

DERSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

Introduction

This policy sets out our procedures for reporting sickness absence and for the management of sickness absence in a fair and consistent way. Sickness absence can vary from short intermittent periods of ill health to a continuous period of long term absence and can impact on both service delivery but on the individuals themselves, their colleagues and the organisation as a whole. This policy includes provision for reasonable measures to be taken to assist those who have been absent by reason of sickness for an extended period to return to work. It applies to all employees, but it does not apply to agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.

Notification of Sickness

If you are unable to attend work because of illness you must, unless in exceptional circumstances, personally notify the Chairman as early as possible, but no later than 11a.m on the first day of absence, informing them of the reason for your absence and if possible your expected date of return. If the Chairman is unavailable the Vice Chairman or other member of the Staffing Committee should be notified. If you are unable to speak to or email the Chairman a family member may call or email on your behalf. If no contact is received it is entirely appropriate for the Chairman to call and speak with the absentee.

You must complete a self-certification form for the first seven calendar days of all sickness absence and give it to the Chairman. This form can be completed on your return to work if your absence lasts less than seven calendar days.

If you are absent by the eighth day (including Saturday and Sunday) you must send a fit note, issued by your G.P. to the Chairman. Current fit notes must cover subsequent periods of absence.

For periods of absence of more than 7 calendar days arrangements for continued contact on a reasonable basis will be made. It is not sufficient to update the Council by merely sending in a new fit note. The expectation will be that contact will be made on an agreed basis (e.g. weekly) but also following medical appointments, on the issue of further fit notes or there being other significant changes in the situation.

The requirement for contact is two way and if you do not make contact then it is entirely appropriate for the Chairman to ring and speak to them. In some limited and exceptional circumstances you may not wish to make contact with the Chairman. In such exceptional circumstances, an agreement for an alternate Member to be the point of contact will need to be reached in discussion with the staffing committee.

It is entirely appropriate to offer help and assistance during an absence rather than just considering such help on the return to work. In the case of an extended period of absence of over 12 weeks the Council may require that your fitness to return/continued absence is confirmed by a medical practitioner of the Council's choice.

Return to Work

For periods of sickness absence of more than 7 calendar days you will not be allowed to return to work until your G.P. deems that you are fit to return. For longer term absences, either with or in some cases, without, recommendations from your G.P. on a fit note, we are able to consider a phased return to work, including reduced duties. Other than in exceptional circumstances phased return to work arrangements do not normally extend beyond four weeks.

If a fit note is received the Council will contact you and arrange for a return to work meeting. At this meeting suggestions will be discussed with the aim of facilitating the employees return to work. Regular reviews will be carried out to ensure that any amendments to hours or working practice are adequate or need to be revised. It should be noted that any amendments are not to be viewed as a permanent change to your contract of employment.

While a phased return will usually be following recommendations from a G.P. it is important to note that the recommendation on the fit note is advisory and not a requirement. G.P.'s may not always be in a position to consider either our procedures or the business needs of the organisation.

Monitoring

Following more than three absences in a six month or five absences in a twelve month period a formal return to work interview must be carried out by the Chairman. In cases where there have been more than five absences in a twelve month period the Chairman will consider the need for a case review hearing to be established.

Disability Considerations

Employees whose absence is related to a disability as defined by the Equalities Act 2010 (EA) are requested to follow these procedures but are advised that such absence will not be recorded as general sickness absence.

Where sickness absence is recorded as disability related in line with the above Act it does not count when considering the number of absences and the need for triggering further action.

Adopted by Full Council on: 27.07.26