



SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

Last Reviewed 15 June 2020

(Management of) Sickness Absence Policy & Procedures

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to detail both the support that will be available to employees and the steps that Fernwood Parish Council will take to monitor and manage absence.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all staff employed by the Parish Council.
- 2.2. The policy and its associated procedures relate to absence due to ill health and its effect on the ability of members of staff to carry out their duties and should be distinguished from unauthorised absence which is an issue of conduct that may fall within the scope of the Parish Council's disciplinary procedures.

3. Aims

- 3.1. Whilst it is accepted that employees may, from time to time, be absent from work due to sickness, the management of sickness absence is vital to the Parish Council for several reasons. Through the application of this policy the Parish Council aims to:
 - i. reduce the level of sickness absences through early intervention and support.
 - ii. ensure a fair and consistent approach to the management of sickness absence without discrimination.
 - iii. limit the consequences for staff and the Parish Council's activities when such absence does occur.
 - iv. support staff through periods of ill health with the aim of securing their early and sustained return to work or other resolution as appropriate.
 - v. minimise the likelihood of sickness absence, by identifying causes of absence and recommending, where practical, changes necessary in working practices or environment.
 - vi. ensure that the Parish Council complies with equality legislation and any other relevant statutory requirements.

4. Application of the Policy

The provisions of this policy will apply to all staff.

5. General Provisions

- 5.1. The Parish Council places a high value on the health of all staff and encourages health promotion and improvement.

- 5.2. All staff are responsible for the effective management of absence due to ill health and its impact upon work performance and service levels. It is imperative that all managers, act in a caring manner.
- 5.3. In applying this policy and its associated procedures, decisions will be made on the basis of information obtained through discussion/interview findings, attendance data and medical advice. Information relating to sickness absence should not be divulged to third parties not involved in the process without the permission of the employee, which will not be unreasonably withheld.

6. Recording and Monitoring Sickness Absence

- 6.1. Monitoring absence in a systematic fashion has been shown to facilitate the early identification of an employee's health problems and reduce levels of absence. It also enables the Parish Council to identify working practices or environments which may be contributing to absence through ill health.
- 6.2. It is the responsibility of the Clerk to record, report and monitor the attendance of all staff. This involves monitoring levels and patterns of absence and taking appropriate action in accordance with the Sickness Absence Procedures.
- 6.3. When absent from work due to sickness or accident, members of staff are required to adhere to the Notification and Certification Procedures-

7. Communication

7.1. Contact during an absence

- 7.1.1 During periods of absence both managers and staff are required to maintain contact at a reasonable frequency to ensure appropriate support is received. On receipt of a fit note from their GP, staff must contact their manager immediately to discuss their fitness to work.
- 7.1.2 Payment of sick pay is also dependent on employees adhering to the notification and certification procedures .

7.2. Contact on Return to Work

- 7.2.1 The Clerk/Chairman should make contact with an employee returning to work after each spell of sickness absence. This should normally be face to face, however, in some circumstances it may be appropriate to hold a conversation by telephone. Meetings or discussions should be carried out, sympathetically and in private, by a specified person on the day the employee returns completing the **Return to Work Discussion /Interview Form**. The aims of the discussion will include confirming the cause of the absence and ascertaining whether the employee needs any further support in making a successful return to work; concern for the welfare of the employee; and ensuring the situation is being managed to minimise further absences. Where appropriate the employee may be referred to Occupational Health or the Disability Advisory and Support Service for further assessment or support.

Sickness Absence Procedures

1. Notification

- 1.1. Entitlement to and payment of SSP and Occupational Sick Pay is subject to staff complying with these notification and certification procedures.
- 1.2. Notification requirements related to sickness must be brought to the attention of all staff.
 - i. the absence must be reported to the Clerk as soon as possible. In the case of the Clerk, this should be reported to the Chairman,
 - ii. the frequency of ongoing contact required should the absence be more than one day in length, should be no less than weekly
 - iii. certificates/statements must be sent to the Clerk as soon as possible (if applicable).

2. Certification

- 2.1 For absence of seven calendar days or less, a Self-Certification must be completed and submitted on the day of return
- 2.2 After seven calendar days, the member of staff must obtain a statement of fitness to work (a 'fit note') from their GP covering any further periods of sickness in the same absence period. This statement must be posted to their manager or nominee on the same or next day.
- 2.3 The fit note will provide advice from the GP as to whether the member of staff is 'unfit for work' in which case they shall remain off sick, or 'may be fit for work' if suitable support can be given by the Parish Council. If the fit note indicates they may be fit to work the employee must contact the Clerk immediately to explore this option. If it is not possible to make suitable adjustments then the employee will remain off sick and treat the fit note as if it had advised 'not fit for work'. A further note confirming this is not required.
- 2.4. An employee may return to work at the end of the period stated on the fit note, or sooner if their manager agrees it is appropriate. Confirmation of fitness to return will no longer be provided by GPs.
- 2.5 When calculating an absence period, note that all calendar days including weekends and/or rest days are counted as days of absence.

3. Return to work Discussion/Interview

- 3.1 A return to work discussion/interview must be conducted between the employee and their line manager on the day the employee returns to work.

4. Data Protection

- 4.1 The person who performs the role of receiving notification of absence also assumes responsibility for recording and reporting absences for monitoring purposes.