

FARNSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

This revised policy was adopted at a Committee meeting on 31/03/2026. 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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