

# How do you prevent frequent absence among your employees?

On average, employees report absent once per year. And usually, this absence lasts about a week. But what if an employee has been absent more than once? In this document, you will find some tools and tips to prevent and solve (long-term) frequent absenteeism.

## Keeping control over frequent absenteeism

Frequent absenteeism occurs when an employee drops out three or more times within one year. Frequent absenteeism can also be a precursor to long-term absenteeism. Employers and employees are often unaware of this. It therefore makes sense to have structural discussions to keep control over frequent absenteeism and possibly prevent long-term absenteeism. You can do this yourself or with support.

## Discuss it with your employee

The aim of having a conversation with your employee is to identify the work-related factors and take actions to prevent subsequent absenteeism. After all, frequent absenteeism can be influenced in many cases.

### When should you talk?

Do not have a frequent absence discussion until the employee is fully back at work. And not until the employee is fully recovered.

### What is the aim of the conversation?

Explain that you want to talk with your employee to see whether there are any amendable work-related factors that can be resolved. And what actions you can agree on to prevent further absence.

### How do you encourage awareness?

Lay out the facts. Give the employee an overview of their exact absence periods. And discuss what unexpected frequent absences mean for their work and their immediate colleagues. It is important that the employee feels safe and not attacked.

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## Address the following questions

- Are there things at or during work that cause you to be absent more often?
- Do you experience problems in balancing your work and private life?
- What could I do as an employer to make you less likely to be absent?
- As an employee, what could you do so that you are less likely to be absent?
- What arrangements can we make with each other?
- Should we call in any help? And if so, what type?

## Delve deeper

If the employee cannot make a direct connection between their frequent absenteeism and amendable work factors, you can gently probe further. You should look for the problem behind the problem. This could be work pressure, physical strain, their working relationship with or support from their superiors and colleagues, support and/or hindrances at home, the extent to which the employee themselves can influence the burdening and/or hindering factors and the employee's motivation for work.

## Shared responsibility

You are jointly responsible as the employer and employee to address any issues that may affect frequent absenteeism. Make a follow-up appointment if important points emerge during the discussion that need more attention and to evaluate the agreements made. It is also important to record the agreements together and to name who will do what and when. This avoids misunderstandings and ensures joint responsibility.

## Easy access to additional support

In most cases, a good conversation solves the problem. Sometimes it does not work, or it is too difficult to have the right conversation together. In such cases, it is nice to get extra help or support. This can be done via a three-way conversation with an employability coach or an intervention from the Zorg van de Zaak Network.

### Three-way conversation with the employability coach

If you need support and the situation is not complex, in many cases, a one-time three-way conversation under the guidance of our employability coach is sufficient. In complex situations, a three-way conversation may take place three times, during which a personal action plan is drawn up with the employee. We call this the Sustainable@Work Plan.

The Sustainable@Work Plan is part of an employee's awareness process, with the aim of becoming sustainably employable. If necessary, we engage the occupational physician if specific questions arise that only this professional can answer.

### Interventions from the network

Often, there is no single cause for frequent or long-term absenteeism and further support is needed. Connecting with the Zorg van de Zaak Network gives you easy access to a multitude of interventions via [www.snelverwijspunt.nl](http://www.snelverwijspunt.nl). These are aimed at increasing employability, reducing absenteeism and enabling employees to work more healthily. For example, 'mind coaching' can help with work-related issues and short-term occupational social work programmes can help with work-life balance problems.

Of course, our professionals are happy to help you and can best advise you on the use of appropriate interventions.