

## SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

*This revised policy was adopted at a meeting on xx/yy/2026. It is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.*



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### What to do if you are unwell

If you are away from work because of sickness, you must:

- contact the Chair of the Staffing Committee, before your normal start time for work on the first day of absence, providing details including how long you expect to be off work. If you are unable to make contact personally, someone else may do so for you. It is your responsibility to ensure the Council is notified. You must then make contact again each day (unless otherwise agreed with the Chair of the Staffing Committee).
- If you are away for seven days or less (including weekends and other non-working days), complete a self-certification form and provide it to the Council when you are back at work.
- If you are away for more than seven days (including weekends and other non-working days), send the Council a Fit Note from your doctor, and continue to do so as each new Fit Note is issued to you. The Fit Note gives details as to whether you are too ill to work or are well enough to work with suitable support from the Council. This gives you and the Council the opportunity to discuss suitable arrangements which will support your return to work.

All sickness or injury absence will be entered on your employment record and will be monitored from time-to-time.

### Return-to-work meetings

On your first day back at work after a period of sickness absence, the Chair of the Staffing Committee may want to meet informally. If this is not possible on your first day back, the meeting may take place later. The return-to-work meeting should take place in a private place, and all discussions will be private and confidential. The meeting will normally include:

- a welcome back to work;
- an outline of the purpose of the return-to-work meeting, which is to manage and monitor absence and attendance to identify any problem areas and offer support where appropriate;



- a discussion about the reasons for absence, in a supportive way, and to understand whether the Council can take any steps to help the employee's attendance;
- explaining that the absence will be recorded;
- establishing if medical advice has been sought (if appropriate);
- ensuring that the self-certification form has been completed or a Fit Note has been provided;
- a discussion on absence over the last 52 weeks, the impact on pay and any next steps; and
- a handover of work where appropriate.

### **Medical appointments**

The Council recognises that employees will, from time to time, need to attend medical appointments. Please try to arrange medical appointments in your own time or, if this is not possible, at times that will cause the minimum amount of absence from work or inconvenience to the Council. The Council will allow reasonable time off work with pay where an appointment cannot be arranged in your own time.

### **Statutory Sick Pay**

If you are ill and unable to attend work, you may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). Tax and National Insurance will be deducted from SSP.

### **Council's Sick Pay**

It is the Council's policy to pay you sick pay as set out in your Contract of Employment. This occupational sick pay will be for absences due to sickness, calculated over the previous 52 weeks, and will include, if your sick pay equates to your normal full pay, your entitlement to SSP.

Payment is, however, conditional upon you complying with the Council's procedure for notifying the Chair of the Staffing Committee of the absence, attending an interview with the Chair of the Staffing Committee on request to discuss the absence, and completing a self-certification form on return to work or providing a Fit Note when requested. We may also ask you to attend an interview/examination with a nominated doctor at the request of the Council.

We may not pay you occupational sick pay where:

- you have failed to comply with the Council's sickness absence notification and evidence requirements;
- you unreasonably refuse to attend a sickness absence meeting with the Council on request;
- you are unable to work because you hurt yourself in dangerous sports/activities or any other occupation you have;
- you have misled the Council about your fitness to work;
- you have resigned; or
- where disciplinary proceedings are pending against you.



## **Medical advice**

The Council may want to obtain advice on your fitness for work from occupational health advisers or medical practitioners. Examples of when the Council might refer to an occupational health or medical practitioner include:

- to seek a medical report on your illness or injury;
- to establish when you might be able to return to work;
- to understand when you are likely to be fully fit to resume your normal duties;
- to understand what alternative duties you might be fit to undertake if you are unfit to resume your normal duties;
- to understand when you are likely to be fit to undertake any alternative duties;
- to ask for guidance on your condition, for example if there is a possibility that you are disabled or ambiguity as to the exact nature of the condition;
- to ask what reasonable adjustments could be made to working conditions or premises to facilitate a return to work;
- to understand the likelihood of recurrence of the illness or injury once you have returned to work; and
- to discuss any adjustments that could be made to accommodate your disability, if you are disabled.

The Council will pay the cost of the report and you will have the right to see it. The Council will also be provided with a copy of the report and, once we have seen it, we will want to meet you to discuss the findings and consider options available to you. If you choose not to consent to an Occupational Health referral, any decisions in relation to your employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

## **Persistent short-term absence**

Persistent short-term absence is where an employee is frequently absent from work for relatively short periods due to sickness. We understand most employees will have some short-term sickness absence from time to time. However, if you are frequently and persistently absent from work, this can damage efficiency and productivity, and place an additional burden of work on your colleagues and Councillors.

Therefore, it is essential that frequent absence is dealt with promptly and consistently and, in some circumstances, the Council may begin a capability or disciplinary procedure as part of the absence management process. If we do so, we will meet with you to set attendance targets. Following a subsequent review meeting we may issue a formal warning if those targets are not met. You will be given written notice in advance of any formal meeting and you can be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. You may appeal against a formal warning. If your absence remains unacceptable after a second formal warning, the Council may bring your employment to an end following consultation with you.

If frequent absence is due to an underlying long-term health condition, we will also request, with consent, a medical report either from an Occupational Health Physician or your G.P. or consultant to establish further information about your health and how the Council can support your attendance.

When considering the reasons for absence, and deciding on whether a formal meeting is appropriate, the Council will not consider any pregnancy related absence. The



Council will also make adjustments where absences are related to a disability, by allowing a higher level of absence before considering whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

The Council will consider any alternative employment options before making any decision about ending employment. You will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at formal meetings and a right of appeal against a formal warning or dismissal. The monitoring of absence operates on a rolling 52-week period.

Where it appears that there is no acceptable reason for an absence or if you have not followed the correct absence notification procedure, the matter will be treated as a conduct issue and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

### **Long-term absence**

As a guide, long term absence is any absence which lasts, or is expected to last, over 4 weeks. In all cases of long-term absence, it is essential for the Council to maintain contact with you. In cases where the expected return date is unclear this will take the form of consultation and will include:

- discussions at the start of the absence and periodically throughout
- obtaining better information on your health and likely prognosis, ideally through an Occupational Health Physician
- where appropriate alerting you to the fact that your absence is becoming a problem, and
- allowing you the opportunity to state your opinion of your condition and giving consideration to that opinion.

Where ill-health means that you are unlikely to return to work for a long period of time, the Council may need to consider bringing your employment to an end. In these circumstances, the Council will:

- review your absence record to assess whether it is sufficient to justify dismissal
- consult with you
- obtain up-to-date medical advice
- advise you in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility
- discuss whether you may be able to access benefits from the employer's Pension Scheme (where appropriate)
- meet with you to discuss the options and consider your views on continuing employment before any decisions are made, allowing you to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative
- review if there are any alternative jobs that you could do prior to taking any decision on whether or not to dismiss
- allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss you on grounds of long-term ill health
- following this meeting, inform you of the final decision.

### **Absence as a result of disability**

Where you experience sickness absence as a result of a disability it will be treated in



line with the provisions contained within the Equality Act 2010. This will include considering whether any reasonable adjustments can be made.

### **Data protection**

The Council will treat personal data collected during the absence management process in accordance with its data protection policy on processing special categories of personal data. Information about how your data is used and the basis for processing your data will be provided in our employee privacy notice. When relying on legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing your data, you can object to the processing.

### **Notes**

1. The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence shall be calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day of absence the aggregate of periods of paid absence during the twelve months immediately preceding that day.
2. Periods of full pay will include SSP. In periods of half pay, employees receive half pay in addition to SSP, provided the total does not exceed normal pay.
3. If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness attributable to (i) deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery, (ii) the employee's own misconduct or neglect, (iii) active participation in professional sport or (iv) injury while working in the employee's own time on their own account for private gain or for another employer, sick pay may be suspended.

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## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

*(This revised Policy was adopted at a meeting on xx/yy/2026)*

### **Our commitment**

Farnsfield Parish Council recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to legally protect people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The purpose of this document is to give an overview of our responsibilities and to detail our objectives in relation to equality. All councillors and employees are asked to read, understand and apply the policy.

The Council is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination. This policy is intended to assist the council to put this commitment into practice and in ensuring that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

### **The law**

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics". Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a



reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

The council will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

### **Types of unlawful discrimination**

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. (In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. That occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.)

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic, such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties.

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he/she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he/she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

### **Equal opportunities in employment**

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

#### Recruitment

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

#### Working practices

The council will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be



worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the council considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

#### Equal opportunities monitoring

The council will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

The council treats personal data collected for reviewing equality and diversity in accordance with the data protection policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in the council's privacy notices.

### **Dignity at work**

The council has a separate Bullying & Harassment Policy, detailing how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

### **People not employed by the council**

The council will not discriminate unlawfully against those using or seeking to use the services provided by the council. You should report any bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others to the council, who will take appropriate action.

### **Training**

The council will raise awareness of equal opportunities in those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

The council will raise awareness in all staff engaged to work at the council to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the council's Bullying & Harassment Policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.

### **Your responsibilities**

Every employee is required to assist the council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

### **Grievances**

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you should use the council's grievance procedure to make a complaint. The council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

### **Monitoring and review**

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time. It will be monitored periodically by the council to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. (END)