

Communication during reintegration:

what to say and how to say it?

4 key moments to communicate with your employee



Period of absence

A period of absence lasting four weeks or longer is considered long-term absence. Employers can start up the reintegration process only after the employee has been on sickness absence for at least four months. This is what you can do in the meantime.

How?

- ✓ **Keep in touch** (regularly) to lower the return-to-work threshold.
- ✓ Send a card that is signed by the entire team or get in touch in **other ways**.
- ✓ **Get help from Mensura** via our [Return Calls](#) service.

What?

- ✓ **Show that you care** and let them know they are missed.
- ✓ **Tell them about work** and ask what they would like to know.

Example:

“Are you feeling a bit better? We just shared a cake today to celebrate Sophie’s birthday.”

1.

2.

Illness reporting

How?

- ✓ The employee calls to report their absence. Let them **tell their story**, or ask **open-ended questions**.

What?

- ✓ Do not ask about the reason for their absence but do probe to find out **if it is work related**.
- ✓ Ask **how long** they expect to be absent.
- ✓ Ask if there is **anything you can do** to help.

Example:

“How are you? How serious is it? Is there anything we can do?”

3.

Reintegration

How?

- ✓ **Take plenty of time** to welcome back the employee.
- ✓ Organise a **one-on-one** meeting soon after their return (or even better: before their return).
- ✓ Show interest and appreciation. Put the employee **at ease**.
- ✓ **Get co-workers involved** by preparing them for the employee’s return.

What?

- ✓ Ask the employee **what would help** them settle in more easily.
- ✓ If needed: suggest **alternate job duties** in consultation with an OH practitioner. Tell co-workers about the planned return and any changes that might take place.

Example:

“Are you feeling OK? It’s great to have you back! What can we do to help?”

4.

Follow-up

How?

- ✓ Organise **regular follow-up meetings** throughout the reintegration period, in the form of coaching sessions if needed, with yourself or a workplace buddy.

What?

- ✓ **Regularly ask** how their first work day/week/meeting/site visit went.

Example:

“How was your first week back at work? How are you coping?”

Take a look at how other organisations manage employee reintegration

Mensura has compiled a booklet on employee reintegration with a selection of inspiring cases from clients who successfully assisted long-term absentees with their return to work. Read and learn from other organisations and supervisors, and find out how Mensura can assist you with this process.