

## **WOOLFARDISWORTHY PARISH COUNCIL**

### **SICKNESS AND ABSENCE POLICY**

<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>Adopted</b>
	<b>16 May 2023</b>
<b>21 May 2024</b>	<b>21 May 2024</b>

If an employee is unable to attend work for any reason, they must contact the Chair or Vice Chair on the first day of absence and not later than one hour after they would normally start work, giving the reason for absence and it's possible duration.

The employee must maintain weekly contact with the Chair or Vice Chair and keep him / her informed of their progress and the date they expect to return to work.

All periods of absence through sickness must be covered by a sickness self-certification form. The completed form should indicate actual days of sickness, including weekends and / or public holidays.

If an employee is going to be absent from work they should speak to the Chair or Vice Chair within a day of their normal working time / meeting time. They should also give a clear indication of the nature of the illness and a likely return date. The Chair will check with the employee to ascertain if there is any information that the Chair or Vice Chair needs to know about the current workload.

If the employee does not contact the Chair or Vice Chair by the appropriate time, the Chair or Vice Chair must attempt to contact the employee at home. An employee may not always feel able to discuss their medical problems with the Chair or Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair must always be sensitive.

For sickness absence of up to 7 working days, employees should complete a self-certification form and hand / send it to the Chair or Vice Chair.

Thereafter a "Statement of Fitness for Work" is required to cover every subsequent day. If the absence is likely to be protracted, i.e. more than four weeks continuously, there is a shared responsibility for the Chair or Vice Chair and the employee to maintain contact at agreed intervals.

Sick pay will be paid at the discretion of the Parish Council and will not be unreasonably withheld. To qualify for sick pay, employees must have completed 3 months' service with the Parish Council and have complied with the above requirements regarding notification of absence and provision of certificates.

Sick pay will be paid in accordance with your Contract of Employment.

Occupational sick pay is entirely at the discretion of the Council but will not be unreasonably withheld as long as you have complied with the notification requirements and produced necessary medical certificates, including self-certificates.

Maximum entitlement to sick pay is determined according to an employee's length of continuous service in local government, as follows:

During 1<sup>st</sup> year of service 1 month full basic pay and, after completing 4

months of service, 2 months on half pay

During 2<sup>nd</sup> year of service 2 months full basic pay, 2 months half pay

During 3<sup>rd</sup> year of service 4 months full basic pay, 4 months half pay

During 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years of service 5 months full basic pay, 5 months half pay

After 5 years of service 6 months full basic pay, 6 months half pay

This information accords with the terms within an employee's contract.

Where the Parish Council makes full payment in times of illness or injury, this will include entitlement to statutory sick pay (SSP). Where the Parish Council pays half pay, SSP will be added but the total pay will not exceed normal full basic pay. The Parish Council will not normally make payment for more than 6 individual days of absence in any rolling 12 month period.

Employees will forfeit entitlement to Council sick pay if:

1. They fail to comply with notification and certification requirements;
2. They make or produce any misleading or untrue documents concerning their fitness for work;
3. Their incapacity has been caused by participation in sports or other activities unrelated to their work with the Council

### **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 – employees and managers are referred to relevant legislation and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Maternity / paternity / adoption leave – is as set out in the relevant legislation.

### **Long-term and Persistent Absences**

The Parish Council will treat as long-term absence any period of absence through illness that extends over a prolonged period. Long-term absence may also consist of a series of unconnected short-term illnesses. If the Parish Council considered that a period of absence is long-term, the employee will be told and:

1. Will be asked to keep regular contact with the Council at mutually agreed intervals;
2. Will be informed if there is any possible threat to their employment

The Parish Council will regard a series of unconnected short-term illnesses as persistent absence.

Where there are incidents of long-term or persistent absence, it may be appropriate to treat these as an issue of capability or conduct. The Parish Council will then:

1. Investigate the absence through a 'Return to Work' interview and seek to obtain medical reports (in accordance with 2.4 and 2.5 below);
2. Set time limits on the assessment of the employee and inform them of such;
3. With the employee, consider modifications to the job and / or phasing the return to work providing such support as may be appropriate'

4. Consider whether the illness amounts to a disability. If this is proven to be the case, the Council will refer to its Equal Opportunities Policy and will make such reasonable adjustments as are appropriate.

Where the Parish Council requires medical reports relating to an absence, it will either:

1. Request the employee undergoes an independent medical examination with an Occupational Health Service or;
2. Obtain a report from the employee's doctor, subject to the employee's agreement.

Should the employee refuses, they should be made aware that the Council can only reach decisions about an employee's future by considering the information available.

The Parish Council will hold all medical reports and relating information obtained above as private and confidential.

Where the absence is found to be a matter of misconduct, the employee will be subject to the Parish Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

### **Return to Work Interviews**

After any absences due to sickness, the employee shall attend a 'Return to Work' interview with their line manager to:

1. Be sure of their fitness to work;
2. Agree if modifications are needed to facilitate their return to work;
3. Make sure that the required certificates relating to the whole period of absence have been completed / obtained;
4. Discuss any problems that may exist.

### **Monitoring**

The Parish Council will monitor and record levels of absence and reasons for absence. This practice will help the Council to identify unsatisfactory work practices and to distinguish between different types of absence.

All information gathered through absence monitoring under this Policy will be held and treated as confidential.