Sickness Absence Policy

Supportive Bridge Ltd - Policy and Procedure

POLICY AT A GLANCE

- Tell us as early as possible, by phone, before your shift is due to start - never by text alone, and never through a colleague.
- People are relying on you. Someone may be alone in their home waiting for you; the sooner we know, the sooner we can cover the visit and reassure them.
- Self-certify for up to 7 days, then a fit note from your GP is needed for anything longer.
- Keep in touch during longer absences. We will agree how and how often with you - this is support, not checking up on you.
- Every absence gets a return-to-work discussion, however short, so we can support you properly and keep our records straight.
- A pattern of absence is looked at supportively first, not punitively - but persistent or unexplained absence may be managed under our Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

Registered Manager	Iffrah Ishtiaq
Nominated Individual	Iffrah Ishtiaq
Office phone	07448266215
Out-of-hours / on-call number	
Date issued	01-10-2026
Next review date	

1. Purpose

1.1 This policy explains how staff report sickness absence, what support is available, and how Supportive Bridge Ltd ("Supportive Bridge", "we", "us") manages absence fairly and consistently. It is referred to in our Infection Prevention and Control Policy and our Disciplinary and Grievance Policy, and sits alongside both.

1.2 Reliability matters more here than in most jobs: a missed shift can mean a person is left without support they depend on. This policy exists to make sure absence is reported quickly, cover can be arranged, and staff who are genuinely unwell are supported to get better and return to work safely.

2. Scope

2.1 Supportive Bridge Ltd operates in two parts: as a staffing agency, supplying care and support workers to care homes, hospitals and other regulated providers under that provider's own policies and supervision; and as a community support service, where our own support workers visit adults and older people in their own homes, including council housing, on morning and evening shifts to help with daily living.

2.2 Supportive Bridge Ltd is not currently registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and does not provide personal care in any circumstances at present. This means no washing, bathing, dressing, toileting, continence care, or assistance with eating, drinking, oral, skin, hair or nail care. Personal care will only be offered once, and if, CQC registration is granted, and this policy will be updated at that point.

2.3 This policy applies to every employee and worker, including staff supplied to a client organisation through our staffing agency arm, who must also follow that organisation's own reporting line for the shift itself as well as notifying our office.

3. Reporting sickness

- phone the office (or the on-call number outside office hours) yourself, as soon as you know you cannot work, and always before your shift is due to start - a text message on its own is not enough;
- tell us which shifts you expect to be affected, and, if you can, how long you think you'll be off;
- speak to a manager or the on-call contact directly, not a colleague, so the information is accurate and acted on immediately;
- keep us updated if your return date changes, in either direction.

3.1 We will never criticise you for being unwell. What matters is that we hear from you early enough to keep the people relying on that visit safe and informed.

4. Certifying your absence

4.1 For absences of 7 calendar days or less, you can self-certify - we will ask you to complete a short self-certification form when you return. For any absence longer than 7 days, you will need a fit note ("sick note") from your GP, which you should send to the office as soon as you have it, and further fit notes to cover the whole period of absence.

5. Pay during sickness absence

5.1 Depending on your eligibility, you may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) in line with current government rates and rules, which are reviewed and updated each year. Your contract of employment or worker agreement sets out whether any company sick pay applies in addition to SSP. Ask the office if you are unsure what you are entitled to for a particular absence.

6. Return-to-work discussions

6.1 Whenever you come back after any sickness absence, however short, your manager will have a brief, informal return-to-work conversation with you. This is to check you are genuinely fit to return, see if you need any support, update our records, and talk through anything that might help prevent the same problem recurring.

7. Keeping in touch during longer absences

7.1 For any absence expected to last more than two weeks, we will agree with you how and how often we stay in touch - for example a short call every week or two - so you are not forgotten, you hear about anything relevant happening at work, and we can plan appropriately for your return. This is never used to pressure someone back before they are ready.

8. Managing frequent or long-term absence

8.1 If absence becomes frequent, forms a pattern (such as regularly around weekends or particular shifts), or continues long-term, we will meet with you to understand what is happening and what support might help - this may include a referral to occupational health, a phased return, or reasonable adjustments to your role under the Equality Act 2010 if a disability or health condition is a factor.

8.2 Where absence remains a genuine concern after that supportive process, or where a pattern suggests the reported reason for absence is not genuine, it may be managed formally under our Disciplinary and Grievance Policy. This is always a last resort, and never the first response to genuine ill health.

9. Sickness during a shift, or feeling unwell while working

9.1 If you start to feel unwell during a visit or shift, tell the office straight away rather than struggling on, particularly if you may be infectious (see our Infection Prevention and Control Policy) - continuing to work while infectious can put the person you support at real risk.

10. Medical and dental appointments

10.1 Routine medical or dental appointments should, where possible, be arranged outside your working hours or at the start or end of a shift, and agreed with the office in advance. Urgent or unavoidable appointments during a shift should be discussed with the office as soon as you're aware of them.

11. Related policies

- Disciplinary and Grievance Policy
- Infection Prevention and Control Policy
- Supervision and Appraisal Policy
- Missed and Late Shifts Policy
- Lone Working Policy

12. Document control

Version	Date	Approved by	Role	Reason
1.0			Nominated Individual	New policy for local authority assurance and CQC registration

Supportive Bridge Ltd - registered office: Bradford - uncontrolled if printed; the master copy is held in the office policy file.