



## *When the employee is ready to return to work*

Returning to work after a long-term absence due to illness can be difficult. When your employee says that he/she is ready to return to work – full-time or part-time – it is therefore a good idea to plan the return. As a manager, you have an important responsibility to help the employee return to work safely, and things do not always go to plan. How much support an employee needs is individual, of course, and you should plan the initial period together.

**Here is an example of what might be a good plan for an employee's return to work:**

### **Before the employee returns**

- Invite the employee to an informal chat over a cup of coffee before he/she returns to work. Before the meeting, ask the employee if he/she would like to meet colleagues or would prefer to meet you in reception and go for a coffee together.
- Start by together defining the tasks that the employee is able to perform at the beginning of the process. Begin with known and routine tasks.
- Plan fixed working hours and place of work during the initial stage.



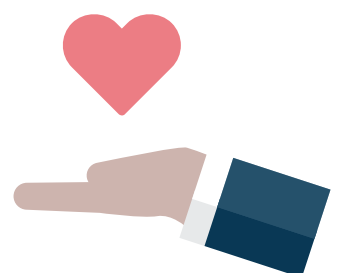
### **When the employee returns to work**

- Help the employee stick to the working hours agreed.
- Schedule fixed weekly follow-up meetings (duration of about ten minutes) for the coming two or three months and prioritise them. It is your responsibility as a manager to invite the employee to these meetings.
- Find out together what characterises a good working day. On the basis of this, set a number of milestones that will be considered at your follow-up meetings.
- Remember to inform the employee's colleagues of the plan for the initial period. In particular, make sure to clearly inform them about the employee's fixed working hours and places of work, so that the colleagues know what to expect.

### **Tips and advice**

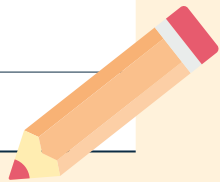
1. Stick to the plan and adjust when necessary.
2. Be patient! If your employee has been ill with stress, the rule of thumb is that it can take about 50% of the time that the

employee suffered from stress – including the time before being reported absent – before the employee is back on full speed. Nevertheless, the employee will often be eager to return and do his/her part and may therefore take on too much too soon.



Below is a schedule you can use in connection with the plan for the employee's return to work

Theme	Agreed on xx xx	Agreed on xx xx	Agreed on xx xx
Working hours			
Work tasks			
Collaboration interfaces and relations			
Physical location			
Information			
Follow-up			



**REMEMBER:** As a manager, you are responsible for preparing the plan for the employee's return to work, but the plan is always based on a dialogue with the employee.



### Other important things to consider when preparing the plan

- What should your employee do if he/she finds that things become difficult to handle? Is it you, the manager, or a designated colleague who can be the employee's go-to person if things become difficult?
- What does your employee want you to tell his/her colleagues?
- Is there anything the employee does not want them to know?
- Is there anyone who particularly needs to be informed of your agreements with the employee? Will you or your employee inform them?
- How would your employee like to be welcomed back?
- Does your employee want his/her colleagues to ask questions about his/her situation, or is he/she most comfortable about informing them himself/herself?

### How to get help yourself

If you have any questions on how best to help your employee return to work, you can get help and support from Danica Business on +45 45 13 17 17. Here, a team of specialists will

help you to handle any issues concerning an employee who has been reported absent due to illness.