

**GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS: PHASED RETURNS**

**WHAT IS A PHASED RETURN?**

A phased return to work is a mechanism whereby an employee returns to work following absence gradually to allow the employee a period of rehabilitation into the workplace.

The extent and length of rehabilitation will depend upon the specific circumstances; however often this will be for one/two weeks and not normally exceeding 4 weeks duration and may include adjustments to working pattern, hours or alternative duties.

**HOW SHOULD THIS BE IMPLEMENTED?**

A phased return should only be implemented following the recommendation from an employee’s GP via a ‘fit note’ or from Occupational Health. The medical professional will provide recommendations on the duration and nature of the phased return to include adjustments to working pattern, hours or alternative duties. You should consider the recommendations for the phased return and any implications for your area and how this may be managed.

You should meet with the member of staff **in advance** of the employee returning to work to discuss and agree a phased return. Any adjustments to working pattern, hours or alternative duties, should be discussed, agreed and confirmed in writing.

A phased return to work can begin whenever the individual and manager consider it appropriate, commencing **immediately** following the period of absence.

You should ensure that you meet with the member of staff during the phased return to review the arrangements to ensure that the arrangements are supporting the return to work and that the individual is managing the gradual increase effectively. In the event that the individual does not feel able to return to full substantive duties at the end of the phased return, you should re-refer the individual to Occupational Health for a further medical opinion.

**PAYMENT**

If the phased return has been recommended by Occupational Health/GP, the employee will be paid **full pay** during the first two weeks of the phased return.

Thereafter the employee will be paid for hours worked. The employee may request to use accrued annual leave during the remainder of the phased return. This should not be unreasonably withheld and should be recorded in accordance with usual procedure.

**FURTHER ADVICE**

You should contact your HR Business Partner for further advice. A list of HR Business Partners is available here in the Contacts section of the People and Culture website.