

HARWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Sickness Absence Policy

Reporting of Sickness Absence

If an employee is absent from work on account of sickness or injury, they or someone on their behalf should inform the Council of the reason for their absence as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the working day on which the absence first occurs.

Confirmation of Reason for Absence

In respect of absence lasting up to seven calendar days, the employee is required to inform the Chair/Vice-Chair and self-certificate their absence.

Extended Periods of Absence

In respect of absence relating to illness lasting more than seven calendar days, the employee must provide a medical certificate stating the reason for the absence and thereafter provide a consecutive medical certificate to cover any subsequent period of absence.

The Council reserves the right to require an employee at any time to submit to a medical examination by a medical practitioner nominated by the Council, subject to the provisions of the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 where applicable. Any costs associated with the examination will be met by the Council.

The employee is required to provide copies of the self-certificate, and where extended periods of absence, copies of a medical certificate to the Chair/Vice Chair. Copies of all sickness absence notes to be maintained by the Parish Clerk and a representative member from the HR group.

Payment of Sickness Absence

The employee will be paid as per their agreed basic remuneration in line with the scale of payment for any one year that runs from 1 April to 31st March. The Council will be responsible for reclaiming the Statutory Sick Pay element if possible from HM Revenue & Customs. Entitlement to payment is subject to notification of absence and production of medical certificates as required above.

Provided that the employee complies with the Council's staff sickness absence policy, the employee will receive sick pay when absent from work because of sickness, as follows:

during 1st year of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one month's full pay and (after completing 6 months' service) 2 months' half pay
during 2 nd year of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
during 3 rd year of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
during 4 th & 5 th - year of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay
after 5 years' service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay

Sickness during probation

Whilst it is recognised that there may be some genuine absence during the probationary period, prolonged or frequent absence during a probationary period may result in failure to confirm an employee in post or the termination of the contract prior to the completion of the probationary period.

Sickness during annual leave

An employee who becomes sick during annual leave should obtain a medical certificate. Annual leave

will be suspended from the date of the medical certificate and can be reapplied for when the employee returns to fitness and work. If the sickness is not supported by a medical certificate, the absence will be counted as annual leave.

Absences for reasons other than sickness

Requests for time off for reasons other than sickness will be considered by the Council in the light of the individual's circumstances, legal requirements and operational needs.

Unauthorised absences will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.

Absence due to disability/maternity

Absences relating to the disability of an employee or to pregnancy will be kept separate from sickness absence records. Disability – refer to relevant legislation and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Maternity/paternity/adoption leave – is as set out in the relevant legislation. The Council and employee(s) will refer to relevant legislation.

Whilst on Sickness absence

Whilst on absence due to sickness or incapacity, the employee is not permitted to undertake any paid work for another employer or for any business established by them without express permission from the Council.

Monitoring of Sickness Absence

It is important that the employee and the Council keep in contact during the period of absence. From the employee perspective, it is important that they feel "included" when they are not at work due to sickness, and that the Council cares about their condition and is keen to get them back to work.

From the Council's perspective, it is important, from both a planning and also cost point of view that the Council understands how long they might be without a member of staff and when they might expect them to return. The onus for continued contact remains with each party.

Return to Work

Each time an employee returns to work following a period of sickness absence, the Council should discuss the absence with the employee to determine whether:

- The employee is well enough to return to work, without causing further impact to themselves or the Council,
- The reason for absence is likely to recur. If so, what can be done to mitigate the impact on both the employee and the Council.

When an employee, has been away for an extended period of sickness absence and is nearing the time when they are able to return to work, they should meet with the Council to discuss return to work arrangements. Return to work might need to be on a phased basis, there may be a need to adapt working practices, albeit temporarily, or indeed equipment used may need to be adapted or changed.

Return of the Council's equipment

If the employee is off sick for an extended period of time (e.g. one month or more) the Council may require them to return Council equipment until they are well enough to return to work.

If the employee does not return to work following a period of sickness absence, they will be required to return all outstanding Council equipment on the date of termination of his or her employment.

A more formal review

A more formal review will be triggered by frequent short-term absences or long-term absence. This review should look at any further action required to improve the employee's attendance and wellbeing.

Disciplinary or termination of employment

If the reasons for absence are:

- considered unsatisfactory,
- a cause for concern and/or are affecting the services provided,
- or an employee is in breach of this policy,

the Council may seek to take disciplinary procedures which could lead to the termination of the employee's contract.

This Policy

The Council respects the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness. This policy will be implemented in line with relevant data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

The Council reserves the right to revise the contents of this policy and procedure from time to time or withdraw it at its absolute discretion, in accordance with the needs of the Council.