

Contact call

Background and Purpose

Early contact and care from an employee's immediate manager are success factors in a rehabilitation process and can make it easier for an employee to return to the workplace.

The purpose of the contact call is to learn how your employee is feeling and to find out whether anything can be done at the workplace to facilitate their return to work. It is important that you and your employee keep in continuous contact with each other throughout their period of sick leave. Contact calls are also important in order for the employee to feel welcome to return to work. If there are special reasons against you as manager making contact, your supervisor or HR specialist/advisor may take your place and make the call.

Early contact (days 1–14)

- Call the sick employee no later than day three.
- Ask the employee how they are feeling.
- Ask when the employee thinks that they will be able to return to work.
- Are there any adjustments that could be made to help them return to work?
- Agree on the time for a follow-up call.
- If needed, initiate contact with occupational health services (e.g., for work-related ill health).
- Document the call, assessments and decisions. If helpful, please use the *Notes Template*.

Contact is important so as to learn the reasons for the employee's ill health as early as possible and to be able to assess possible adjustments that can be made to facilitate the individual's return to work; e.g. adjustments in work assignments, working hours, place of work or travel to and from work.

Continued contact (days 15 and onwards)

- Keep in regular contact with the employee to check how they are doing, as you've agreed up on.
- The focus is on understanding when the employee has recovered sufficient capacity for work so that you as manager can begin to plan their occupational rehabilitation.
- Document the call, assessments and decisions. If helpful, please use the *Notes Template*.

Suggested topics during contact calls

- State of health, medical certificate, doctor's prognosis regarding return to work.
- Practical questions regarding scheduling, booked meetings etc.
- What can be done to facilitate a return to work?
- Can other, temporary, work assignments be offered?
- Is part-time work possible?
- What information can be given to co-workers?
- Set a time for the next call. Listen attentively and be sensitive to what the employee says and be open to their preferred methods of contact.

Remember to include the following if the period of sick leave is expected to be prolonged:

- Determine how continued contact should take place in case of long-term sick leave.
- Inform the individual about rehabilitation meetings (*Return to work plan*) when they have been on sick leave for one month.
- Encourage them to visit the workplace.
- Invite them to visit the workplace or to join in other social activities.
- It is important that your employee feels welcome to return to work.