self-certificate or fit note this will be counted as sick leave and you will receive the holiday at another time.
- 11.1.3 If your illness prevents you from taking your holiday entitlement, we will carry over the remainder to the next holiday year.
- 11.1.4 If you are on sick leave and go on holiday you should contact your line manager to seek authorisation and to let them know how long you will be away for and to ensure communication resumes upon your return.

11.2 Doctor/Hospital/Dental Appointments

- 11.2.1 Doctor, hospital and dental appointments should be arranged out with working hours. If it is not possible, you should request time off from your line manager. Arrangements could include using annual leave, TOIL/flexi or unpaid leave. In some circumstances, line managers could also use their discretion and consider giving paid time off.

11.3 Conduct Whilst off Sick

- 11.3.1 When on sick leave, you are still bound by your contract of employment with us and all our policies including Code of Conduct and your duty of fidelity. We also expect that you do not participate in activities that would be at odds with the reason for your absence. As a responsible employer, we would not expect an employee to undertake any work whilst on sickness leave and would also discourage accessing work emails as this may be contradictory to recovery.
- 11.3.2 Any breach in respect of this will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. This includes conduct on social networking sites and any other publicly made remarks regarding our customers, work colleagues, partners and anyone else who is connected with us.

11.4 Cosmetic Procedures

11.4.1 Absence due to cosmetic procedures (whether carried out in the UK or abroad) will not fall under the sick leave or pay unless it is recommended by health professionals. Employees should therefore request time off and agree with their line manager how the absence will be processed, e.g. annual leave or unpaid leave.

11.5 IVF Treatment

11.5.1 Absences relating to IVF treatment will not be processed as sick leave or pay. The same applies to a partner of a person that is undergoing such treatment. Instead, you should discuss with your line manager how time off for the treatment could be accommodated, e.g. annual leave, flexi time or unpaid leave. Absences relating to IVF treatment will also not be treated as relating to pregnancy unless the employee actually falls pregnant.

11.6 Stress Management

11.6.1 Stress is not an illness. It can result from an illness or lead to one but it is not an illness itself. The same relates to "nervous debility" or any other diagnosis of that type. If you go off sick with stress, your manager will endeavour to find out the underlying cause so that an appropriate action can be taken (if any) and in particular to determine whether conditions at work cause or contribute to stress and whether something could be done to help the situation. We will follow procedures as outlined in the stress management policy. Reasonable adjustments will also be considered if stress is caused by factors out with your work environment.

11.6.2 If a doctor certifies the absence, your line manager may ask your doctor or our occupational health consultant to clarify the underlying cause for stress. The Association will seek permission from you to approach your doctor.

12.0 Equality Act 2010

12.1 Disability discrimination refers to 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities.' The act also covers people who have had a disability in the past. It also doesn't provide a list of impairments that are covered but it considers the effects of impairment on a person.

12.2 This is meant to be a fairly wide definition and includes:

- Physical impairment - this includes weakening or adverse change of a part of the body caused through illness, by accident or from birth. For example, amongst many other situations, blindness, deafness, heart disease, the paralysis of a limb or severe disfigurement
- Mental impairment - this can include learning disabilities and all recognised mental illnesses
- Substantial - this does not have to be severe, but is more than minor or trivial
- Long-term adverse effect - that has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months
- A normal day-to-day activity - that is, one that affects one of the following: your mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech, hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or perception of the risk of physical danger. It does not include the ability to work because no particular form of work is 'normal' for most people

12.3 This includes the need to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities. It is unlawful to discriminate against disabled people by treating disabled employees less favourably for a reason related to their disability without justification. As an employer we are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to recruitment processes, work arrangements and the working environment in order to accommodate disabled people. An employer who fails to comply with this duty will be guilty of discrimination, unless the employer can show justification.

12.4 Reasonable adjustments while in employment can include:

- Giving or arranging training and equipment e.g. speech browser software installed onto computer
- Providing a reader or interpreter e.g. sign language interpreter for meetings
- Providing supervision e.g. support worker
- Acquiring or modifying equipment e.g. a specifically designed chair
- Modifying instructions or reference manuals e.g. oral instruction may be provided
- Altering working hours e.g. a person who takes medication, which has side effects worse in the morning, is allowed to start work later in the day
- Allocating some of the disabled person's duties to another person e.g. a librarian cannot return books to high shelving - a colleague assists with this aspect of the work
- Transferring the disabled person to fill an existing vacancy e.g. a sales rep has to give up driving. She is transferred to a vacant post requiring computer skills for which she is given training
- Assigning the disabled person to a different place of work e.g. allowing home working during a period of rehabilitation
- Allowing absence during working hours for rehabilitation assessment or treatment
- Employees may need time off for counselling sessions
- Modifying assessment procedures e.g. giving people longer to complete selection tests
- Adjusting premises e.g. the direction in which a door opens is altered for a wheelchair user

13.0 Employee Counselling Service

13.1 The Association offers the following access to counselling services to provide additional support measures which will hopefully help manage staff absences, reduce the period of long-term absence for employees experiencing health issues and therefore increasing their overall effectiveness and performance at work.

12.0 Data Protection

12.1 We will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Data Protection Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Craigdale Housing Association's employee privacy notice.

13.0 Complaints

- 13.1 We have a separate complaints policy and procedure. Leaflets and copies of the complaint's procedure are available from the Association's office and on our website. We also provide information on how our customers can make a complaint to the SPSO, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS, telephone 0800 377 7300 or 0131 225 5300.

14.0 Review of Policy

- 14.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years or in light of changes to legislation.