

MANAGERS AND STAFF

STAGE 1 SICKNESS ABSENCE USER GUIDE

(Version 3)



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SICKNESS ABSENCE STAGE 1

INTRODUCTION

The changes to sickness absence management will be introduced gradually across departments in three stages.

When the changes come into effect, you will:

STAGE 1

- **Conduct review meetings.**
- **Conduct meetings to consider Written Warnings and Final Written Warnings.**

STAGE 2

- **Apply early support procedures.**

During Stages 1 and 2 you will have one to one support from a NICSHR Employee Relations Case Manager.

STAGE 3

- **Manage staff sickness absence casework.**
- **Decide on the outcome of appeals for Written Warnings and Final Written Warnings.**
- **Refer staff to Welfare Support Services and the Occupational Health Service.**
- **Refer casework to NICSHR ER for consideration of dismissal.**

During Stage 1 managers will continue to:

- Record your member of staff's absences on HRConnect.
- Maintain contact with your staff during an absence.
- Approve & agree phased return plans.
- Conduct Return to Work Interviews.

As managers you will continue to engage with your staff who are absent due to sickness. You will also have the opportunity to hold earlier discussions to identify how you can support your member of staff. Throughout Stage 1 NICSHR Case Managers will guide, coach and mentor you in case management and decision ensuring you understand how individual cases have been managed and the rationale behind their decision making.

NICSHR Case Managers will be responsible for guiding you on the actions you are required to take and the timeframe within which this should happen. The NICSHR Case Manager will always speak with you in advance of issuing an e-mail requesting action in a sickness absence case.

All staff who process personal data as part of their job have a legal obligation to protect the information they handle.

As a manager engaging with sickness absence under the revised processes you will be handling personal data relating to your members of staff. The guidance that follows is designed to supplement existing departmental records management policies and guidance. If you have any doubt about the handling of personal data, you should ask your Local Information Manager (LIM) or Business Area Information Manager (BAIM).

It is important to remember that:

- You should only hold information **specifically required for the management of this process**.
- Information you hold about the member of staff, for the purposes of this process, is **discoverable**.
- Information you hold about the member of staff, which you have not already shared with them as part of this process, may be subject to release should they submit a **Subject Access Request**.

You must ensure that you:

- Comply with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).
- Have completed your mandatory training for the handling of personal data.
- Store all documents containing personal information in a secure environment.



More guidance on the principles of record management can be found in:

- Your departmental Records Management policy.
- Your departmental Guide to Physical, Document and IT Security.



This guidance is written for the majority of NICS managers who have access to HPRM. Where HPRM is not available, please use your established departmental records management system and seek further guidance from your departmental information management team where required.

Storing data in relation to the revised sickness absence process

- Data stored relating to the changes in this process may relate to sensitive issues involving medical information and, in some cases, information around personal workplace relationships or personal and/or domestic problems.
- The changes to the sickness absence process are restricted to a change in your roles and responsibilities, with responsibilities for conducting certain sickness absence meetings passing to managers. All resulting decisions / outcomes from the meetings will continue to be the responsibility of the NICSHR Case Manager, who will continue to control the HPRM storage facility. They will also be responsible for monitoring the departmental HPRM container for any new content added by the manager.
- While a case is ongoing it will be necessary to retain data / personal information, resulting from this change in role, in a secure manner.
- On completion of all actions relating to an absence, you must provide all documentation to the NICSHR Case Manager for retention in the appropriate HPRM container.
- Any copies of information held by you as “work in progress” (electronic or hardcopy), must be disposed of securely by deleting electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies following confirmation of receipt by the NICSHR Case Manager.
- Where possible, correspondence received from a member of staff in hardcopy format, for example suggested corrections to minutes of a meeting, should be scanned and held electronically. If this is not possible then the hardcopy should be stored in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

Creating, amending or saving information

- This process is supported by a number of template documents which must be used in the management of all cases, all of which have been developed in line with the principles of GDPR.
- Alternatives to the template documents should **NOT** be created.
- Template documents / correspondence will be provided by the NICSHR Case Manager for your use. The NICSHR Case Manager will provide detailed guidance on the completion of these documents, taking the specifics of the individual case into account.
- Any personal information which is provided by the member of staff to you as their manager, and is not relevant to the management of the absence should not be shared with the NICSHR Case Manager.

If the member of staff should provide an update in writing which contains personal information (or information they request remain private), you must not save this in your departmental HPRM container (if available). Transcribe information relating to the absence onto a ‘Regular Contact Form’ and save into your departmental HPRM container (if available) or e-mail to the NICSHR Case Manager. The original document from the member of staff should be securely disposed of by deleting electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

Sending information

- For the purposes of this procedure, you will send most information electronically. In instances where a member of staff is not in the workplace and their preferred method of contact is via a private e-mail account, to ensure security of data, a test e-mail should be forwarded to them in advance as outlined in [Annex 1](#) of this guidance. You must restrict access to the letter (in word format) by adding a password of the employee's date of birth in the format DDMMYYYY. For guidance on how to password protect a document please refer to [Annex 2](#).
- NICSHR Case Managers continue to have responsibility for the maintenance of all HPRM documents and will provide access to all the HPRM documents you will need. These will be supplied, via e-mail, as HPRM links which are restricted as required i.e. you will only have access to specific documents and not entire containers - **Word versions will not be sent**. Any hardcopy data you receive from the member of staff, should be scanned and saved to the relevant departmental HPRM container and the hardcopy securely disposed of by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- If you do not have access to HPRM, all documents must be sent electronically via e-mail. Any hardcopy data you receive from the member of staff should be scanned before e-mailing and you should securely dispose of the hardcopy by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- There should be very few cases, where you as a manager, will not have access to scanning and e-mailing facilities. However, should this be the case, hardcopy documents must be sent in appropriately sealed and marked envelopes and where possible should be hand delivered.
- Information in relation to this formal procedure has an **OFFICIAL** security marking, i.e. the default setting for the e-mail system.
- Do not send documents attached to diary entries or meeting requests as these may be viewed by third parties.

After receiving information

- Information which you receive from NICSHR Case Managers, for the purpose of informing sickness absence meetings, will be by HPRM link. This is to ensure that data access is appropriately restricted.
- If you do not have access to HPRM, all documents must be sent electronically via e-mail. Any hardcopy data you receive from the member of staff should be scanned before e-mailing and you should securely dispose of the hardcopy by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- If you receive information from the member of staff **electronically** this should be saved into the relevant departmental HPRM container (if available) or forwarded to the NICSHR Case Manager by e-mail.
- If you receive information from member of staff by post in hardcopy form this must be scanned (where available) and e-mailed to the NICSHR Case Manager as above with the original document(s) disposed of securely by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

- As previously stated, if the member of staff should provide an update in writing (e-mail or hardcopy) which contains personal information (or information which they request remain private), you must not save this in the relevant departmental HPRM container (if available). Transcribe the information relating to the absence onto a '**Regular Contact Form**' and save into the relevant departmental HPRM container (if available) or e-mail to the NICSHR Case Manager.
- Think before you print – only print if required as a working document. All duplicate hardcopy documents must be safely stored at all times in a secure cabinet with restricted access and disposed of securely by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

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SICKNESS ABSENCE STAGE 1

FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE - MEMBER OF STAFF REPORTS SICK

 [Handling Personal Data Guidance](#)

When a member of staff reports sick on the first day of their absence, consider what information you need to know and what you need to do, taking the nature of their absence into account.

Familiarise yourself with the [First Contact Guidance](#) document, available on the Employee Services Portal (ESP), which outlines the responsibilities for both you and your member of staff.

Member of Staff

- To make / arrange contact with work as soon as possible.
- To advise about the nature and, if possible, the likely duration of the absence.

Manager

- To offer assistance / support.
- To record the absence on HRConnect.
- Confirm the member of staff's contact details & the date and time of next contact.


There are **3** steps in this process.


STEP 1


Member of Staff

Member of staff reports sick

Your member of staff must contact you, or a more senior manager, as early as possible on the first day of their absence (normally within one hour of their usual start time). They must state the nature of their illness and when they expect to be able to return to work (if known).

 *In exceptional circumstances if a member of staff is unable to contact you personally, they should arrange for someone to act on their behalf. However, it remains the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure the message is received.*

 *Text messages are not considered to be an appropriate method of contact and must not be used.*

 *In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for your member of staff to disclose the nature of their absence to an alternative manager within their management structure, for example:*

- *Where the absence reason is gender specific, they may wish to speak to someone of the same gender.*

- Where there are work related issues contributing to their absence, they may wish to speak to someone else.

STEP 2

Manager

Discuss absence & work commitments with your member of staff

You should enquire if there is anything you can do to assist with a return to work as well as direct your member of staff to the support services available to them. If applicable, ask your member of staff if they would like a copy of the information sheet [Support – How can we Help?](#)

At this stage you should also confirm with your member of staff if there are any work commitments they should make you aware of, appointments due, or if there is any urgent work that needs to be addressed in their absence.

You should also agree the arrangements for your next contact with your member of staff and the preferred method of contact (i.e. telephone or e-mail).



Any personal contact details should be stored securely in accordance with your Departmental Records management policy and should only be used for the purpose for which they were obtained.

STEP 3

Manager

Open the absence on HRConnect

You must create a new sickness absence entry for your member of staff on HRConnect, which you can access via the Employee Services Portal (ESP).

A [Sickness Absence Quick Reference Guide](#) on how to create a new sickness absence record within HRConnect is available to access via the Employee Services Portal.



You should ensure that you do not enter an end date on HRConnect until your member of staff returns to work.

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SICKNESS ABSENCE STAGE 1

MAINTAINING REGULAR CONTACT



[Handling Personal Data Guidance](#)

Where a member of staff is absent due to sickness, Management is expected to maintain regular contact (as per sections 6.4 and 6.5 of the Inefficiency Sickness Absence Policy). You should agree with your member of staff the frequency and method of contact.



In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for an alternative manager within the member of staff's management structure to maintain regular contact, for example:

- Where the absence reason is gender specific and the member of staff wishes to be managed throughout their absence by someone of the same gender.*
- Where there are work related issues contributing to the member of staff's absence and it is more appropriate that they are managed throughout their absence by another manager.*

There are **3** steps in this process.

STEP 1

Manager

Agree how often the regular contact should take place

Contact should normally be every 2 weeks, however the frequency of contact will depend on the nature and circumstances of the absence.



You will need to exercise your discretion as to the appropriate level of contact on a case by case basis.

STEP 2

Manager

Confirm your member of staff's preferred method of contact

Establish the manner of contact which is preferred by your member of staff. In the majority of cases this will be via telephone. However, staff may request to meet face to face or maintain contact via e-mail or by letter. Confirm that information provided relating to the member of staff's absence, will be shared with the NICSHR Case Manager, unless they specifically request the information be kept private.

If the method of contact is **verbal** by telephone or by meeting face to face proceed to **STEP 3a**.

If the method of contact is **written** by e-mail or post proceed to **STEP 3b**.

STEP 3a

Manager

Complete the Regular Contact Form – Verbal Communication

Prior to speaking with your member of staff, you should familiarise yourself with the Sickness Absence – Regular Contact form, which provides guidance on what this discussion should cover.

You should complete the [Sickness Absence - Regular Contact Form](#) following each contact and e-mail this to the NICSHR Case Manager. If a departmental container has been opened for this absence the document should be saved there and the NICSHR Case Manager notified accordingly. You must only include information with the member of staff's permission that is relevant to the absence.

Where a departmental container hasn't been opened, you should e-mail the completed Regular Contact form to the NICSHR Case Manager.

If you do not have access to HPRM forward the Regular Contact Form to the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.



The NICSHR Case Manager will advise you when to securely dispose of documentation.

STEP 3b

Manager

Regular Contact – Written Communication

In cases where regular contact is maintained via e-mail you should provide the NICSHR Case Manager with a copy.

On receipt of written communication, where the member of staff has included information that is not relevant to the absence or which they do not wish to share with NICSHR, you should extract the required information and transcribe onto a [Sickness Absence - Regular Contact Form](#).



You must not scan or save the original document into the departmental HPRM container.


Where a departmental container has been opened for this absence you should save the Regular Contact Form, or e-mail (if appropriate) into the container and notify the NICSHR Case Manager.

Where a departmental container has not been opened, you should forward a copy of the Regular Contact Form, or the e-mail (if appropriate) to the NICSHR Case Manager.

If you do not have access to HPRM forward the Regular Contact Form, or documentation (if appropriate) to the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

In cases where you receive information from your member of staff via hardcopy, you should scan the document (where available) and e-mail it to the NICSHR Case Manager, who shall confirm receipt and that the original document(s) can be disposed of securely by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

When sending documents by hardcopy (in cases where scanning facilities are unavailable) ensure this is appropriately sealed and marked prior to posting. Where possible hand-deliver.

 *The NICSHR Case Manager will advise you when to securely dispose of documentation.*

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SICKNESS ABSENCE STAGE 1

PROGRESS MEETING

 [Handling Personal Data Guidance](#)

The NICSHR Case Manager will review the individual circumstances of an absence and advise you if a Progress Meeting is required. The meeting will normally be carried out around the 14th calendar day of an absence.

 *In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for an alternative manager within the member of staff's management structure to conduct the Progress Meeting, for example:*

- *Where the absence reason is gender specific and the member of staff wishes to be managed throughout their absence by someone of the same gender.*
- *Where there are work related issues contributing to the member of staff's absence and it is more appropriate that they are managed throughout their absence by another manager.*

There are **7** Steps in this process.

STEP 1

NICSHR Case Manager

Will discuss the need for a meeting with you

In and around the 14th calendar day of sickness absence the NICSHR Case Manager will speak with you to discuss the requirement for a Progress Meeting. If the Progress Meeting is deemed unnecessary or inappropriate, the NICSHR Case Manager will discuss the reasoning for this decision with you.

STEP 2

NICSHR Case Manager

Will issue a confirmation e-mail

The NICSHR Case Manager will send you a standard e-mail advising you to carry out the Progress Meeting.

Where a Progress Meeting is required, the e-mail will contain a link to enable you to download the [Progress Meeting Pro-forma](#) from the Employee Services Portal (ESP).

Where a Progress Meeting is not required, the NICSHR Case Manager will e-mail to confirm the reason and advise you to securely dispose of all records.

STEP 3

Manager

Conducts the Progress Meeting

You should contact your member of staff (normally by telephone) to carry out the Progress Meeting and take a note of what was discussed. During the meeting you must confirm that you will share any information provided that is relevant to their absence with the NICSHR Case Manager, unless specifically requested not to do so.

This will include:

- **Confirming reason for absence.**
- **Update of their condition / treatment.**
- **Likely duration of absence – barriers preventing a return to work.**
- **Support available – Inspire, Welfare Support Services, etc.**

STEP 4

Manager

Completes the Progress Meeting Pro-forma

Where possible you should always complete the Progress Meeting pro-forma on the same day, using notes taken during the meeting. If, in exceptional circumstances, you are unable to complete the Progress Meeting pro-forma on the same day the meeting took place, any handwritten notes or relevant documentation must be stored in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

STEP 5

Manager

Returns the Progress Meeting Pro-forma to NICSHR

Send the Progress Meeting pro-forma to the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail. You should also scan and forward any handwritten notes / relevant hardcopy documents (if applicable) to NICSHR. Where scanning facilities are unavailable, ensure documents are appropriately sealed and marked prior to posting. Where possible hand-deliver.

STEP 6

NICSHR Case Manager

Will consider the information provided & how absence should be managed

The NICSHR Case Manager will review the content of the Progress Meeting pro-forma along with all available and relevant information before considering the next steps in the management of the absence. The NICSHR Case Manager will keep you informed on how the absence will be managed e.g. referral to OHS, Welfare Support Services or Mediation Service.

STEP 7

NICSHR Case Manager

Will secure all documentation

The NICSHR Case Manager will ensure all information is saved into the appropriate NICSHR HPRM container. When the NICSHR Case Manager is content they are in receipt of all the relevant information, they will advise you to delete any electronic copies and securely dispose of any hardcopies of documentation relating to the Progress Meeting including pro-formas, e-mails, etc. (if applicable) by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

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SICKNESS ABSENCE STAGE 1

ISSUING AN INFORMATION & SUPPORT LETTER

 [Handling Personal Data Guidance](#)

Once a member of staff is absent for 28 calendar days, an Information & Support letter is normally issued. When required, the NICSHR Case Manager will advise you to issue this letter to the member of staff.

 In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for an alternative manager within the member of staff's management structure to issue the Information & Support letter, for example:

- Where the absence reason is gender specific and the member of staff wishes to be managed throughout their absence by someone of the same gender.
- Where there are work related issues contributing to the member of staff's absence and it is more appropriate that they are managed throughout their absence by another manager.

There are **4** steps in this process.

STEP 1

NICSHR Case Manager

Will speak to you to discuss the issue of the Information & Support letter

The NICSHR Case Manager will speak with you to discuss the requirement to issue the Information & Support letter.

In exceptional circumstances it may be decided that it would be appropriate to hold the issue of the letter and this will be discussed with you.

STEP 2


NICSHR Case Manager

Will e-mail you to issue the Information & Support letter

If the NICSHR Case Manager decides that it is appropriate to issue the Information & Support letter, they will e-mail you requesting that you take this forward.

The e-mail will include a Permalink to:

- A blank [Information & Support Letter and Guidance](#) for you to complete.
- Guidance on how to complete the Information & Support letter.

 In exceptional circumstances, where it has been agreed between you and the NICSHR Case Manager that an Information and Support letter should not issue, the NICSHR Case Manager will set out the justification for the decision and save into the NICSHR HPRM container.

STEP 3

Manager

Complete and issue the Information & Support letter

Download the template [Information & Support Letter and Guidance](#) by using the Permalink within the NICSHR Case Manager's e-mail. You should complete the letter using the member of staff's details provided in the e-mail and issue to them via the agreed method i.e. e-mail or post.

By e-mail:

Before sending any information to a private e-mail address you must send a test e-mail. You should request your member of staff reply to your e-mail providing their payroll number to confirm both their identity and that you have the correct e-mail address. You should restrict access to the letter by adding a password of the employee's date of birth in the format DDMMYYYY.

For guidance on how to password protect a document please refer to [Annex 2](#).

By post:

Should your member of staff advise that they wish to receive the letter via a hardcopy, the letter should be placed in a sealed envelope and marked '**Strictly Private**'.

You MUST forward a copy of the Information & Support letter to:

- HRConnect.
- Your Manager.
- NICSHR Case Manager.

STEP 4

NICSHR Case Manager

Will secure all documentation

Once the NICSHR Case Manager receives a copy of the Information & Support letter they will ensure that it is saved into the appropriate HPRM container.

When the NICSHR Case Manager has saved the Information & Support letter to HPRM, they will advise you to delete all electronic copies and securely dispose of all hardcopies of the letter (if applicable) by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.



Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), you are not permitted to retain a copy of this letter once it has issued to the member of staff and has been received and stored by NICSHR.

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SICKNESS ABSENCE STAGE 1

REVIEW MEETING

 [Handling Personal Data Guidance](#)

The NICSHR Case Manager may ask you to carry out a Review Meeting for a member of staff during a period of long term sick absence. The NICSHR Case Manager will review the individual circumstances of an absence and will provide you with a guidance and preparation document when a review meeting is required.

 In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for an alternative manager within the member of staff's management structure to conduct the Review Meeting, for example:

- Where the absence reason is gender specific and the member of staff wishes to be managed throughout their absence by someone of the same gender.
- Where there are work related issues contributing to the member of staff's absence and it is more appropriate that they are managed throughout their absence by another manager.

There are **12** Steps in this process.

STEP 1

NICSHR Case Manager

Will discuss the need to hold a meeting with you

Where your member of staff's absence is long term, the NICSHR Case Manager will speak with you to discuss the requirement for a Review Meeting.

STEP 2

NICSHR Case Manager

Will issue a confirmation e-mail to you

The NICSHR Case Manager will e-mail you advising you to conduct a Review Meeting and to arrange for a departmental HPRM container to be opened in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy, please see [Annex 8](#) for further guidance on this. You must ensure that your manager and NICSHR are given access to this container.

For those who have access to HPRM, this e-mail will provide you with a link to the completed *Review Meeting – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* document. This document provides you with a meeting structure and acts as speaking notes.



Form A is held within the NICSHR HPRM container, you will only have access to this document and not the container itself. You are not permitted to save this document locally.

The e-mail will also include a Permalink to a blank [Sickness Absence - Review Meeting Form B](#) pro-forma for you to complete following the Review Meeting.

The e-mail will further include a series of Permalinks to:

- **Invitation to Review Meeting letter.**
- **Guidance on how to complete an Invitation to Review Meeting letter.**
- **Meeting Summary cover letter.**
- **Guidance on how to complete a Meeting Summary Cover letter.**
- **Role of the note-taker guidance.**

For those who do not have access to HPRM, your NICSHR Case Manager will e-mail you advising you to carry out a Review Meeting and will attach all documents electronically. These documents should be saved in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

Where a Review Meeting is not currently required, the NICSHR Case Manager will e-mail you to confirm the reasoning for this.

STEP 3a

Manager

Arrange meeting with your member of staff

Prior to issuing an invitation letter, you should contact your member of staff (if possible) to agree a suitable time and date for the Review Meeting. This is to reduce the likelihood of having to reschedule the meeting.

You should ensure your member of staff has 2 weeks' notice to allow them time to arrange for a Trade Union representative or a work colleague to accompany them, should they wish.

If a note-taker is to be present at the Review Meeting, you should advise the member of staff who the note-taker will be, at least 5 days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting.

If the member of staff is not content with the proposed note-taker, they may request that a different person is selected. You and the member of staff should agree who will take a record of the meeting.

STEP 3b

Manager

Member of staff unable to attend meeting

If the member of staff is unable to attend due to ill health you should offer them the opportunity to provide a written statement and advise that this will be forwarded to the NICSHR Case Manager for their consideration.

If you have access to HPRM:

If your member of staff supplies you with a written statement electronically, you will save into the relevant departmental HPRM container and notify the NICSHR Case Manager.

If received by hardcopy, you should scan and save the written statement into the relevant departmental HPRM container and notify the NICSHR Case Manager.

If you don't have access to HPRM:

If your member of staff supplies you with a written statement electronically, you should forward a copy of the written statement to NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

If received by hardcopy, you should scan the written statement and e-mail to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should only post documentation when you don't have access to scanning facilities.

If you do not receive the written statement within the agreed timescales you should notify the NICSHR Case Manager accordingly.

STEP 4

Manager

Complete and issue the invitation letter

The NICSHR Case Manager's e-mail contains a Permalink to download the [Invite to Review Meeting letter and Guidance](#) from the Employee Services Portal, complete and save a copy of the invitation letter to the relevant departmental HPRM container. If you do not have access to HPRM you should save this in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

Complete the letter using the member of staff's details provided in *Review Meeting – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* and issue via the agreed method i.e. e-mail or post.

By e-mail:

Before sending any information to a private e-mail address you must send a test e-mail. You should request your member of staff reply to your e-mail providing their payroll number to confirm both their identity and that you have the correct e-mail address. You should restrict access to the letter by adding a password of the employee's date of birth in the format DDMMYYYY.

For guidance on how to password protect a document please refer to [Annex 2](#).

By post:

Should your member of staff advise that they wish to receive the letter via a hardcopy, the letter should be placed in a sealed envelope and marked '**Strictly Private**'.

If you have access to HPRM:

You MUST e-mail a copy of the Invitation to Review Meeting letter to:

- **HRCConnect.**

You MUST forward a link to the departmental HPRM container to:

- **Your Manager.**
- **NICSHR Case Manager.**

If you do not have access to HPRM

You should forward a copy of the letter to your manager and the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

STEP 5

Manager

Prepare for the Review Meeting

In advance of the meeting consider the *Review Meeting – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* document provided by the NICSHR Case Manager. As part of your preparation for the meeting, you **must** contact the NICSHR Case Manager to discuss and to confirm your understanding of what you are being asked to do.

If you identify any further questions that you feel should be asked during the meeting, you should discuss these with the NICSHR Case Manager.

You should provide the agreed note-taker with a copy of the document, *Role of the note-taker* (see [Annex 5](#)), well in advance of the meeting.

STEP 6

Manager

Conduct the Review Meeting

Meet with your member of staff and conduct the Review Meeting. A note of the meeting must be taken either by you or a note-taker.

You should bring the following documentation to the meeting:

- **A copy of the Form A.**
- **The Inefficiency Sickness Absence policy.**
- **The member of staff's sickness absence record.**

You must use Form A to conduct the meeting. Form A provides you with a meeting structure and acts as speaking notes, including:

- **Introductions.**
- **Right to be accompanied.**
- **Purpose of meeting.**
- **Intention to share information provided related to absence with the NICSHR Case Manager.**

On conclusion of the meeting the printed copy of Form A and the sickness absence record must be disposed of securely by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

Where you have taken the record of the meeting proceed to [STEP 7a](#).

Where a note-taker has taken a record of the meeting proceed to [STEP 7b](#).

STEP 7a

Manager

Manager Completes the Review Meeting Pro-forma – Form B

If you have access to HPRM you should:

- Download Form B (using the Permalink supplied in the NICSHR e-mail), complete and save this document into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Scan a copy of your handwritten notes and save into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Securely dispose of the hardcopy of the handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- Use scanned copy of handwritten notes to complete Form B.

If you do not have access to HPRM you should save these documents in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

STEP 7b

Manager

Note-taker Completes the Review Meeting Pro-forma – Form B

If you have access to HPRM you should:

- Download Form B (using the Permalink supplied in the NICSHR e-mail), complete section 1 'staff member details' and save this template into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Scan a copy of the note-taker's handwritten notes and save into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Securely dispose of the hardcopy of handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- Arrange for the note-taker to be given access to Form B and the scanned copy of the handwritten notes within the relevant departmental HPRM container.



The note-taker will have access to these documents **only**, the note-taker will **not** be able to access the container itself or any other document within the container).

The note-taker should then use the scanned copy of the handwritten notes to complete Form B. Once Form B has been completed, you should arrange for the note-takers access to Form B and the scanned copy of the handwritten notes within the HPRM container to be removed.

If you do not have access to HPRM you should save these documents in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

If in exceptional circumstances the note-taker retains their handwritten notes until Form B has been completed, these notes must be stored in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

The note-taker should complete **Form B** within **3 days of the meeting**. You should review Form B and make any necessary changes ensuring it is an accurate reflection of what was discussed at the meeting.

You will have **five working days** from the date of the meeting to produce a summary of the meeting and to forward it to the member of staff for their consideration.

Where the **member of staff wishes** to receive **correspondence by post** proceed to **STEP 8a**.

Where the **member of staff wishes** to receive **correspondence by e-mail** proceed to **STEP 8b**.

STEP 8a

Manager

Issue record of meeting to the member of staff for their consideration by post

You must download the [Meeting Summary Letter and Guidance](#), complete the relevant sections of this template, attach a copy of the completed [Review Meeting – Record of Meeting \(Form B\)](#) and send this to the member of staff for their agreement or comments / suggested factual amendments. The letter should be placed in a sealed envelope and marked '**Strictly Private**'.

STEP 8b

Manager

Issue meeting summary to the member of staff for their consideration by e-mail

Step by step instruction on issuing the meeting summary and the wording to be used in your e-mail can be found at [Annex 1](#). This document will provide you with a standard template along with information on security marking and password protecting the document for issue to private e-mail accounts.

STEP 9

Member of Staff

Member of staff returns the summary or timescale expires

The member of staff will have **five working days** from the date the meeting summary was issued to either agree the summary or provide comments / suggested factual amendments.

If the meeting **summary is agreed** proceed to **STEP 10a**.

If the member of staff has provided **suggested amendments** and you are content to accept these proceed to **STEP 10b**.

If the member of staff has provided **suggested amendments** and you are **NOT** content to accept these proceed to **STEP 10c**.

If the member of staff has provided **comments** on the meeting summary proceed to **STEP 10d**.

If the member of staff **fails to respond** or responds outside the **timescale** proceed to **STEP 10e**.

STEP 10a

Manager

Summary Agreed - Return the Documentation to NICSHR

If you have access to HPRM:

When you receive the agreed meeting summary via e-mail you must save this into the relevant departmental HPRM container along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes and inform the NICSHR Case Manager that the meeting summary is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this, save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to advise that the documentation is available. Where available, always scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

You should forward the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. Where available, always scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager and then securely dispose of the documentation including the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

STEP 10b

Manager

Amendments Accepted - Return the Documentation to NICSHR

Where you receive the suggested amendments from the member of staff and you are content to accept these.

If you have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, into the relevant departmental HPRM container. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save this in line with your Departmental Records Management policy. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt



You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your Departmental Records Management policy. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10C

Manager

Amendments not Accepted - Return the Documentation to NICSHR

Where you receive the suggested amendments from the member of staff and you are not content to accept these.

If you have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save the member of staff's suggested amendments to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available and then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save in line with your Departmental Records Management policy. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward both copies of the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.



You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your Departmental Records Management Policy. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward the original record of the meeting together with the suggested amendments and the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10d

Manager

Comments Received - Return the Documentation to NICSHR

Where you receive comments from the member of staff.

If you have access to HPRM:

Where you receive comments via post you should scan and save these to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

Where the member of staff returned comments by e-mail you should save the member of staff's comments to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available and then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive comments via post you should scan and save these in line with your Departmental Records Management policy. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward both copies of the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.



You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

Where the member of staff returned comments by e-mail you should save these along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your Departmental Records Management Policy. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward the original record of the meeting together with comments and the handwritten notes of the meeting to

NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10e *Manager* ***Return the Documentation to NICSHR – No Response within set timescales***

You should advise the NICSHR Case Manager that the member of staff has not responded to the summary within the agreed timescales. You should provide the meeting summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager. The original handwritten notes should be securely disposed of by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you have access to HPRM you should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to advise that the completed Form B and the handwritten notes are available.

If you do not have access to HPRM forward the meeting summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.



You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

STEP 11 *NICSHR Case Manager* ***Will consider the information provided***

The NICSHR Case Manager will review the summary of the meeting along with any associated comments or amendments provided by the member of staff.

If incomplete – Should the NICSHR Case Manager perceive any gaps in the information, you will either be asked to provide the relevant information or contact the member of staff to seek further clarification. You will need to update Form B accordingly and again forward to the employee for consideration as set out in step 9 & 10 above.

Once this process has been completed ensure this information is made available to the NICSHR Case Manager. Once received they will ask you to securely dispose of all electronic copies, hardcopies and handwritten notes by deleting any electronic copies and by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies.


If complete - The NICSHR Case Manager will ensure all information is saved into the appropriate NICSHR HPRM container.

STEP 12 *NICSHR Case Manager* ***Will issue the Outcome of Review meeting letter***

The NICSHR Case Manager will contact you to discuss the management of the absence.

The NICSHR Case Manager will draft the outcome of the Review Meeting letter and issue to the member of staff which will detail the next steps in the management of the absence..

Both you and your manager will receive a copy of the outcome of the Review Meeting letter for information purposes only.

 The Outcome of Review Meeting letter must not be printed or saved locally.

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8

SICKNESS ABSENCE STAGE 1

RETURN TO WORK

 [Handling Personal Data Guidance](#)

When your member of staff returns to work following a period of sickness absence, you must close the absence on HRConnect (via the Employee Services Portal) and complete a Return to Work Interview.

There are **9** Steps in this process.

When your member of staff returns to work following a period of sickness absence, you must ensure that the absence is fully certified.

Where the **member of staff has been absent 7 calendar days or less** proceed to **STEP 1a**.

Where the **member of staff has been absent for 8 calendar days or more** proceed to **STEP 1b**.

STEP 1a

Manager

Check that the absence is fully certified – 7 calendar days or less

On their return, your member of staff must complete a Self-Certificate of Sickness on HRConnect via the Employee Services Portal. The [Sickness Absence - Employee \(Quick Reference Guide\)](#) details how to do this.

If they do not have access to ESP, you should provide the member of staff with a [Self-Certified Sick Leave Form](#) on their return to work. Once you have received the completed form, you must update the HRConnect Manager Self-Service 'Self-Certification Form' screen with the relevant details on their behalf.

STEP 1b

Manager

Check that the absence is fully certified – 8 calendar days or more

Your member of staff must have provided Statements of Fitness for Work (Fit Notes). You should review the self-certificate (if applicable) and the Fit Notes to ensure the reasons for absence and dates of sickness are consistent and that the entire absence period is fully certified. It is likely that when you first opened the absence it was recorded as 'uncertified'; you must now ensure that this has been updated to "certified".

STEP 2

Manager

Close the absence on the HRConnect portal

You must close your member of staff's absence on the HRConnect portal following their return to work. The [Sickness Absence - Managers \(Quick Reference Guide\)](#) details how to do this.



It is important to remember to use the correct end date, i.e. the last working day that your member of staff was absent. Failure to close the absence correctly could result in your member of staff receiving an incorrect rate of pay.

STEP 3

Manager

Conduct the Return to Work Interview

Regardless of the duration of the absence, a Return to Work Interview must take place following every absence. It should normally be held within 2 working days of your member of staff's return to work or as soon as possible thereafter, taking account of work patterns or phased return to work plans. This meeting will provide you with the opportunity to talk to your member of staff about their absence, ensure fitness for work and discuss any support they may require within the workplace. [Annex 6](#) provides specific guidance on conducting the Return to Work Interview.

STEP 4

Manager

Complete the Return to Work Interview Form

The [Return to Work Interview Form](#) will assist you during the meeting and can be downloaded from the Employee Services Portal (ESP). You should complete this form with your member of staff. However, if in exceptional circumstances you are unable to complete the Return to Work Form on the same day as the meeting, any handwritten notes or relevant documentation (if applicable) must be scanned and saved into the relevant departmental HPRM container. If a container has not already been opened, you must store the documents in a secure location with restricted access. If you do not have access to HPRM you should save the Return to Work Form in accordance with your departmental data management policy.

STEP 5

Manager

Agree and sign the Return to Work Interview Form

It is important that the information recorded on the [Return to Work Interview Form](#) accurately reflects the discussion that took place. You should therefore ensure that the form is agreed and signed by both you and your member of staff.

STEP 6

Manager

Update HRConnect

Upon finalisation of the [Return to Work Interview Form](#), you must update your member of staff's record on the HRConnect portal with the information captured on the form. The [Sickness Absence - Managers \(Quick Reference Guide\)](#) details how to do this.

STEP 7

Manager

Forward the Return to Work Interview Form

Once the information captured on the Return to Work Interview Form has been transferred onto HRConnect you should send the original to HRConnect and give a copy of the form to your member of staff. You should ensure that any other copies of the form, electronic or hardcopy, are disposed of

securely by deleting any electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies.

STEP 8

Manager

Update NICSHR Case Manager

You must ensure that the NICSHR is made aware that your member of staff has returned to work. During Sickness Absence Stage 1 the NICSHR will decide what action, if any, should be taken following your member of staff's return to work and will advise you accordingly.

STEP 9

Manager


Carry out any actions agreed

You must ensure that any actions agreed with your member of staff during the Return to Work Interview are taken forward, for example, a risk assessment. In cases where you have agreed to implement workplace adaptations or reasonable adjustments for you member of staff, you should arrange regular reviews to ensure any adjustments remain effective.

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 [Handling Personal Data Guidance](#)

Where a member of staff returns to work following a period of sickness absence, the NICSHR Case Manager will review the absence and may advise you to carry out a meeting to consider if a Written Warning is appropriate.

 *In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for an alternative manager within the member of staff's management structure to conduct the Written Warning Meeting, for example:*

- *Where the absence reason is gender specific and the member of staff wishes to be managed throughout their absence by someone of the same gender.*
- *Where there are work related issues contributing to the member of staff's absence and it is more appropriate that they are managed throughout their absence by another manager.*

There are **12** Steps in this process.

STEP 1

NICSHR Case Manager

Will request information and discuss the need for a meeting with you.


Where your member of staff's absence has reached a review point, the NICSHR Case Manager will speak with you to discuss the requirement for a meeting to consider a Written Warning.

STEP 2a

NICSHR Case Manager

No further action – meeting not required.

Where a Written Warning meeting is not required, the NICSHR Case Manager will issue a no further action letter, **A – No further action letter**, and provide you with a copy. This letter will include the reason why no further action is to be taken at this time and will advise the member of staff that their attendance will continue to be monitored.

 Both you and your manager will be provided with a copy of letter for information purposes only. You should note the content of the letter before securely disposing of it. This letter must not be printed or saved locally.

STEP 2b

NICSHR Case Manager

Meeting required.

The NICSHR Case Manager will e-mail you advising you to conduct a meeting to consider a Written Warning and to arrange for a departmental HPRM container to be opened, if one has not already been created. Please see [Annex 8](#) for further guidance on how to open a departmental HPRM container. You must ensure that your manager and NICSHR are given access to this container.

For those who have access to HPRM, this e-mail will provide you with a link to the completed *Consideration of Written Warning – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* document. This document provides you with a meeting structure and acts as speaking notes.



Form A is held within the NICSHR HPRM container, you will only have access to this document and not the container itself. You are not permitted to save this document locally.

The e-mail will also include a Permalink to a blank [Consideration of Written Warning Meeting Proforma \(Form B\)](#) for you to complete following the meeting.

The e-mail will further include a series of Permalinks to:

- **Invitation to the Written Warning Meeting letter.**
- **Guidance on how to complete an Invitation to Written Warning letter.**
- **Meeting Summary cover letter.**
- **Guidance on how to complete a Meeting Summary Cover letter.**
- **Role of the note-taker guidance.**

For those who do not have access to HPRM, your NICSHR Case Manager will e-mail you advising you to carry out a Consideration of Written Warning Meeting and will attach all documents electronically. These documents should be saved in accordance with your departmental data management policy.

STEP 3a

Manager

Arrange meeting with your member of staff

Prior to issuing an invite letter, you should agree with your member of staff a suitable time and date for the Consideration of the Written Warning Meeting (this will reduce the likelihood of having to reschedule the meeting).

You should ensure your member of staff has 2 weeks' notice to allow them time to arrange for a Trade Union representative or a work colleague to accompany them, should they wish.

If a note-taker is to be present at the meeting, you should advise the member of staff who this will be at least 5 days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting.

If the member of staff is not content with the proposed note-taker, they may request a different person is selected. You and the member of staff should agree who will take a record of the meeting.

STEP 3b

Manager

Member of staff unable to attend meeting

If the member of staff is unable to attend you should offer them the opportunity to provide a written statement.

If you have access to HPRM:

If your member of staff supplies you with a written statement electronically, you will save into the relevant departmental HPRM container and notify the NICSHR Case Manager.

If received by hardcopy, you should scan and save it into the relevant departmental HPRM container and notify the NICSHR Case Manager.

If you don't have access to HPRM:

If your member of staff supplies you with a written statement electronically, you should forward a copy of the written statement to NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

If received by hardcopy, you should scan the written statement and e-mail to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should only post documentation when you don't have access to scanning facilities.

If they do not supply you with a written statement within the agreed timescales you should notify the NICSHR Case Manager accordingly.

STEP 4

Manager

Complete and issue the invitation letter

The NICSHR Case Manager's e-mail contains a Permalink to download the template [Invite to Written Warning Meeting letter and Guidance](#) from the Employee Services Portal. Save a copy of the invitation letter to the relevant departmental HPRM container. If you do not have access to HPRM you should save this in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

Complete the letter using the member of staff's details provided in *Consideration of a Written Warning – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* and print a copy of the member of staff's sickness absence record from HRConnect (for guidance on how to produce this record please refer to [Annex 4](#)).

Issue the invitation letter and absence record via e-mail. You should only send by post if e-mail is unavailable.

By e-mail:

You must ensure the Invite to Meeting letter is marked '**Official**' in the subject heading to be GDPR compliant and you should thoroughly check the addressee details before sending.

By post:

Should your member of staff not have access to e-mail you should send a hardcopy of the letter in a sealed envelope and marked '**Strictly Private**'.

If you have access to HPRM:

You MUST e-mail a copy of the Invitation to Consideration of a Written Warning Meeting letter to:

- **HRConnect.**

You MUST forward a link to the departmental HPRM container:

- **Your Manager.**
- **NICSHR Case Manager.**

If you do not have access to HPRM:

You should forward a copy of the letter to your manager and the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

STEP 5

Manager

Prepare for Written Warning meeting

In advance of the meeting consider the *Consideration of a Written Warning – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* document provided by the NICSHR Case Manager. As part of your preparation for the meeting, you **must** contact the NICSHR Case Manager to discuss and to confirm your understanding of what you are being asked to do.

If you identify any further questions that you feel should be asked during the meeting, you should discuss these with the NICSHR Case Manager.

You should provide the agreed note-taker with a copy of the document, ***Role of the Note-taker*** (see [Annex 5](#)), well in advance of the meeting.

STEP 6

Manager

Conduct the Consideration of a Written Warning Meeting.

Meet with your member of staff and conduct the Consideration of a Written Warning Meeting. A note of the meeting must be taken either by you or a note-taker.

You should bring the following documentation to the meeting:

- **A copy of the Form A.**
- **The Inefficiency Sickness Absence policy.**
- **The member of staff's sickness absence record.**

You must use Form A to conduct the meeting. Form A provides you with a meeting structure and acts as speaking notes, including:

- **Introductions.**
- **The right to be accompanied.**
- **The purpose of meeting.**

On conclusion of the meeting the printed copy of Form A and the sickness absence record must be disposed of securely by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

Where you have taken the record of the meeting proceed to **STEP 7a**.

Where a note-taker has taken a record of the meeting proceed to **STEP 7b**.

STEP 7a

Manager

Manager Completes the Written Warning Meeting Pro-forma – Form B

If you have access to HPRM you should:

- Download Form B (using the permalink supplied in the NICSHR e-mail), complete and save this document into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Scan a copy of your handwritten notes and save into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Securely dispose of the hardcopy of the handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- Use scanned copy of handwritten notes to complete Form B.

If you do not have access to HPRM you should save these documents in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

STEP 7b

Manager

Note-taker Completes the Written Warning Meeting Pro-forma – Form B

If you have access to HPRM you should:

- Download Form B (using the Permalink supplied in the NICSHR e-mail), complete section 1 'staff member details' and save this template into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Scan a copy of the note-takers handwritten notes and save into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Securely dispose of the hardcopy of handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- Arrange for the note-taker to be given access to Form B and the scanned copy of the handwritten notes within the relevant departmental HPRM container.



The note-taker will have access to these documents **only**. The note-taker will **not** be able to access the container itself or any other document within the container.

The note-taker should then use the scanned copy of the handwritten notes to complete Form B. Once Form B has been completed, you should arrange for the note-taker's access to Form B and the scanned copy of the handwritten notes within the relevant departmental HPRM container be removed.

If you do not have access to HPRM you should save these documents in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

If in exceptional circumstances the note-taker retains their handwritten notes until Form B has been completed, these notes **must** be stored in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

The Note-taker should complete Form B within 3 days of the meeting. You should review Form B and make any necessary changes ensuring it is an accurate reflection of what was discussed at the meeting.

You will have **five working days** from the date of the meeting to produce a summary of the meeting and to forward this to the member of staff for their consideration.

Where the **member of staff** is to receive correspondence **by post** proceed to **STEP 8a**.

Where the **member of staff** is to receive correspondence **by e-mail** proceed to **STEP 8b**.

STEP 8a

Manager

Issue record of meeting to the staff member for their consideration by post

You must download the [Meeting Summary Letter and Guidance](#), complete the relevant sections of this template, attach a copy the completed meeting summary [Consideration of Written Warning – Record of Meeting Form B](#) and send this to the member of staff for their agreement or comments / suggested factual amendments. The letter should be placed in a sealed envelope and marked “**strictly private**”.

STEP 8b

Manager

Issue meeting summary to the staff member for their consideration by e-mail

Step by step instruction on issuing the meeting summary and the wording to be used in your e-mail can be found at [Annex 1](#). This document will provide you with a standard template along with information on security marking and password protecting the document for issue to private e-mail accounts.

STEP 9

Member of Staff

Member of staff returns the summary or timescale expires

The member of staff will have **five working days** from the date the meeting summary was issued to either agree the summary, provide comments or suggest factual amendments.

If the meeting **summary is agreed** proceed to **STEP 10a**.

If the member of staff has provided **suggested amendments** and you are content to accept these proceed to **STEP 10b**.

If the member of staff has provided **suggested amendments** and you are **NOT** content to accept these proceed to **STEP 10c**.

If the member of staff has provided **comments** on the meeting summary proceed to **STEP 10d**.

If the member of staff **fails to respond** or responds outside the **timescale** proceed to **STEP 10e**.

STEP 10a

Manager

Summary Agreed - Return the documentation to NICSHR.

If you have access to HPRM:

When you receive the agreed meeting summary via e-mail you must save this into the relevant departmental HPRM container, along with a scanned copy of the handwritten notes, and inform the NICSHR Case Manager that the meeting summary is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this, save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager that the documentation is available. Where available, always scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

You should forward the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. Where available, always scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager and then securely dispose of the documentation including the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

STEP 10b

Manager

Amendments Accepted - Return the Documentation to NICSHR

Where you receive the suggested amendments from the member of staff and you are content to accept these.

If you have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, into the relevant departmental HPRM container. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save this in line with your departmental Records Management policy. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.



You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your departmental Records Management policy. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10C

Manager

Amendments not Accepted - Return the Documentation to NICSHR

Where you receive the suggested amendments from the member of staff and you are not content to accept these.

If you have access to HPRM:


Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save the member of staff's suggested amendments to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available and then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save in line with your departmental Records Management policy. These amendments along with the original summary will

form a record of the meeting. You should forward both copies of the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

 **You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.**

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your departmental Records Management Policy. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward the original meeting summary together with the suggested amendments and the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10d *Manager*

Comments Received - Return the Documentation to NICSHR

Where you receive comments from the member of staff.


If you have access to HPRM:

Where you receive comments via post you should scan and save these to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

Where the member of staff returned comments by e-mail you should save the member of staff's comments to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available and then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive comments via post you should scan and save these in line with your departmental Records Management policy. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward both copies of the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

 **You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.**

Where the member of staff returned comments by e-mail you should save these along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your departmental Records Management policy. These

comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward the original record of the meeting together with comments and the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10e


Manager

Return the Documentation to NICSHR – No Response within set timescales

You should advise the NICSHR Case Manager that the member of staff has not responded to the summary within the agreed timescales. You should provide the meeting summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager. The original handwritten notes should be securely disposed of by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you have access to HPRM you should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to advise that the completed Form B and the handwritten notes are available.

If you do not have access to HPRM forward the meeting summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

 **You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, if HPRM is unavailable. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.**

STEP 11

NICSHR Case Manager


Will consider the information provided & decide if a warning is appropriate

The NICSHR Case Manager will review the summary of the meeting along with any associated comments or amendments provided by the member of staff.

If incomplete – Should the NICSHR Case Manager perceive any gaps in the information, you will either be asked to provide the relevant information or contact the member of staff to seek further clarification. You will need to update Form B accordingly and again forward to the employee for consideration as set out in step 9 & 10 above.

Once this process has been completed ensure this information is made available to the NICSHR Case Manager. Once received they will ask you to securely dispose of all electronic copies, hardcopies and handwritten notes by deleting any electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies.

If complete - The NICSHR Case Manager will ensure all information is saved into the appropriate NICSHR HPRM container. They will also advise you to arrange for the closure and disposal of the departmental HPRM container in accordance with your departmental records management policy. Please see [Annex 8](#) for further guidance on how to close a departmental HPRM container.

 Under GDPR it remains your responsibility to ensure that the container and the information within it is disposed of correctly.

STEP 12

NICSHR Case Manager

Will issue the decision letter to the member of staff

The NICSHR Case Manager will provide the decision letter to the following:

- **Member of Staff.**
- **HRConnect.**
- **Manager.**
- **Next Line Manager.**

Where a Written Warning has been issued proceed to **STEP 12a**.

Where no further action is to be taken proceed to **STEP 12b**.

STEP 12a

NICSHR Case Manager

Written Warning issued to the member of staff

This letter will include the reason why a Written Warning was issued and will advise the member of staff of their right to appeal.

You should arrange to meet with your member of staff to discuss the Written Warning and ensure they understand the implications of receiving the warning. Your member of staff should complete the acknowledgement form that issued with the Written Warning letter and return it as instructed.



Both you and your manager will receive a copy the Written Warning letter. Once you have discussed this with your member of staff you should securely dispose of any copies by deleting any electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies. This letter must not be saved locally.

STEP 12b

NICSHR Case Manager

No further action taken against member of staff

This letter will include the reason why no further action is to be taken at this time and will advise the member of staff that their attendance will continue to be monitored.




Both you and your manager will receive a copy of the No Further Action letter for information purposes only. The letter must not be printed or saved locally.

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 [Handling Personal Data Guidance](#)

Where a member of staff returns to work following a period of sickness absence and has a current Written Warning in place, the NICSHR Case Manager will review the absence and may advise you to carry out a meeting to consider if a Final Written Warning is appropriate.

 In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for an alternative manager within the member of staff's management structure to conduct the Final Written Warning Meeting, for example:

- Where the absence reason is gender specific and the member of staff wishes to be managed throughout their absence by someone of the same gender.
- Where there are work related issues contributing to the member of staff's absence and it is more appropriate that they are managed throughout their absence by another manager.

There are **12** Steps in this process.

STEP 1

NICSHR Case Manager

Will request information and discuss the need for a meeting with you.

Where your member of staff has a valid warning in place and their absence level has not improved, the NICSHR Case Manager will speak with you to discuss the requirement for a meeting to consider a Final Written Warning.


STEP 2

NICSHR Case Manager

Meeting required.

The NICSHR Case Manager will e-mail you advising you to conduct a meeting to consider a Final Written Warning and to arrange for a departmental HPRM container to be opened, if one has not already been created. Please see [Annex 8](#) for further guidance on how to open a departmental HPRM container. You must ensure that your manager and NICSHR are given access to this container.

For those who have access to HPRM, this e-mail will provide you with a link to the completed *Consideration of Final Written Warning – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* document. This document provides you with a meeting structure and acts as speaking notes.

 **Form A is held within the NICSHR HPRM container, you will only have access to this document and not the container itself. You are not permitted to save this document locally.**

The e-mail will also include a Permalink to a blank [Consideration of Final Written Warning Meeting Pro-forma \(Form B\)](#) for you to complete following the meeting.

The e-mail will further include a series of Permalinks to:

- **Invitation to the Final Written Warning Meeting letter.**
- **Guidance on how to complete an Invitation to Final Written Warning letter.**
- **Meeting Summary cover letter.**
- **Guidance on how to complete a Meeting Summary Cover letter.**
- **Role of the note-taker guidance.**

For those who do not have access to HPRM, your NICSHR Case Manager will e-mail you advising you to carry out a Consideration of Final Written Warning Meeting and will attach all documents electronically. These documents should be saved in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

STEP 3a

Manager

Arrange meeting with your member of staff

Prior to issuing an invite letter, you should agree with your member of staff a suitable time and date for the Consideration of the Final Written Warning Meeting (this will reduce the likelihood of having to reschedule the meeting).

You should ensure your member of staff has 2 weeks' notice to allow them time to arrange for a Trade Union representative or a work colleague to accompany them, should they wish.

If a note-taker is to be present at the meeting, you should advise the member of staff who this will be at least 5 days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting.

If the member of staff is not content with the proposed note-taker, they may request a different person is selected. You and the member of staff should agree who will take a record of the meeting.

STEP 3b

Manager

Member of staff unable to attend meeting

If the member of staff is unable to attend you should offer them the opportunity to provide a written statement.

If you have access to HPRM:

If your member of staff supplies you with a written statement electronically, you will save into the relevant departmental HPRM container and notify the NICSHR Case Manager.

If received by hardcopy, you should scan and save it into the relevant departmental HPRM container and notify the NICSHR Case Manager.

If you don't have access to HPRM:

If your member of staff supplies you with a written statement electronically, you should forward a copy of the written statement to NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

If received by hardcopy, you should scan the written statement and e-mail to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should only post documentation when you don't have access to scanning facilities.

If they do not supply you with a written statement within the agreed timescales you should notify the NICSHR Case Manager accordingly.

STEP 4

Manager

Complete and issue the invitation letter

The NICSHR Case Manager's e-mail contains a Permalink to download the template [Invite to Final Written Warning Meeting letter and Guidance](#) from the Employee Services Portal. Save a copy of the invitation letter to the relevant departmental HPRM container. If you do not have access to HPRM you should save this in accordance with your Departmental Records Management policy.

Complete the letter using the member of staff's details provided in *Consideration of a Final Written Warning – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* and print a copy of the member of staff's sickness absence record from HRConnect (for guidance on how to produce this record please refer to [Annex 4](#)).

Issue the invitation letter and absence record via e-mail. You should only send by post if e-mail is unavailable.

By e-mail:

You must ensure the Invite to Meeting letter is marked '**Official**' in the subject heading to be GDPR compliant and you should thoroughly check the addressee details before sending.

By post:

Should your member of staff not have access to e-mail you should send a hardcopy of the letter in a sealed envelope and marked '**Strictly Private**'.

If you have access to HPRM:

You MUST e-mail a copy of the Invitation to Consideration of a Final Written Warning Meeting letter to:

- **HRConnect.**

You MUST forward a link to the departmental HPRM container:

- **Your Manager.**
- **NICSHR Case Manager.**

If you do not have access to HPRM

You should forward a copy of the letter to your manager and the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

STEP 5

Manager

Prepare for Final Written Warning meeting

In advance of the meeting consider the *Consideration of a Final Written Warning – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* document provided by the NICSHR Case Manager. As part of your preparation for the meeting, you **must** contact the NICSHR Case Manager to discuss and to confirm your understanding of what you are being asked to do.

If you identify any further questions that you feel should be asked during the meeting, you should discuss these with the NICSHR Case Manager.

You should provide the agreed note-taker with a copy of the document, ***Role of the Note-taker*** (see [Annex 5](#)), well in advance of the meeting.

STEP 6

Manager

Conduct the Consideration of a Final Written Warning Meeting.

Meet with your member of staff and conduct the Consideration of a Final Written Warning Meeting. A note of the meeting must be taken either by you or a note-taker.

You should bring the following documentation to the meeting:

- **A copy of the Form A.**
- **The Inefficiency Sickness Absence policy.**
- **The member of staff's sickness absence record.**

You must use Form A to conduct the meeting. Form A provides you with a meeting structure and acts as speaking notes, including:

- **Introductions.**
- **The right to be accompanied.**
- **The purpose of meeting.**

On conclusion of the meeting the printed copy of Form A and the sickness absence record must be disposed of securely by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

Where you have taken the record of the meeting proceed to **STEP 7a**.

Where a note-taker has taken a record of the meeting proceed to **STEP 7b**.

STEP 7a

Manager

Manager Completes the Final Written Warning Meeting Pro-forma – Form B

If you have access to HPRM you should:

- Download Form B (using the permalink supplied in the NICSHR e-mail), complete and save this document into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Scan a copy of your handwritten notes and save into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Securely dispose of the hardcopy of the handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- Use scanned copy of handwritten notes to complete Form B.

If you do not have access to HPRM you should save these documents in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

STEP 7b

Manager

Note-taker Completes the Final Written Warning Meeting Pro-forma – Form B

If you have access to HPRM you should:

- Download Form B (using the Permalink supplied in the NICSHR e-mail), complete section 1 'staff member details' and save this template into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Scan a copy of the note-takers handwritten notes and save into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Securely dispose of the hardcopy of handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- Arrange for the note-taker to be given access to Form B and the scanned copy of the handwritten notes within the relevant departmental HPRM container.



The note-taker will have access to these documents **only**. The note-taker will **not** be able to access the container itself or any other document within the container.

The note-taker should then use the scanned copy of the handwritten notes to complete Form B. Once Form B has been completed, you should arrange for the note-taker's access to Form B and the scanned copy of the handwritten notes within the relevant departmental HPRM container be removed.

If you do not have access to HPRM you should save these documents in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

If in exceptional circumstances the note-taker retains their handwritten notes until Form B has been completed, these notes **must** be stored in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

The Note-taker should complete Form B within 3 days of the meeting. You should review Form B and make any necessary changes ensuring it is an accurate reflection of what was discussed at the meeting.

You will have **five working days** from the date of the meeting to produce a summary of the meeting and to forward this to the member of staff for their consideration.

Where the **member of staff** is to receive correspondence **by post** proceed to **STEP 8a**.

Where the **member of staff** is to receive correspondence **by e-mail** proceed to **STEP 8b**.

STEP 8a

Manager

Issue record of meeting to the staff member for their consideration by post

You must download the [Meeting Summary Letter and Guidance](#), complete the relevant sections of this template, attach a copy the completed meeting summary [Consideration of Final Written Warning Meeting Pro-forma \(Form B\)](#) and send this to the member of staff for their agreement or comments / suggested factual amendments. The letter should be placed in a sealed envelope and marked “**strictly private**”.

STEP 8b

Manager

Issue meeting summary to the staff member for their consideration by e-mail

Step by step instruction on issuing the meeting summary and the wording to be used in your e-mail can be found at [Annex 1](#). This document will provide you with a standard template along with information on security marking (and password protecting the document for issue to private e-mail accounts).

STEP 9

Member of Staff

Member of staff returns the summary or timescale expires

The member of staff will have **five working days** from the date the meeting summary was issued to either agree the summary, provide comments or suggest factual amendments.

If the meeting **summary is agreed** proceed to **STEP 10a**.

If the member of staff has provided **suggested amendments** and you are content to accept these proceed to **STEP 10b**.

If the member of staff has provided **suggested amendments** and you are **NOT** content to accept these proceed to **STEP 10c**.

If the member of staff has provided **comments** on the meeting summary proceed to **STEP 10d**.

If the member of staff **fails to respond** or responds outside the **timescale** proceed to **STEP 10e**.

STEP 10a

Manager

Summary Agreed - Return the documentation to NICSHR.

If you have access to HPRM:

When you receive the agreed meeting summary via e-mail you must save this into the relevant departmental HPRM container, along with a scanned copy of the handwritten notes, and inform the NICSHR Case Manager that the meeting summary is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this, save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager that the documentation is available. Where available, always scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

You should forward the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. Where available, always scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager and then securely dispose of the documentation including the original handwritten notes by deleting any electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

STEP 10b

Manager

Amendments Accepted - Return the Documentation to NICSHR

Where you receive the suggested amendments from the member of staff and you are content to accept these.

If you have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.




You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, into the relevant departmental HPRM container. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is

available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save this in line with your departmental Records Management policy. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

 **You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.**

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your departmental Records Management policy. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10C


Manager

Amendments not Accepted - Return the Documentation to NICSHR

Where you receive the suggested amendments from the member of staff and you are not content to accept these.

If you have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.


 **You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.**

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save the member of staff's suggested amendments to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available and then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save in line with your departmental Records Management policy. These amendments along with the original summary will

form a record of the meeting. You should forward both copies of the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

 **You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.**

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your departmental Records Management policy. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward the original meeting summary together with the suggested amendments and the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10d *Manager* **Comments Received - Return the Documentation to NICSHR**

Where you receive comments from the member of staff.


If you have access to HPRM.

Where you receive comments via post you should scan and save these to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

Where the member of staff returned comments by e-mail you should save the member of staff's comments to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available and then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive comments via post you should scan and save these in line with your departmental Records Management policy. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward both copies of the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

 **You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.**

Where the member of staff returned comments by e-mail you should save these along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your departmental Records Management policy. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward the original record of the meeting together with comments and the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10e

Manager

Return the Documentation to NICSHR – No Response within set timescales

You should advise the NICSHR Case Manager that the member of staff has not responded to the summary within the agreed timescales. You should provide the meeting summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager. The original handwritten notes should be securely disposed of by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you have access to HPRM you should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to advise that the completed Form B and the handwritten notes are available.

If you do not have access to HPRM forward the meeting summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.



You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

STEP 11

NICSHR Case Manager

Will consider the information provided & decide if a warning is appropriate

The NICSHR Case Manager will review the summary of the meeting along with any associated comments or amendments provided by the member of staff.

If incomplete – Should the NICSHR Case Manager perceive any gaps in the information, you will either be asked to provide the relevant information or contact the member of staff to seek further clarification. You will need to update Form B accordingly and again forward to the employee for consideration as set out in step 9 & 10 above.

Once this process has been completed ensure this information is made available to the NICSHR Case Manager. Once received they will ask you to securely dispose of all electronic copies, hardcopies and handwritten notes by deleting any electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies.

If complete - The NICSHR Case Manager will ensure all information is saved into the appropriate NICSHR HPRM container. They will also advise you to arrange for the closure and disposal of the departmental HPRM container in accordance with your departmental records management policy. Please see [Annex 8](#) for further guidance on how to close a departmental HPRM container.



Under GDPR it remains your responsibility to ensure that the container and the information within it is disposed of correctly.

STEP 12

NICSHR Case Manager

Will issue the decision letter to the member of staff

The NICSHR Case Manager will provide the decision letter to the following:

- **Member of Staff.**
- **HRConnect.**
- **Manager.**
- **Next Line Manager.**

Where a Final Written Warning has been issued proceed to **STEP 12a.**

Where no further action is to be taken proceed to **STEP 12b.**

STEP 12a

NICSHR Case Manager

Final Written Warning issued to the member of staff

This letter will include the reason why a Final Written Warning was issued and will advise the member of staff of their right to appeal.

You should arrange to meet with your member of staff to discuss the Final Written Warning and ensure they understand the implications of receiving the warning. Your member of staff should complete the acknowledgement form that issued with the Final Written Warning letter and return it as instructed.



Both you and your manager will receive a copy the Final Written Warning letter. Once you have discussed this with your member of staff you should securely dispose of any copies by deleting any electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies. This letter must not be saved locally.

STEP 12b

NICSHR Case Manager

No further action taken against member of staff

This letter will include the reason why no further action is to be taken at this time and will advise the member of staff that their attendance will continue to be monitored.



Both you and your manager will receive a copy of the No Further Action letter for information purposes only. The letter must not be printed or saved locally.

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11

SICKNESS ABSENCE STAGE 1

WRITTEN WARNING (WHICH CONSTITUTES A FIRST & FINAL WRITTEN WARNING) MEETING

 [Handling Personal Data Guidance](#)

Where a probationary / temporary / fixed term member of staff returns to work following any period of sickness absence, the NICSHR Case Manager will review the absence and may advise you to conduct a meeting to consider if a Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) if appropriate.

 *In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for an alternative manager within the member of staff's management structure to conduct the Written Warning (which constitutes a First & Final Written Warning) meeting, for example:*

- *Where the absence reason is gender specific and the member of staff wishes to be managed throughout their absence by someone of the same gender.*
- *Where there are work related issues contributing to the member of staff's absence and it is more appropriate that they are managed throughout their absence by another manager.*

There are **12** Steps in this process.

STEP 1

NICSHR Case Manager

Will request information and discuss the need for a meeting with you.


Where your member of staff returns to work following an absence the NICSHR Case Manager will speak with you to discuss the requirement for a meeting to consider a Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning).

STEP 2a

NICSHR Case Manager

No further action – meeting not required.

Where a Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) meeting is not required, the NICSHR Case Manager will issue a no further action letter **A – No further action letter** and provide you with a copy. This letter will include the reason why no further action is to be taken at this time and will advise the member of staff that their attendance will continue to be monitored.

 Both you and your manager will be provided with a copy of letter for information purposes only. You should note the content of the letter before securely disposing of it. This letter must not be printed or saved locally.

STEP 2b

NICSHR Case Manager

Meeting required.

The NICSHR Case Manager will e-mail you advising you to conduct a meeting to consider a Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) and to arrange for a departmental HPRM container to be opened, if one has not already been created. Please see [Annex 8](#) for further guidance on how to open a departmental HPRM container. You must ensure that your manager and NICSHR are given access to this container.

For those who have access to HPRM, this e-mail will provide you with a link to the completed *Consideration of a first & final Written Warning – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* document. This document provides you with a meeting structure and acts as speaking notes.



Form A is held within the NICSHR HPRM container, you will only have access to this document and not the container itself. You are not permitted to save this document locally.

The e-mail will also include a Permalink to a blank [Consideration of first and final Written Warning - Form B - Record of Meeting](#) for you to complete following the meeting.

The e-mail will further include a series of Permalinks to:

- **Invitation to the Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) Meeting letter.**
- **Guidance on how to complete an Invitation to Written Warning letter.**
- **Meeting Summary cover letter.**
- **Guidance on how to complete a Meeting Summary Cover letter.**
- **Role of the note-taker guidance.**

For those who do not have access to HPRM, your NICSHR Case Manager will e-mail you advising you to carry out a Consideration of Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) Meeting and will attach all documents electronically. These documents should be saved in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

STEP 3a

Manager

Arrange meeting with your member of staff

Prior to issuing an invite letter, you should agree with your member of staff a suitable time and date for the Consideration of the Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) Meeting (this will reduce the likelihood of having to reschedule the meeting).

You should ensure your member of staff has 2 weeks' notice to allow them time to arrange for a Trade Union representative or a work colleague to accompany them, should they wish.

If a note-taker is to be present at the meeting, you should advise the member of staff who this will be at least 5 days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting.

If the member of staff is not content with the proposed note-taker, they may request a different person is selected. You and the member of staff should agree who will take a record of the meeting.

STEP 3b

Manager

Member of staff unable to attend meeting

If the member of staff is unable to attend you should offer them the opportunity to provide a written statement.

If you have access to HPRM:

If your member of staff supplies you with a written statement electronically, you will save into the relevant departmental HPRM container and notify the NICSHR Case Manager.

If received by hardcopy, you should scan and save it into the relevant departmental HPRM container and notify the NICSHR Case Manager.

If you don't have access to HPRM:

If your member of staff supplies you with a written statement electronically, you should forward a copy of the written statement to NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

If received by hardcopy, you should scan the written statement and e-mail to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should only post documentation when you don't have access to scanning facilities.

If they do not supply you with a written statement within the agreed timescales you should notify the NICSHR Case Manager accordingly.

STEP 4

Manager

Complete and issue the invitation letter

The NICSHR Case Manager's e-mail contains a Permalink to download the template [Invite to Written Warning Meeting letter and Guidance](#) from the Employee Services Portal. Save a copy of the invitation letter to the relevant departmental HPRM container. If you do not have access to HPRM you should save this in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

Complete the letter using the member of staff's details provided in *Consideration of a first & final Written Warning – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* and print a copy of the member of staff's sickness absence record from HRConnect (for guidance on how to produce this record please refer to [Annex 4](#)).

Issue the invitation letter and absence record via e-mail. You should only send by post if e-mail is unavailable.

By e-mail:

You must ensure the Invite to Meeting letter is marked '**Official**' in the subject heading to be GDPR compliant and you should thoroughly check the addressee details before sending.

By post:

Should your member of staff not have access to e-mail you should send a hardcopy of the letter in a sealed envelope and marked '**Strictly Private**'.

If you have access to HPRM:

You **MUST** e-mail a copy of the Invitation to Consideration of a first & final Written Warning Meeting letter to:

- **HRConnect.**

You **MUST** forward a link to the departmental HPRM container to:

- **Your Manager.**
- **NICSHR Case Manager.**

If you do not have access to HPRM:

You should forward a copy of the letter to your manager and the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

STEP 5

Manager

Prepare for Written Warning (which constitutes a First & Final Written Warning) meeting

In advance of the meeting consider the *Consideration of a first & final Written Warning – Guidance & Preparation (Form A)* document provided by the NICSHR Case Manager. As part of your preparation for the meeting, you **must** contact the NICSHR Case Manager to discuss and to confirm your understanding of what you are being asked to do.

If you identify any further questions that you feel should be asked during the meeting, you should discuss these with the NICSHR Case Manager.

You should provide the agreed note-taker with a copy of the document, ***Role of the Note-taker*** (see [Annex 5](#)), well in advance of the meeting.

STEP 6

Manager

Conduct the Consideration of a Written Warning (which constitutes a First & Final Written Warning) Meeting.

Meet with your member of staff and conduct the Consideration of a Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) Meeting. A note of the meeting must be taken either by you or a note-taker.

You should bring the following documentation to the meeting:

- **A copy of the Form A.**
- **The Inefficiency Sickness Absence policy.**
- **The member of staff's sickness absence record.**

You must use Form A to conduct the meeting. Form A provides you with a meeting structure and acts as speaking notes, including:

- **Introductions.**
- **The right to be accompanied.**
- **The purpose of meeting.**

On conclusion of the meeting the printed copy of Form A and the sickness absence record must be disposed of securely by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

Where you have taken the record of the meeting proceed to **STEP 7a**.

Where a note-taker has taken a record of the meeting proceed to **STEP 7b**.

STEP 7a

Manager

Manager Completes the First & Final Written Warning Meeting Pro-forma – Form B

If you have access to HPRM you should:

- Download Form B (using the permalink supplied in the NICSHR e-mail), complete and save this document into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Scan a copy of your handwritten notes and save into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Securely dispose of the hardcopy of the handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- Use scanned copy of handwritten notes to complete Form B.

If you do not have access to HPRM you should save these documents in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

STEP 7b

Manager

Note-taker Completes the First & Final Written Warning Meeting Pro-forma – Form B

If you have access to HPRM you should:

- Download Form B (using the Permalink supplied in the NICSHR e-mail), complete section 1 ‘staff member details’ section and save this template into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Scan a copy of the note-takers handwritten notes and save into the relevant departmental HPRM container.
- Securely dispose of the hardcopy of handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.
- Arrange for the note-taker to be given access to Form B and the scanned copy of the handwritten notes within the relevant departmental HPRM container.



The note-taker will have access to these documents **only**. The note-taker will **not** be able to access the container itself or any other document within the container.

The note-taker should then use the scanned copy of the handwritten notes to complete Form B. Once Form B has been completed, you should arrange for the note-taker’s access to Form B and the scanned copy of the handwritten notes within the relevant departmental HPRM container be removed.

If you do not have access to HPRM you should save these documents in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

If in exceptional circumstances the note-taker retains their handwritten notes until Form B has been completed, these notes **must** be stored in accordance with your departmental Records Management policy.

The Note-taker should complete Form B within 3 days of the meeting. You should review Form B and make any necessary changes ensuring it is an accurate reflection of what was discussed at the meeting.

You will have **five working days** from the date of the meeting to produce a summary of the meeting and to forward this to the member of staff for their consideration.

Where the **member of staff** is to receive correspondence **by post** proceed to **STEP 8a**.

Where the **member of staff** is to receive correspondence **by e-mail** proceed to **STEP 8b**.

STEP 8a

Manager

Issue record of meeting to the staff member for their consideration by post

You must download the [Meeting Summary Letter and Guidance](#), complete the relevant sections of this template, attach a copy the completed meeting summary [Consideration of first and final Written Warning - Form B - Record of Meeting](#) and send this to the member of staff for their agreement or comments / suggested factual amendments. The letter should be placed in a sealed envelope and marked “**strictly private**”.

STEP 8b

Manager

Issue record of meeting to the staff member for their consideration by e-mail

Step by step instruction on issuing the meeting summary and the wording to be used in your e-mail can be found at [Annex 1](#). This document will provide you with a standard template along with information on security marking and password protecting the document for issue to private e-mail accounts.

STEP 9

Member of Staff

Member of staff returns the summary or timescale expires

The member of staff will have **five working days** from the date the meeting summary was issued to either agree the summary, provide comments or suggest factual amendments.

If the meeting **summary is agreed** proceed to [STEP 10a](#).

If the member of staff has provided **suggested amendments** and you are content to accept these proceed to [STEP 10b](#).

If the member of staff has provided **suggested amendments** and you are **NOT** content to accept these proceed to [STEP 10c](#).

If the member of staff has provided **comments** on the meeting summary proceed to [STEP 10d](#).

If the member of staff **fails to respond** or responds outside the **timescale** proceed to [STEP 10e](#).

STEP 10a

Manager

Summary Agreed - Return the documentation to NICSHR.

If you have access to HPRM:

When you receive the agreed meeting summary via e-mail you must save this into the relevant departmental HPRM container, along with a scanned copy of the handwritten notes, and inform the NICSHR Case Manager that the meeting summary is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this, save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager that the documentation is available. Where available, always scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

You should forward the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. Where available, always scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager and then securely dispose of the documentation including the original handwritten notes by deleting any electronic

copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

STEP 10b *Manager* ***Amendments Accepted - Return the Documentation to NICSHR***

Where you receive the suggested amendments from the member of staff and you are content to accept these.


If you have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, into the relevant departmental HPRM container. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save this in line with your departmental Records Management policy. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

 **You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.**

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your departmental Records Management policy. You should make the necessary changes and e-mail to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10C *Manager* ***Amendments not Accepted - Return the Documentation to NICSHR***

Where you receive the suggested amendments from the member of staff and you are not content to accept these.

If you have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save it to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save the member of staff's suggested amendments to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available and then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive the meeting summary via post you should scan this and save in line with your departmental Records Management policy. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward both copies of the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.



You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.

Where the member of staff returned the meeting summary by e-mail you should save this along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your departmental Records Management Policy. These amendments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward the original meeting summary together with the suggested amendments and the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10d

Manager

Comments Received - Return the Documentation to NICSHR

Where you receive comments from the member of staff.


If you have access to HPRM:

Where you receive comments via post you should scan and save these to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

Where the member of staff returned comments by e-mail you should save the member of staff's comments to the relevant departmental HPRM container. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to inform that the documentation is available and then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you do not have access to HPRM:

Where you receive comments via post you should scan and save these in line with your departmental Records Management policy. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward both copies of the summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

 **You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.**

Where the member of staff returned comments by e-mail you should save these along with a scanned copy of any handwritten notes, in line with your departmental Records Management Policy. These comments along with the original summary will form a record of the meeting. You should forward the original record of the meeting together with comments and the handwritten notes of the meeting to NICSHR. You should then securely dispose of the original handwritten notes by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

STEP 10e


Manager

Return the Documentation to NICSHR – No Response within set timescales

You should advise the NICSHR Case Manager that the member of staff has not responded to the summary within the agreed timescales. You should provide the meeting summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager. The original handwritten notes should be securely disposed of by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin when the NICSHR Case Manager acknowledges safe receipt.

If you have access to HPRM you should e-mail the NICSHR Case Manager to advise that the completed Form B and the handwritten notes are available.

If you do not have access to HPRM forward the meeting summary along with the handwritten notes of the meeting to the NICSHR Case Manager via e-mail.

 **You must scan and e-mail the documents to the NICSHR Case Manager, where possible. You should only post hardcopy documents should scanning facilities be unavailable to you.**

STEP 11

NICSHR Case Manager

Will consider the information provided & decide if a warning is appropriate

The NICSHR Case Manager will review the summary of the meeting along with any associated comments or amendments provided by the member of staff.

If incomplete – Should the NICSHR Case Manager perceive any gaps in the information, you will either be asked to provide the relevant information or contact the member of staff to seek further clarification. You will need to update Form B accordingly and again forward to the employee for consideration as set out in step 9 & 10 above.

Once this process has been completed ensure this information is made available to the NICSHR Case Manager. Once received they will ask you to securely dispose of all electronic copies, hardcopies and handwritten notes by deleting any electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies.

If complete - The NICSHR Case Manager will ensure all information is saved into the appropriate NICSHR HPRM container. They will also advise you to arrange for the closure and disposal of the departmental HPRM container in accordance with your departmental records management policy. Please see [Annex 8](#) for further guidance on how to close a departmental HPRM container.



Under GDPR it remains your responsibility to ensure that the container and the information within it is disposed of correctly.

STEP 12

NICSHR Case Manager

Will issue the decision letter to the member of staff

The NICSHR Case Manager will provide the decision letter to the following:

- **Member of Staff.**
- **HRConnect.**
- **Manager.**
- **Next Line Manager.**

Where a Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) has been issued proceed to **STEP 12a**.

Where no further action is to be taken proceed to **STEP 12b**.

STEP 12a

NICSHR Case Manager

Written Warning (which constitutes a First & Final Written Warning) issued to the member of staff

This letter will include the reason why a Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) was issued and will advise the member of staff of their right to appeal.

You should arrange to meet with your member of staff to discuss the Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) and ensure they understand the implications of receiving the warning. Your member of staff should complete the acknowledgement form that issued with the Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) letter and return it as instructed.



Both you and your manager will receive a copy the Written Warning (which constitutes a first & final Written Warning) letter. Once you have discussed this with your member of staff you should securely dispose of any copies by deleting any electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies. This letter must not be saved locally.

STEP 12b

NICSHR Case Manager

No further action taken against member of staff

This letter will include the reason why no further action is to be taken at this time and will advise the member of staff that their attendance will continue to be monitored.



Both you and your manager will receive a copy of the No Further Action letter for information purposes only. The letter must not be printed or saved locally.

[Return to contents](#)

ANNEX 1	SICKNESS ABSENCE STAGE 1
	ISSUING A MEETING SUMMARY BY E-MAIL

Where a member of staff has requested a meeting summary (Form B) be issued to a private e-mail address or a work e-mail the guidance below should be followed.

*You should ensure you use the appropriate template below when creating the body of the e-mail. **Template 1 – e-mailing a private account or Template 2 – for work e-mails.***

There are 3 Steps in this process.

STEP 1

Member of Staff

Requests meeting summary be issued to their e-mail address

Your member of staff may request that the meeting summary is sent to their private e-mail address if they are still absent from work or to their work e-mail (following a consideration of a warning meeting). If your member of staff is absent, it is likely you will have already been provided with their private e-mail address in Form A. If not, you must request their private e-mail address from your member of staff.

STEP 2

Manager

Confirm e-mail address using a test e-mail (Private e-mail account only)

If you are sending any information to a private e-mail address you must first send a test e-mail. Ask your member of staff to reply to your e-mail providing their payroll number to confirm both their identity and that you have the correct e-mail address. You will only need to do this once.

STEP 3

Manager

Use the appropriate template below to construct the headings and body of the e-mail

Template 1 - Provides you with a form of words for the body of the e-mail when e-mailing a private account along with the necessary security markings and GDPR compliant subject heading.

The subject field should **NOT** contain any personal information that could identify your member of staff (such as name or payroll number). For guidance on how to password protect a document please see [Annex 2](#).

Template 2 - Provides you with a form of words when e-mailing a work e-mail account, along with the necessary security markings and GDPR compliant subject heading. The document does not require password protection.

Email Template 1 – Private e-mail account

Subject: OFFICIAL

Dear <NAME>,

SUMMARY OF SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

Please see attached the summary of your sickness absence review meeting held on <DATE>.

This summary is password protected, the password has been set as your date of birth in the format DDMMYYYY.

You have 5 working days to agree the meeting summary or suggest any factual amendments. If you are happy with the summary you should sign and return the document to me or you can email me confirming you are happy with the content of the summary.

If you have any amendments you should send these to me and your comments will be appended to the meeting summary and will **form part** of the record.

If a response is not received within 5 working days, it will be assumed that you are happy with the content of the summary and that it is an accurate account of the meeting.

Should you have any difficulties accessing the meeting summary or have any queries please contact me on < Telephone Number>.

Yours sincerely

<YOUR NAME>

<YOUR JOB TITLE>

Email Template 2 – Work e-mail account

Subject: OFFICIAL

Dear <NAME>,

SUMMARY OF SICKNESS ABSENCE MEETING

Please see attached the summary of your sickness absence meeting held on <DATE>.

You have 5 working days to agree the meeting summary or suggest any factual amendments. If you are happy with the summary you should sign and return the document to me or you can email me confirming you are happy with the content of the summary.

If you have any amendments you should send these to me and your comments will be appended to the meeting summary and will **form part** of the record.

If a response is not received within 5 working days, it will be assumed that you are happy with the content of the summary and that it is an accurate account of the meeting.

Yours sincerely

<YOUR NAME>

<YOUR JOB TITLE>

Before sending a document to a private e-mail account you should restrict access to it by adding a password.

You should follow the steps below to add a password.

There are **5** Steps in this process.

STEP 1

Manager

Open the word document and click "**FILE**" in the upper left corner

STEP 2

Manager

Select the "**Protect Document**" tile.

STEP 3

Manager

Click "**Encrypt with Password**" from the drop down menu.

STEP 4

Manager

Enter a password and click "**OK**".

STEP 5

Manager

Confirm the password and click "**OK**".



Passwords are case sensitive.

During a member of staff's sickness absence a manager shall be required to draft and complete a number of letters. These include Information & Support, Invitation and Meeting Summary letters. Where required, the NICSHR Case Manager will advise you to issue the relevant letter.

There are **10** Steps in this process.

STEP 1**NICSHR Case Manager*****Will advise that an action / letter is required***

The NICSHR Case Manager speak with you to explain what stage your member of staff is at in the process, what action is required and will follow this up with a confirmation e-mail. Following the advice given, you will be required to issue the appropriate letter to your member of staff, i.e. an Information & Support Letter when the absence has reached 28 calendar days.

STEP 2**Manager*****Select the appropriate sickness absence letter.***

The NICSHR Case Manager's confirmation e-mail will provide a Permalink for the appropriate letter template and guidance on its completion. The letter templates can also be found via the Employee Services Portal (ESP) **HR > Leave and Attendance > Sickness Absence > Letter.**



STEP 3**Manager*****Download the letter to be completed***

If a HPRM container has been opened:

- Select the link to the letter from the e-mail or ESP.
- Select **open** and save the letter in the appropriate departmental HPRM container using the correct HPRM naming convention.

If a HPRM container has not been opened:

- Select the link to the letter from the e-mail from the NICSHR Case Manager or ESP.
- Select **save**. The letter will be saved into your Computer's '**Downloads folder**'.

You can access your "Downloads folder" by selecting the yellow folder icon  at the bottom of your Screen and then select  Downloads on the left hand side of the screen. The letter will appear in this folder (in date order) and can be opened to complete.

If you do not have access to HPRM you should save all documents in accordance with your departmental Records Management Policy.

STEP 4

Manager

Drafting the sickness absence letter

The letters have been designed using drop down options for the majority of the required text and blanks with indicators. These include either a date, number (total) or free text as required. If you experience any difficulty completing the letters guidance is available by following the link provided.

If you are still unsure of how to complete the letter after considering the guidance, you may contact the NICSHR Case Manager for further advice.

STEP 5

Manager

Saving and naming the letter

When saving and naming the letter you should not use any personal information that could be used to identify your member of staff (i.e. name or payroll number).

STEP 6

Manager

Issuing the letter to your member of staff via work e-mail.

On most occasions you will issue the letter to your member of staff via the Government Secure Network (GSI).

This e-mail should be marked **'Official'** in the subject heading to be GDPR compliant. Insert the recipients in the 'To' field only when the message has been completed and checked thoroughly. Check the recipients again before sending.



When you start to type the name of the recipient, Outlook will suggest similar addresses you have used previously. If you have e-mailed several people whose name or address starts the same way – e.g. “Paterson” - the auto-complete function may bring up several different “Patersons”. Make sure you choose the right address and re-check for accuracy before you send.

STEP 7

Manager

Issuing the letter to your member of staff's private e-mail address

If your member of staff is currently on long term sick absence, the letter will issue either to their private e-mail address or as a hardcopy to their home address.

Your member of staff may have stated their preferred method of contact is via their private e-mail address. It is likely you will have already been provided with this in the e-mail from the NICS Case Manager. If not you must request this from your member of staff.



Before sending any information to a private e-mail address you must send a test e-mail. Ask your member of staff to reply to your e-mail providing their payroll number to confirm both their identity and that you have the correct e-mail address. You will only need to do this once. You should restrict access to the letter by adding a password of the employee's date of birth in the format DDMMYYYY.

For guidance on how to password protect a document please see [Annex 2](#).

This e-mail should be marked '**Official**' in the subject heading to be GDPR compliant.

The subject field should NOT contain any personal information that could identify your member of staff (including name or payroll number).

You must **attach** the **letter** and send the **e-mail** to your member of **staff**.

STEP 8

Manager

Provide a copy of the letter to the required parties

It is vital that whenever you are issuing a sickness absence letter to your **member of staff** that you always provide copies of the letter to:

- **HRConnect.**
- **NICSHR Case Manager.**
- **Your Manager.**



HRConnect will not be aware that an action has taken place (i.e. meeting arranged) unless they receive a copy of your letter. They will use the information from your letter to update their records.



The **NICSHR Case Manager** and **your own Manager** also need to be advised, so that they know you have completed this action. If you have opened a HPRM container for this absence, you must forward a link to the container to your manager and NICSHR and not attach an electronic copy of the letter.

If you do not have access to HPRM you should send a copy of the letter to HRConnect, the NICSHR Case Manager and your own Manager via e-mail.

NICSHR will in turn update their records and save the letter into the NICSHR HPRM container.

STEP 9

Manager


Issuing the letter to your member of staff via hardcopy

Should your member of staff advise that they wish to receive the letter via a hardcopy, the letter should be placed in a sealed envelope and marked '**Strictly Private**'.

Always check the member of staff's address to ensure it is correct. The address should have been verified during the Progress Meeting around the 14th calendar day of absence.

When drafting the letter you should not print any hardcopies unnecessarily. However, if you should print a hardcopy, it must be stored in a secure location (locked cabinet with restricted access).

Once the letter has been posted, dispose of any additional / draft copies securely by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin.

 Remember to issue a copy of the letter to **HRConnect**, the **NICSHR Case Manager** and your **Manager** as outlined above.

STEP 10

Manager

Delete all electronic copies and securely dispose of any hardcopies of all letters or other documentation.

Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), you are not permitted to retain any personal information regarding your member of staff's sickness absence.

When the NICSHR Case Manager is content that they are in receipt of all the relevant information they will advise you to delete all electronic copies and securely dispose of all hardcopies of letters and any related documentation by deleting any electronic copies and shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin any hardcopies.

During the sickness absence process you will now be required to run / produce sickness absence reports in relation to your staff.

There are **6** Steps in this process.

STEP 1*Manager***Log on to HRConnect Self-Service**

Select the **Employee Services Portal** icon on your desk top. Select '**Quick Links**' on the top right hand side of the screen and then select the '**HRCONNECT Self Service**' icon on the left hand side of the screen.

Enter your **Username** and **Password** to login.

STEP 2*Manager***Locate & Open the Discover Report**

From the Main Menu select '**HRConnect Manager Self-Service**' then select '**Employee Information**' and finally the '**Employee Details**' link.

The screen will now display a list of all your staff, **note** the **Employee Number** of the member of staff who you wish to run a sickness absence report on.

STEP 3*Manager***Open Discover**

Return to the **Manager Self-Service menu** by clicking the back button (blue circle with white arrow pointing left) in top left hand corner.

Select '**Other Manager Actions**' and then the '**Discover Menu**' link.

STEP 4*Manager***Open the Absence Report facility**

The screen will display a worklist of the different types of reports available. In the blank text field type '**absence**' and then click '**Go**'.

From the resulting list, select the + sign next to the '**Individual Absence Report**'

STEP 5

Manager

Run the Absence report for your member of staff

Enter the '**Employee number**' for your member of staff (which you noted at Step 2) in the bottom field. Enter the '**Start**' and '**End**' dates for the required period of the report (**normally a 4 year period**) in the format '**01-JAN-2019**' select '**Go**'.

STEP 6

Manager

Printing the member of staff's absence report

To print a hardcopy of the absence report;

Select '**Printable page**' on the left hand side of the screen and then select '**Printable PDF**'

Background

During the Inefficiency Sickness Absence process a number of formal meetings may be carried out between the manager and member of staff. These are as follows:

- Review Meeting(s) which take place during a period of long term sickness absence, and;
- a meeting to consider a warning after a member of staff returns to work.

The manager conducting the meeting may arrange for a note-taker to be present. The note-taker will be a member of staff who is not involved in the absence, whose role is to take a record of the meeting and to act as an independent witness to what is said at the meeting.

The involvement of a note-taker in this process enables the manager conducting the meeting to concentrate on their discussion with the member of staff.

The Purpose of the note-taker

The purpose of this role is to take a record of the meeting(s) i.e. the discussion points, questions and answers and any actions agreed. This information will then be transferred onto the appropriate Form B 'Record of Meeting', determined by the purpose of the meeting.

The summary **should not be a verbatim record**, but it should accurately capture the key points of the meeting.

At the meeting the note-taker should;

- ➔ be present for the duration of the entire meeting.
- ➔ record the names of all those present.
- ➔ take an accurate summary of the meeting.
- ➔ include any action points in the summary (the tasks and who is to take them forward).

Where HPRM is available

The manager who conducted the meeting will download and save the appropriate Form B and will scan and save the handwritten notes into the departmental container. The manager will arrange for the note-taker to be granted access to these two documents **only** (and not the container itself). The original handwritten notes must be disposed of securely by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin once saved onto HPRM by the manager.

Where HPRM is unavailable

The manager who conducted the meeting will e-mail the note-taker an electronic copy of the appropriate Form B. If the note-taker retains their handwritten notes until Form B has been completed, these notes must be stored in a secure location with restricted access.

Following the meeting the note-taker should;

- ➔ Transfer the hand written notes into the appropriate Form B within 3 days of the meeting.
- ➔ Ensure all handwritten notes and Form B are forwarded securely to the manager who conducted the meeting.
- ➔ Delete any electronic copies of the meeting (including any e-mails) held locally and securely disposed of any physical copies by shredding / placing in a confidential secure waste bin once the manager acknowledges receipt of the completed Form B and handwritten notes (if not previously saved onto HPRM).

Following note-takers completion of the Record of the Meeting

The manager who conducted the meeting will arrange for the note-takers access to Form B and the scanned handwritten notes in the departmental container be removed.

Information Handling – General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The note-taker is bound by the principles contained in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). There are special rules for the note-taker to bear in mind when processing data related to a staff members health (which is one of the 'special categories' of data under Article 9 of the GDPR).

Under GDPR, a data breach is a breach in security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alternation, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to personal data.

Consequently, you will be in breach of GDPR should you (accidentally or by intent), disclose any information arising from the meeting, either verbally or in writing to anyone who was not in attendance at the meeting.

Detail on how information is to be stored, processed and sent can be found within Section 2 (Handling Personal Data Guidance) of the Sickness Absence – Stage 1 User guide and your Departmental Records Management policy.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality enables the free flow of information between the manager and the member of staff and acknowledges that a staff member's personal information belongs to them. The member of staff must be assured of **confidentiality** as this is essential to building mutual trust.

It is therefore vital that when performing the role of note-taker staff do not discuss any of the information arising from the meeting with anyone who was not in attendance.

Consequently, if it is established that any member of staff in their capacity as note-taker has breached the confidentiality inherent to the process, they **will** be considered for formal action under 6.03 Disciplinary Policy.

 [Handling Personal Data Guidance \(Sickness Absence - Stage 1\)](#)

The Return to Work Interview provides the manager with the opportunity to meet with their member of staff on a “one to one” basis to discuss their absence, ensure their fitness for work and explore the possibility of providing support to ease their transition back to work.

It also provides an opportunity to discuss the member of staff’s attendance levels and make them aware of the implications of the sickness absence policy and procedures should their attendance become a concern.

The member of staff will have the opportunity to raise any underlying problems which may have contributed to their absence and to explore any workplace adaptations or adjustments that may be beneficial.

There are **4** Steps in this process.

STEP 1**Manager****Arranging the Return to Work Interview**

Regardless of the duration of the absence, a Return to Work Interview should take place within 2 days of the member of staff’s return, or as soon as possible thereafter taking account of work patterns.

You should arrange a suitable time and location for the interview i.e. in a private room or a quiet area.



As this is an informal meeting which will not lead to a decision about warnings or future employment, there is no statutory right for the member of staff to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

STEP 2**Manager****Preparing for the Return to Work Interview**

The Return to Work Interview should take the form of an informal discussion allowing the member of staff to feel comfortable in identifying any help they may need in supporting them on their return to work. With this in mind, prior to the meeting you should consider the following issues:

- Your member of staff’s sickness absence record, particularly within the previous 12 months.
- The nature of the illness or injury.
- Frequency and whether there is a pattern to the absences.
- Whether the absence is the result of work issues.
- Whether there are any domestic circumstances which may have impacted on the absence.

- Any circumstances falling within relevant legislation, including disability legislation.
- Any relevant information provided by the Occupational Health Service (OHS) or the Welfare Support Service (WSS).
- Any relevant information captured during Review Meetings.

STEP 3

Manager

The Return to Work Interview

The following 5 key areas should determine the structure of the discussion:

1. **Welcome Back:** You should welcome your member of staff back to work and provide an update on how their work was covered during their absence. They should also be updated on any changes or developments that may have occurred within the workplace.
2. **Confirm Absence Details:** It is essential that accurate information is recorded in respect of the member of staff's absence. You should therefore take this opportunity to confirm the dates of the absence, the absence reason, and ensure that the absence has been fully covered by a self-cert and/or a fit note. Confirm phased return plan if applicable. See [Annex 7](#) for further detail on managing a phased return.
3. **Sickness Absence Process:** Remind your member of staff of the review points applicable to their employment status i.e. permanent, probationer or fixed-term. If they have a current sickness absence warning in place, they should be reminded of the terms of the warning and its expiry date.



While your member of staff may not have reached a review point, you should ensure that they are made aware of the sickness absence procedures and if appropriate, highlight in any cases where the level of absence is becoming a concern.

4. **Support Services:** Ensure your member of staff is made aware of the sources of support and advice that are available and provide them with a copy of the support sheet ([Support – How can we Help? – Sheet](#)). Where appropriate, direct them to further support such as Workable NI, Access to Work, Action Mental Health, and Accommodation/Health & Safety etc.
5. **Adjustments:** Explore if there are any requirements for workplace adaptations or adjustments which may support the member of staff's return to work. If adjustments are already in place, check that these are still adequate for their needs and explore if there is anything further that could be done. It may also be the case that the adjustments are no longer required.

Throughout this discussion, your member of staff should be given the opportunity to provide details of any underlying problems which may have contributed to their absence.

STEP 4

Manager

Following the Return to Work Interview

Immediately following the Return to Work Interview, you must:

- Complete form [HR-SAB 1.32b](#). This must be agreed and signed by both you and your member of staff confirming that the information recorded accurately reflects the discussion that took place.
- Forward a copy of the form to HRConnect and provide the member of staff with a copy.
- Update the staff member's record with the agreed information using the HRConnect Manager Self-Service Screen 'Return to Work Interview Form ([HRC – Quick Ref Guide – Manager](#)).
- Ensure any actions agreed with the member of staff are taken forward, such as a risk assessment or referral to the WSS.
- Arrange regular reviews for any workplace adaptations or reasonable adjustments that have been agreed.

Where a member of staff wishes to return to work from sickness absence but feels they are unable to fully take on their normal working pattern, a phased return may be considered.

A phased return must be endorsed by either the member of staff's General Practitioner (GP) usually via a fitness for work statement (Fit Note) or by the Occupational Health Service (OHS). The recommendation should support the need for a temporary reduction in hours in addition to confirmation that they should be able to return to their previous working pattern.

Where approved, a phased return to work plan increasing the member of staff's working hours (over a maximum period of 3 months) until they resume their normal contracted hours, should be agreed.

There are **7** Steps in this process.

STEP 1**Manager and Member of Staff****Agreeing a phased return**

Where a phased return has been recommended by a medical professional you should meet your member of staff to discuss and agree a phased return to work plan.

This should include:

- the proposed duration for the phased return, up to a maximum of 3 months;
- the number of hours to be worked each week/each day of each week;
- the scope and range of duties involved;
- procedures for reviewing the phased return plan including agreement of any changes.



If it is not possible to agree a full plan you may make an interim agreement, perhaps covering the first week only. A full plan must be agreed when the member of staff returns to work.

STEP 2**Manager****Recording the Phased Return Plan on HRConnect**

You should record the details of the phased return on the HRConnect portal (through Manager Self-Service).

This should include:

- Phased Return start and end date;
- Phased Return review date.

You can access HRConnect via the Employee Service Portal. Further guidance on how to update the HRConnect portal can be found within [Sickness Absence - Managers \(Quick Reference Guide\)](#).

Alternatively, you can complete the downloadable [Phased Return Instruction Form HR -REF 1.51 R2](#) and submit this to HRConnect. You must also copy this form to the NICSHR Case Manager.

It is important that the information is accurately recorded as the content of this form is used to inform the Phased Return Plan letter issued to the member of staff by HRConnect.

STEP 3

Manager

Conducting a return to work interview

When your member of staff returns to work from sickness absence you should close the absence on the HRConnect portal and conduct the return to work interview in the normal way.

Where a fully completed Phased Return to Work plan has not already been agreed, you should agree a full plan at this stage. You should ensure that you notify the NICSHR Case Manager that your member of staff has returned to work.

STEP 4

Manager

Completing Weekly Returns

Throughout the duration of the phased return you are required to submit a weekly return detailing the actual hours your member of staff worked each day of that week, via HRConnect Manager Self-Service.

Alternatively, you can complete the downloadable [Phased Return Weekly Return Form](#) and submit this to HRConnect.



You should ensure that any approved annual leave and public / privilege holidays (within your member of staff's normal work pattern) are recorded as attendance.

STEP 5

Manager

Monitoring progress

You should monitor your member of staff's work pattern closely to ensure that the agreed phased return plan is being followed and to review its success. You should have already agreed a suitable date to meet with your member of staff, to review the progress of the arrangement and any issues arising, when you originally agreed the phased return plan with them. This review should take place around 2 months from the start of the plan to allow any issues to be addressed before the end of the arrangement.

Where both parties agree that the phased return to work plan is progressing satisfactorily, then your member of staff will continue with the agreed plan, gradually increasing their hours as agreed, and you should continue to monitor their progress throughout the duration of the phased return.



Where any difficulties have arisen, then details of the plan may be revisited and revisions to the original plan may be considered, however, the period should not exceed the original maximum 3 month period as laid down in the policy.



If your member of staff is still having health difficulties and unable to complete the hours as agreed in the work plan, a referral to OHS may be considered. You should contact the NICSHR Case manager to discuss this option and request that they initiate a referral (if agreed).

STEP 6

Manager

Extension of phased return

Where the phased return to work plan has not progressed satisfactorily and your member of staff is unable to complete the hours as agreed and a referral to OHS had been undertaken, the Medical Advisor should provide further advice, including the likelihood of your member of staff being able to satisfactorily complete a phased return within the 3 month period. In exceptional circumstances, the OHS Medical Advisor may recommend further adjustments to the original plan, including an extension of the 3 month period.

The NICSHR Case manager should provide you with a copy of the OHS advice for you to consider any recommendations made, and if accepted you would be required to agree a new phased return to work plan with your member of staff.

STEP 7

Manager

Appealing OHS recommendations

Where OHS recommend that your member of staff *is* able to complete the agreed phased return plan and they **do not** comply, this will be treated as an appeal against the decision. You should liaise with the NICSHR Case manager for advice and guidance on actions needed to take forward the appeal.

Where the decision is that the appeal is **not upheld**, your member of staff should continue on with the agreed phased return to work plan. Where your member of staff **does not** continue with the agreed plan i.e. comply with the outcome of the appeal, the NICSHR Case Manager should proceed to follow the inefficiency procedures, including consideration of withholding sick pay.

Where the appeal **is upheld** your member of staff may be offered a permanent reduction to working hours if a suitable post can be found. If a suitable post cannot be found, or your member of staff does not accept a permanent reduction in hours, they must revert to full time sickness absence. The NICSHR Case manager may then consider proceeding to implement the procedures contained in either the Inefficiency Sickness Absence policy or Retirement on Medical Grounds policy.

Where an extension to a phased return to work plan was put in place and your member of staff remains unable to resume their normal contracted hours at the end of the extension period they must revert to full time sickness absence. The NICSHR Case manager may then consider proceeding to implement the procedures contained in either the Inefficiency Sickness Absence policy or Retirement on Medical Grounds policy.

During your member of staff's sickness absence you may be asked to arrange with your departmental Information Management Unit (IMU) for a departmental HPRM container to be opened. You will use this container to securely save any information relating to the absence. Once the container is no longer required NICSHR will ask you to arrange for the container to be closed.

There are **5** Steps in this process.

STEP 1*Manager****E-mail request to IMU***

The NICSHR Case Manager will advise you to arrange with your departmental IMU to open a container. You should arrange for the HPRM container to be opened in accordance with your department's specific guidance.

STEP 2*Manager****Add relevant documents to container***

From this point you will save **any** documents you create relating to your member of staff's period of sickness absence into the container, e.g. new regular contact updates, invite to meeting letters, etc.

STEP 3*NICSHR Case Manager****Request to close departmental HPRM container***


When the member of staff's absence has reached its natural conclusion (i.e. the member of staff has returned to work and a decision following their absence has been taken or where the member of staff has ill health retired, etc) NICSHR will advise you when to close the container. You will receive a request by email from the NICSHR Case Manager to arrange for the departmental HPRM container to be closed.

STEP 4*Manager****Request to close departmental HPRM container***

You will arrange to close the container in accordance with your departmental guidance.

STEP 5*IMU****Close and retain departmental HPRM container***

IMU will close the relevant departmental HPRM container.

 Should a Manager change post at any time during the life of the departmental HPRM container they must ensure access controls to the container are changed accordingly. Annex 10 of this guide provides more detailed information on the manager's responsibilities.

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 [Handling Personal Data Guidance \(Sickness Absence - Stage 1\)](#)

Where sickness absence exceeds 7 calendar days, your member of staff will be required to provide you with medical evidence in the form of a Statement of Fitness for Work (fit note) completed by a registered medical practitioner.

You must record the details of the Statement of Fitness for Work on the HRConnect portal (via the Employee Services Portal), provide HRConnect with a copy of the fit note and then return the original document to your member of staff.

There are 4 Steps in this process.

STEP 1*Member of Staff***Send fit note to management**

Your member of staff should provide you with a Statement of fitness for Work completed by a registered medical practitioner or, where they are receiving hospital treatment, a certificate by a responsible officer of the hospital.

Fit notes will be accepted for the periods specified on them, where a fit note is received with no period specified they should be returned to the member of staff so they can have an end date added by their doctor. However, in cases where it is clear that the absence is likely to be long term (given the nature of the illness) you should discuss this with the NICS HR Case Manager as there is discretion for NICS HR to approve up to 3 months sickness absence on the strength of the doctor's statement.

STEP 2*Manager***Update HRConnect with fit note details**

You must log on the HRConnect portal and update your member of staff's record with the details of the fit note. The [Sickness Absence - Managers \(Quick Reference Guide\)](#) provides specific guidance on entering a fit note onto the HRConnect portal.

STEP 3*Manager***Forward a copy of the fit note to HRConnect**

You must record the member of staff's payroll number in the top right corner of the fit note and then forward a scanned copy of the fit note to HRConnect, via email, using the specified email address below. HRConnect will retain the copy of the fit note on the member of staff's record.

For Non-Industrial NICS Staff (excluding DOJ / PPS): NICS@HRConnect.nigov.net

For Industrial NICS Staff: Industrial@HRConnect.nigov.net

STEP 4

Manager

Return the original fit note to your member of staff

The original Statement of fitness for Work document remains the property of the member of staff and must be returned to them. You should agree with your member of staff a method for returning the original document to them by either...

- Agreeing to retain original fit notes in a secure location with restricted access until the member of staff returns to work.

OR

- Agreeing to securely return each fit note back to the member of staff by post once the relevant details have been updated on the HRConnect portal.

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[Handling Personal Data Guidance \(Sickness Absence - Stage 1\)](#)

Where there is a change in management during a member of staff's sickness absence or where the absence has not reached a natural conclusion (i.e. the member of staff has returned to work and a decision following their absence has been taken or where the member of staff has ill health retired, etc), access controls to the departmental container should be reviewed and revised accordingly. The scenarios below should be considered to guide you in your next steps.

SCENARIO 1*Manager****Where a new manager has been appointed***

The departing manager should contact the member of staff to advise who their new manager will be.

The departing manager should arrange to have their name removed from the access controls of the relevant Departmental HPRM container and have the details of the new manager added.

SCENARIO 2*Manager****Where a new manager has not yet been appointed***

The departing manager should contact the member of staff to advise who will be managing their absence until a new manager is appointed (this will usually be the next manager in the management structure).

The departing manager should arrange to have their name removed from the access controls of the relevant Departmental HPRM container.

If the person taking over the management of the absence already has access to the Departmental HPRM container (i.e. the next manager in the management structure) then their manager should be added to the access controls of the Departmental HPRM container (there should always be 2 people in the management structure with access to the container).

If the person taking over the management of the absence does not have access to the Departmental HPRM container then their details should be added to the access controls of the container. Access should also be given to the appropriate next manager in the management structure (there should always be 2 people in the management structure with access to the container).

SCENARIO 3

Manager

Where the departing manager is not being replaced

The departing manager should contact the member of staff to advise who will be taking over the management of their absence (this will usually be the next manager in the management structure).

The departing manager should arrange to have their name removed from the access controls of the relevant Departmental HPRM container.

If the person taking over the management of the absence already has access to the Departmental HPRM container (i.e. the next manager in the management structure) then their manager should be added to the access controls of the Departmental HPRM container (there should always be 2 people in the management structure with access to the container).

If the person taking over the management of the absence does not have access to the Departmental HPRM container then their details should be added to the access controls of the container. Access should also be given to the appropriate next manager in the management structure (there should always be 2 people in the management structure with access to the container).

SCENARIO 4

Manager

Where the manager is absent for a period of time

Where the manager is absent for a period of time (e.g. due to sickness absence or an extended period of leave, etc), the next manager in the management structure should assume responsibility for managing the absence.

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