

## **Sickness Absence Policy**

This policy sets out our arrangements for sick pay and for reporting and managing sickness absence.

Abuse of sickness absence, including failing to report absence or falsely claiming sick pay will be treated as misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

### **Reporting Sickness Absence**

If you cannot attend work because you are sick or injured you should telephone your manager as early as possible and no later than 1 hour after the time when you are normally expected to start work.

### **Evidence of Incapacity**

You must complete a self-certification form for sickness absence of up to seven calendar working days.

For absence of more than a week you must provide a doctor's certificate stating that you are not fit for work and giving the reason. You must also complete a self-certification form to cover the first seven working days. If absence continues beyond the expiry of a certificate, a further certificate must be provided.

If your doctor provides a certificate stating that you "may be fit for work" you must inform your manager immediately. We will hold a discussion with you about how to facilitate your return to work, taking account of your doctor's advice. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, you will remain on sick leave and we will set a date for review.

### **Statutory Sick Pay**

You may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you satisfy the relevant statutory requirements. Qualifying days for SSP are Monday to Friday, or as set out in your employment contract. The rate of SSP is set by the government in April each year. No SSP is payable for the first three consecutive days of absence. It starts on the fourth day of absence and may be payable for up to 28 weeks.

## **Sickness Scheme**

If you are eligible you will be entitled to receive sick pay from the Council in accordance with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions Sickness Scheme. If you require further information, please contact the Town Clerk.

## **Return to Work Interviews**

After a period of sick leave your manager may hold a return-to-work interview with you. The purposes may include:

- (a)** ensuring you are fit for work and agreeing any actions necessary to facilitate your return;
- (b)** confirming you have submitted the necessary certificates;
- (c)** updating you on anything that may have happened during your absence;
- (d)** raising any other concerns regarding your absence record or your return to work.

## **Managing Long-Term or Persistent Absence**

The following paragraphs set out our procedure for dealing with long-term absence or where your level or frequency of short-term absence has given us cause for concern.

The purpose of the procedure is to investigate and discuss the reasons for your absence, whether it is likely to continue or recur, and whether there are any measures that could improve your health and/or attendance. We may decide that medical evidence, or further medical evidence, is required before deciding on a course of action.

- We will notify you in writing of the time, date and place of any meeting, and why it is being held. We will usually give you a week's notice of the meeting.
- Meetings will be conducted by your line manager and will normally be attended by the Town Clerk.
- You may bring a companion to any meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. Your companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague, who will be allowed reasonable paid time

off from duties to act as your companion.

- If you cannot attend at the time specified you should let us know as soon as possible and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.
- If you have a disability, we will consider whether reasonable adjustments may need to be made to the sickness absence meetings procedure, or to your role or working arrangements.

### **Medical Examinations**

We may ask you to attend a medical examination by a doctor or occupational health professional or other specialist nominated by us (at our expense).

You will be asked to agree that any medical report produced may be disclosed to us and that we may discuss the contents of the report with the specialist and with our advisers. All medical reports will be kept confidential.

### **Initial Sickness Absence Meeting**

The purposes of a sickness absence meeting or meetings will be to discuss the reasons for your absence, how long it is likely to continue, whether it is likely to recur, whether to obtain a medical report, and whether there are any measures that could improve your health and/or attendance.

In cases of long-term absence, we may seek to agree a return-to-work programme, possibly on a phased basis.

In cases of short-term, intermittent absence, we may set a target for improved attendance within a certain timescale.

### **If Matters do not Improve**

If, after a reasonable time, you have not been able to return to work or if your attendance has not improved within the agreed timescale, we will hold a further meeting or meetings.

We will seek to establish whether the situation is likely to change and may consider redeployment opportunities at that stage.

If it is considered unlikely that you will return to work or that your attendance will improve within a short time, we may give you a written warning that you are at risk of dismissal. We may also set a further date for review.

### **Final Sickness Absence Meeting**

Where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, and the

situation has not changed significantly, we will hold a meeting to consider the possible termination of your employment. Before we make a decision, we will consider any matters you wish to raise and whether there have been any changes since the last meeting.

## **Appeals**

You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure. If you wish to appeal you should set out your appeal in writing to the Town Clerk stating your grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

If you are appealing against a decision to dismiss you, we will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will be dealt with impartially and, where possible, by a more senior manager who has not previously been involved in the case.

We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. There is no further right of appeal.

The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.

Full details of the Sickness Scheme can be located in the Green Book, Part 2. If you require further information in relation to this, please contact the Town Clerk.