



## Human Resources

# ATTENDANCE SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



**November-January 2023**

Surrey Heath Borough Council  
Knoll Road, Camberley GU15 3HD  
[human.resources@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:human.resources@surreyheath.gov.uk)



## 1. Introduction

Surrey Heath Borough Council ('Council') believes that employees are its most valuable resource and recognises the important contribution made by regular attendance at work to continue to provide the high level of quality public service to the community.

This policy and procedure provides a framework to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently in relation to sickness absence and, managers at the Council are aware of the most appropriate procedures to provide for the welfare of their staff. Whilst employees should be treated fairly and consistently, every effort should be made to maximise attendance levels and reduce absence.

It is recognised that supporting staff whilst they experience a medical absence is an essential part of the employment experience and that this policy, and those who implement it, carefully need to consider the impact on the individual, their team and on the wider Council to continue to deliver services.

## 2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all employees at the Council and it should be read in conjunction with the following policies (and all other relevant policies will apply):-

- [Leave and Special Leave Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Family Friendly Policy](#)
- [Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#)



- [Capability Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Grievance Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Health and Safety Procedure](#)
- [Flexible Working Policy and Procedure](#)

### 3. Policy Statement

Employees ~~have entered into a legal contract of employment to attend work and provide their services in accordance with their job description are paid to attend work~~ and they are expected to do so unless they have a ~~significant and~~ legitimate reason for their absence. Employees should recognise that any absence, however justified, will inevitably have a financial and operational impact on the Council ~~and on their colleagues~~. ~~Absence due to malingering is a conduct issue which would be considered under either the Capability or Disciplinary Procedures. A continued absence from work that removes or reduces this service despite ongoing support and adjustments, may therefore be referred on to the Capability Policy and Procedure. This referral may happen during the course of the absence. Please refer to the Capability Policy for further information.~~

~~There may be occasions, based on the actual circumstances surrounding absences, when the Council's formal Capability or Disciplinary Procedures need to be invoked.~~ Managers should ensure that all employees are aware that their attendance will be monitored and that all employees are aware of and follow this ~~Attendance Sick~~ [Absence](#) Policy and Procedure.

#### Attendance Standard



The Council considers the following to represent the attendance standard expected. Breaches of the standard (When attendance falls outside standard expected) (or 'trigger point') will result in a formal meeting which will review the reasons for the sickness and the appropriate action that should be taken. Please refer to the procedure section: Formal Meeting, for more information about what happens when a trigger point is reached.

### Trigger Points

The Council considers the following levels of absence to be a cause for concern.

These are referred to as trigger points:

- a total of 8 working days sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period
- 3 or more periods of sickness in a rolling 12 month period
- a pattern of absence that is causing concern.

The trigger points for employees that work less than 5 days per week will be pro rata to the number of days worked. Part time staff will still 'trigger' if they have had the pro rata number of days sickness absence in a 12 month period or they have been absent for 5 periods or more. Please see table below.

<b>Trigger points for parttime staff</b>	
<b>Working Days</b>	<b>Trigger Point</b>
<u>1</u>	<u>21.6 days</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>3.2 days</u>
<u>2.5</u>	<u>4 days</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>54.8 days</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>6.4 days</u>

\* NB To calculate the number of pro rata days, the following sum has been used:

$8 \text{ days (full time trigger point)} / 5 \text{ days (FTE)} = 1.6 \text{ days}^*$

$1.6 \text{ days} \times 2.5 \text{ working days} = 4 \text{ days}$



Managers have the responsibility to monitor and to take immediate action when an employee reaches any of the above trigger points.

## 4. Equality Assessment Policy

The Council's Equality Scheme demonstrates its commitment to equality internally and externally and ensures that all sections of the community are given an opportunity to contribute to the wellbeing of the community. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on this Policy and Procedure.

The Council ensures that consultation is representative of the community and that consideration is given on how to consult hard to reach groups and will positively learn from responses.

## 5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 To ensure fairness and compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, full employee medical reports will only be seen and stored by Human Resources. Extracts from the medical reports highlighting the return to work recommendations, including any reasonable adjustments, will be provided to the appropriate Line Manager.
- 5.2 Information relating to an employee's health is only disclosed to those who have a direct involvement in dealing with the matter and/or are involved in



the Council's sickness absence monitoring process. The Council recognises that some employees may be reluctant to divulge sensitive or personal information and may wish to speak to a member of Human Resources rather than their manager. Medical information is considered to be sensitive personal data and therefore can only be shared with the consent of the individual.

## 6. Principle and Aims

The aims of the policy and procedure are:

- 6.1 To ensure all employees are treated fairly, consistently and sensitively whilst they are unable to attend work ~~during times of illness~~ whilst ensuring that the highest levels of quality and service are maintained to allow the Council to meet the needs and high expectations of its residents
- 6.2 To set a clear performance standard for attendance and ~~ensure all~~ employees understand their responsibilities and follow sickness reporting arrangements and are encouraged to make use of the support mechanisms available to them
- 6.3 To provide managers with a structured framework to assist them in managing attendance sickness absence with the aim of supporting the employee back to work and keeping absence sickness ~~absence~~ levels down. This includes conducting return to work meetings after every period of absence, monitoring an employee's attendance sickness in accordance with the set attendance standard ~~sickness triggers~~ and referring to Occupational Health (OH) where appropriate



- 6.43 To support attendance ~~contain sickness~~ to an agreed level according to the sickness absence triggers. Absences exceeding 45 weeks duration will be viewed as long term, as specified in the Council's Local Best Value Performance Indicator's (BVPI's).
- 6.54 To explore reasons for attendance that does not meet the standard expected sickness absence in order to help prevent the absence recurring, address any wellbeing problems and ensure that appropriate medical assistance and appropriate support is being provided.
- 6.65 To provide payments to employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness where appropriate.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

### 7.1 The Council

The Council is responsible for providing a safe and healthy working environment that enables employees to provide the highest levels of quality and public service. to the community. This includes offering support as appropriate and making reasonable adjustments where necessary to support attendance and productivity at work.

### 7.2 Managers

- 7.2.1 It is the responsibility of all managers to support their employees to maximise their level of fitness for work and to provide a working



environment that is conducive to enabling employees to perform to a high standard.

7.2.2 Managers will implement the Attendance Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure fairly, consistently and supportively ensitively and will take action where attendance levels fall below the required performance standard.

7.2.3 Managers will ~~Without giving medical advice, actively~~ support the employee to ~~attend~~ attend expected levels of attendance. This will require a formal meeting to be held once a trigger point is reached (please refer to the procedure section relating to formal meetings). ~~maximise their level of fitness for work, for example:~~

~~■ Managers will discuss options such as temporarily working from home (i.e. to reduce the spread of infections coughs and colds), part time working, phased return, temporary or permanent reduction in hours/duties/redeployment to help the employee continue to work rather than be absent.~~

~~■ Managers will provide reasonable support with the aim of helping people staff to those with ill health to return to work at full capacity at the earliest opportunity.~~

7.2.4 Managers will also support employees through their return to work reassessing their work regarding reasonable adjustments if applicable.

7.2.5 Managers will conduct return to work meetings after each absence on the employee's first day back at work. A return to work form will be completed in iTrent. If the employee's manager is absent a nominated manager will conduct the meeting instead.





- 7.2.6 Managers will follow the Capability Policy and Procedure where appropriate with the support and advice of the HR Team. Please be aware that the individual may be referred on to the Capability Policy whilst still absent from work.
- 7.2.7 Managers, after consultation with Human Resources, will consider whether an employee may be considered to have a disability under the Equality Act. Where this is the case, for example, adjustments to working practices may be made.
- 7.2.8 Record any period of sickness in iTrent, this can either be completed by the manager or employee. **Managers MUST log an absence end date within iTrent to close off any period of absence once an employee has returned to work.**
- 7.2.9 **Upload any relevant documentation e.g. Statement of Fitness to work certificates into iTrent**

### 7.3 Employees

- 7.3.1 All employees have a responsibility to comply with this Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure. In particular:
- It is the responsibility of every employee to attend work regularly at the expected time and to take appropriate steps to maintain their own health and attendance at work.
  - Employees must report any absence from work in accordance with the Attendance Policy and Procedure. In exceptional circumstances, a family member may do this on an employee's behalf.
  - Attend Occupational Health appointments as required,



- Keep their manager and the organisation fully informed at all times during their sickness absence about the reason for and the likely duration of any absence or medical appointments they are required to attend. In exceptional circumstances it may be agreed with the line manager that a family member can maintain contact on the employee's behalf.
- Provide their manager with any relevant documentation from their GP
- Co-operate with their manager to support their return to work.
- Regularly communication with their manager in accordance with their agreed communication plan.

## 7.4 Human Resources

- 7.4.1 Human Resources will provide guidance and support to both managers and employees with regard to the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure.
- 7.4.2 Human Resources will remind managers and employees of the Healthcare Scheme and Employee Assistance Helpline.
- 7.4.3 Human Resources will ensure that all sickness absence records are treated as confidential and kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information regarding medical conditions is regarded as sensitive data under GDPR and must only be shared on a 'need to know' basis and with the consent of the individual.

## 8. Advice and Support



Staff are encouraged to make their line manager aware of any difficulties they may have in maintaining attendance or performance at work, due to ill health. There are a number of ways in which the Council can support staff. Examples include [\(this is not an exhaustive list\)](#) :

- Occupational Health advice
- Information on flexible working
- Advice on physical adjustments to the workplace where required
- The opportunity to work from home when appropriate
- [Redeployment where possible](#)
- [The Employee Assistance Helpline](#)
- [Signposting to Access to Work or Able Futures and other supportive services](#)

## 9. Special Considerations

### 9.1 Mental Health

Positive mental health is a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community (World Health Organisation)

The Council is committed to promoting positive mental health in the workplace. If [you are an employee is](#) concerned about [your/their](#) own mental health, [they can please](#) speak [to you/with their](#) line manager or to HR to discuss what support would be useful [to you/for them](#). If a manager has any concern about the mental health of one of their employees, or an employee has a concern about a colleague, they should contact HR in order to obtain advice, as recommended by the ACAS guidelines 'Promoting Positive Mental Health at Work'.



Surrey Heath supports mental health through the provision of mental health first aiders who can sign post employees to supportive services. There is an employee assistance programme available for independent support and employees can also use the Able Futures Service provided by the Government. Details of these support resources can be found on the Council intranet.

If mental health is adversely impacted by the work place it is particularly important to bring this to the attendance of the HR Team who can provide additional advice, guidance and support.

## 9.2 Maternity related sickness absences

Section 18 of the Equality Act 2010 provides that unfavourable treatment of a woman at work during the 'protected period' because of an illness suffered by her as a result of pregnancy, constitutes pregnancy discrimination. The 'protected period' is when the pregnancy begins and ends when she returns to work after maternity leave (where applicable). For further information, please contact Human Resources.

## 9.3 Disability related absence

Where an employee is absent from work due to illness which is directly associated with their disability, this will need to be accommodated within the terms of the Equality Act 2010. For further information, please contact Human Resources.

Please be aware that a medical condition may fall under the legal definition of 'disability' as described in the Equality Act (2010) whether or not the individual considers themselves to be experiencing a disability. If you are a



manager supporting a person with a long term or serious medical condition, please always seek the advice and guidance of the HR Team.

## 10. Procedure

### 10.1 First Day of Absence

10.1.1 If an employee is unable to attend work due to illness or injury they are required to personally notify their manager by telephone before their normal time of arrival. If it is not possible for an employee to make contact personally then someone else may do so on their behalf. If an employee cannot contact their manager they can leave a message with a member of Human Resources or a colleague whereupon the manager will call the employee back.

10.1.2 The employee must notify their manager:-

- That they are not coming into work;
- Provide the reason for their absence;
- The likely duration of their absence, and whether or not they intend to contact their doctor;
- Of any urgent work that needs actioning, meetings that may need to be postponed, etc.

10.1.3 The manager will remind the employee of the necessity to telephone again each day until the length of absence has been identified.



10.1.4 If an employee becomes sick during the working day and leaves work before their normal finishing time they must notify their manager or another suitable manager in their absence.

**See Section 13 below. The employee should agree with their manager who will update iTrent as the absence will need to be recorded.**

10.1.5 In the event of an accident at work it is important to ensure that the [accident reporting procedure](#) is followed.

10.1.6 It is important that employees comply with the procedure as set out above; failure to do so may result in their absence being regarded as unauthorised and unpaid.

10.1.7 If an employee fails, without prior agreement, to contact their manager as stated in this procedure, their manager may contact the employee.

## 10.2 More Than Seven Days Absence

10.2.1 If an employee's sickness extends beyond seven days (including weekends) they will require a **'Statement of Fitness to Work'** note from their Doctor or hospital certificate if they are an in-patient. The manager will be responsible for uploading the certificate in iTrent. Please follow the link for detailed instructions <https://intranet.surreyheathonline.gov.uk/hr/itrent>  
**Failure to do so may result in sickness payments being stopped or suspended.**



10.2.2 If an employee submits false information regarding their sickness it may be treated as gross misconduct and may result in their dismissal from the Council.

### 10.3 If an individual has reached a 'trigger point'

10.3.1 A formal meeting with the individual and their line manager will be held at this point. The meeting will be held to:

- Investigate the detail of the reason(s) for absence and the impact on the service and colleagues plus determine any measures to support the employee and maximise the employee's fitness for work. This can be held as part of the return to work interview or separately as appropriate.
  
- Consider whether a referral to Occupational Health would be appropriate to obtain advice on an underlying medical condition and to ascertain:
  - whether any reasonable adjustments are required to support the employee to maintain their attendance at work
  - what would be an appropriate performance target/trigger point for the employee (For guidance, this is usually but not always, a medical condition covered by the Equality Act 2010.)
  
- Consider putting in place an Action Plan (in writing to the employee) which may include the following:



- Remind the employee of Surrey Heath Borough Council's performance standard for absence
- Set an attendance target. This would normally be no more than 2 days sickness absence for the next three months (pro rata for employees who do not work 5 days per week).
- Provide advice and support
- Possible outcome if the target is not met and refer to the capability process if required
- Monitoring arrangements and the timescale for review
- The likely action that may follow if the level or pattern of absence continues to give cause for concern.

■ Discuss whether reasonable adjustments could support attendance, options such as temporarily working from home (i.e. to reduce the spread of infections ), part time working, phased return, temporary or permanent reduction in hours/duties/redeployment to help the employee continue to work rather than be absent.

■ Signpost the employee to services that may help (for example the Employee Assistance Programme)

Detailed notes of the meeting will be taken by the line manager and stored by HR securely on the personal file. There is no requirement for the individual to be represented at the meeting, however if appropriate, HR may agree that the individual can be supported by a colleague. In this instance, an HR colleague will also attend to take notes.





Please discuss with HR if the actions outlined in section 10.3 do not seem appropriate

## 11. Continuing Absence

- 11.1 When absent from work due to sickness, the employee should agree a communications plan with their line manager which includes frequency and method of contact. They will continue to make themselves available/contactable via their agreed method phone or email (work or personal), for absence monitoring purposes, at all times during the working day, as they would if they were at work. Human Resources will discuss the preferred method of contact with the employee. Managers will keep regular contact with the employee to check on their wellbeing, seek information about the intended return to work, arrange Occupational Health appointments etc. Managers may also contact the employee to ask business critical questions. Managers cannot ask an employee to undertake any work whilst they are absent from work due to sickness. An example of why the manager would contact the employee could be to arrange an Occupational Health appointment. If the employee is not available to respond within a reasonable period of time (24 hours), they must notify their manager of the reasons why. The failure to comply with this may be a conduct issue and



could be considered under the Capability Policy and Procedure or the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (depending on the circumstances).

- 11.2 Employees must submit a 'Statement of Fitness to Work' note as often as is necessary to authorise their absence from work. All 'Statement of Fitness to Work' notes must be continuous, i.e., when one 'Statement of Fitness to Work' note expires the next 'Statement of Fitness to Work' note must follow on from the very next day.

**Failure to comply with the procedure may result in the employee's absence being regarded as unauthorised and therefore unpaid.**

- 11.3 The Council may at any time, whether during or after a period of absence through illness, require an employee who has been unable to perform their duties as a consequence of illness to submit to an examination by the Council's independent Occupational Health ~~Advisor~~ Doctor. Any expenses incurred in connection with such an examination will be met by the Council. The Council will require at least 24 hours' notice if an employee is going to cancel their occupational health appointment. ~~However, f~~ailure to attend a rearranged occupational health appointment could be a conduct issue (depending on the circumstances).

- 11.4 Employees are required to continue to follow the sickness absence procedure and inform their manager of their expected return to work date. It is important to give as much notice as possible.

- 11.5 **Employees must not return to work while their absence is still covered by a 'Statement of Fitness to Work' note without prior discussions with HR and line manager.** HR may need to seek further advice and guidance from Occupational Health.



## 12. Return to work

12.1 When an employee returns to work following any period of absence a return to work meeting will be carried out by the employee's line manager.

12.2 Return to work meetings are a key factor in reducing absence rates and improving communication between managers and employees. The manager will hold a return to work meeting in private with the employee on their first day back at work. The return to work meeting will be recorded electronically within iTrent on a Return to Work Form.

**Please note the Return to Work Form must be completed in iTrent even when a 'statement of fitness to work' note has been provided.**

12.3 The purpose of the return to work meeting is to: ensure the employee is fit to return to work, examine the reasons, pattern and nature of the absence with a view to determining whether an Occupational Health appointment is required to establish whether there is an underlying medical condition or other issues contributing to the level of absence, identify ways to support the employee to operate at full capacity, set targets for attendance and explain the consequences of those targets not being met.

12.3.1 The meeting will include the following, as appropriate:

- the levels and pattern of attendance.
- the underlying causes of the absence
- whether the employee is well enough to return to work, i.e. have they returned too early
- the likelihood of a recurrence of the illness, if known.



- what absence monitoring, in the form of return to work discussions, have taken place previously.
- suggestions from the employee on managing and improving the situation.
- whether medical advice from their GP/Consultant has been sought
- whether management action or other support is needed e.g. referral to Occupational Health
- Support measures: Employee Assistance Helpline, training or development opportunities, workplace equipment, flexible working arrangements, working from home, temporary or permanent reduction in hours/duties or other reasonable adjustments, stress risk assessment or work station assessment.
- The impact on the service of this employee's level of fitness for work

12.3.2 Where appropriate, a phased return to work may be advised by Occupational Health. The manager, in consultation with Human Resources, will agree with the employee how the phased return can be arranged which is both supportive and ensures the service needs are adhered to.

12.3.3 Occupational Health may identify that the employee is unfit to perform the full duties of their role and instead that they could be temporarily redeployed to alternative duties. Any temporary redeployment will be discussed and agreed with the employee and the manager. However, if temporary redeployment is not feasible, then the employee may be required to remain on sick leave until they are fit to return to their normal duties.

12.3.4 If Occupational Health advises that the employee is permanently incapable of performing their current duties, Human Resources will review other options available for the employee.

12.4 To ensure fairness and compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, full employee medical reports will only be seen and stored by Human



Resources. Extracts from the medical reports highlighting the return to work recommendations, including any reasonable adjustments, will be provided to the appropriate Line Manager.

## 13. Long term sickness

13.1 Long term sickness is generally defined as a continuous period of absence lasting at least 4 weeks/ 28 calendar days.

13.2 Where an employee is absent through long term sickness, there is a shared responsibility for the employee and the line manager to keep in regular contact with one another.

13.3 If an employee is off on long term sickness, the manager will review and monitor the situation with the employee on a regular 2-week basis and decide, at each review, what is the appropriate next step.

### 13.4 Review Meeting

#### During each review the manager will;

- Agree with the employee the most appropriate way to stay in contact given the anticipated length of sickness and the individual circumstances of the case e.g. by email, by telephone or through home visits. (Home visits should only be undertaken with the employee's prior consent).
- Set the next review date for 2 weeks' time unless the situation requires a meeting at an earlier date i.e., at the expiry of the next fit note, following an operation etc.



- On each occasion the manager and employee should agree the date and form of their next contact. The line manager is advised to keep a record of all contacts made with the employee. Advice on how to maintain contact with the employee can be obtained from HR/Occupational Health; and in cases where an employee is off work with stress related illness, this guidance should always be sought.
- The employee is required to keep their line manager informed of their ongoing medical condition. This will help inform discussions about reasonable adjustments that might enable the employee to return to work as soon as possible. The employee should also inform the manager when they anticipate returning to work.

13.4.1 Following each review meeting the manager should agree one of the following actions with the employee:

- No further action at this point (e.g. in cases such as an operation where a return to work date is clear)
- No action at this point and a further review date set (e.g. where treatment is ongoing and prognosis is unclear)
- Referral to Occupational Health for advice on prognosis
- Set a target date to return to work. This may be as advised by Occupational Health. If this target is not met, it may be appropriate for the HR to conduct a further review meeting. If appropriate, the Capability Procedure will be applied.

### 13.5 Preparing to Return to Work after Long Term Absence



Returning to work following long term absence will require active support. The detail of this support will depend on individual circumstances and will be clarified with the employee prior to their return.

Possible discussion/action prior to return:

- In certain circumstances, an Occupational Health referral will need to be undertaken in advance of the employee returning to work in order for any adjustment to be in place on the employee's first working day, including whether the employee should return on a phased return. (An Occupational Health referral may not be necessary if a detailed Fit Note has been provided by the GP.)
- Options for support might include a mutually agreed and recorded phased return to work plan, temporary redeployment or permanent redeployment.
- Update the employee on key developments during their absence.
- Review risk assessments and make any changes that are recommended.
- Offer appropriate support, where needed, to facilitate the employee's smooth return to work: the Employee Assistance Helpline, training or development opportunities, workplace equipment, flexible working arrangements, or other reasonable adjustments.

## 13.6 Inability to Return to Work

### 13.6.1 Permanently incapable for work

Occupational Health may issue advice that recommends that an employee be retired on the grounds of ill health. This would be where the medical practitioner has established that the employee:



- Is permanently incapable of discharging efficiently the duties of his/her employment because of ill health or infirmity of mind or body and is not immediately capable of undertaking any gainful employment

AND

- IS LIKELY to be capable of undertaking gainful employment within the next three years (or before his/her normal pension age, if earlier). (TIER 3)

OR

- IS UNLIKELY to be capable of undertaking any gainful employment within the next three years but IS LIKELY to be capable of undertaking gainful employment at some time thereafter and before his/her normal retirement age, if earlier). (TIER 2)

OR

- IS UNLIKELY to be capable of undertaking gainful employment before his/her normal pension age. (TIER 1).

13.6.2 Occupational Health would arrange for a certificate confirming the above to be provided by a registered medical practitioner who has not previously been involved in the case. The medical practitioner would also provide an opinion as to which of the of ill-health pension benefits the Council should award. This will be discussed in detail with the employee by the Head of Service and HR and will be linked to the pension regulations applicable at that time.

13.6.3 In these circumstances managers are required to follow the procedures for holding a meeting under stage four of the Capability Procedure (dismissal). The manager must notify the employee that Occupational Health have advised that the employee may be retired on grounds of ill health and invite them to attend a meeting under the Capability Procedure (dismissal). The notification must ensure that the employee is clear about the purpose of the meeting and the issues to be addressed; including the fact that termination of employment for reasons of ill health is to be considered at that meeting. As part of this process, the ~~Executive of the Council~~ Chief Executive will be informed of the termination of employment for reasons of ill health.





13.6.4 Managers are advised to seek guidance from HR when a 'permanently incapable for work' report is received.

#### 13.6.5 Appeals

As with any decision to terminate employment, an employee has the right of appeal against the decision to terminate his/her employment on the grounds of ill health. The employee should write to their Head of Service within 10 working days of the receipt of the letter notifying them that their employment will be terminated on the grounds of ill health. Since appeals are part of the formal procedure, the appeal will be dealt with under the procedure for appeals set out in the Capability policy.

## 14. Sickness during the Working Day

14.1 If an employee becomes sick or injured during the working day and has to leave work before their normal finishing time they must:

- ensure that a suitable manager is informed before they leave;
- if there is a work related injury that it is logged in the [Accident Book](#);
- ensure that their absence, even if it is only for half a day (half a day is before 13:00), is recorded in iTrent and a return to work form completed when the employee returns to work.

## 15. ~~Trigger Points~~



15.1 The Council considers the following levels of absence to be a cause for concern. These are referred to as trigger points;

a total of 8 working days sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period

3 or more periods of sickness in a rolling 12 month period

a pattern of absence that is causing concern.

The trigger points for employees that work less than 5 days per week will be pro rata to the number of days worked. Part time staff will still 'trigger' if they have had the pro rata number of days sickness absence in a 12 month period or they have been absent for 5 periods or more. Please see table below.

Trigger points for parttime staff	
Working Days	Trigger Point
1	1.5 days
2	3 days
2.5	4 days
3	5 days
4	6.5 days

Managers have the responsibility to monitor and to take immediate action when an employee reaches any of the above trigger points.

15.2 Options to be considered will involve:

- a) A formal meeting to be convened
- b) Further monitoring of the situation
- c) Referral to the Council's Occupational Health
- d) Consideration of redeployment



- e) ~~Change in the requirements for the provision of 'Statement of Fitness to Work' note~~
- f) ~~Additional home visits where appropriate~~
- g) ~~Implementation of either the Capability Policy and Procedure or the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. In certain cases the Council will have the right to hold a capability meeting whilst the employee is off sick.~~

~~**NB This list is not exhaustive**~~

## 16. Sickness Payments

The following will apply:

- Payment of salary will not be made in cases where an injury has occurred as a direct result of active participation in sport undertaken as a professional.
- Payment of salary may not be made where absence through persistent sporting injuries occur.
- Payment of salary will not be made where injury occurs as a result of participation in high risk/extreme sports. A list of these sports can be found [here](#). Employees are advised to consider purchasing independent insurance to cover potential loss of earnings when participating in these high risk/extreme sports.
- Payment of salary will not be made where surgery and subsequent recovery is not required for genuine medical reasons. However, if complications were to arise following the treatment and the normal recovery time is not achievable as a result, sick pay would then apply.
- Payment of salary will not be made where an absence arises from, or is



attributable to, the staff member's own misconduct, unless the Council decides otherwise.

- Payment of salary may be extended in exceptional circumstances, subject to the consideration and approval of the Head of Paid Service.
- Employees who are absent as the result of an accident will not be entitled to pay if damages are recovered from a third party in respect of such an accident. In this event the Council may, having looked at the circumstances of the case, provide the employee with an advance not exceeding the sick pay provided under these Conditions, subject to the employee undertaking to refund to the Council the total amount of such allowances or the proportion thereof represented in the amount of damages recovered.
- Where full reimbursement occurs from a 3rd party, payment of salary will be extended accordingly.
- If an employee fails to observe these Conditions, the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure or prejudices their recovery, the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure may be invoked and payment of salary may be withheld.
- Where the Council can exercise discretion, this will be undertaken by the line manager or Human Resources and, where necessary, the decision will be provided in writing. If an employee does not agree with the decision made they may pursue this through the Council's Grievance Procedure.

## 17. Scale of allowances

- 17.1 Subject to the provisions of these conditions, an employee absent from duty owing to ~~illness (which term is deemed to include injury or other disability)~~ a medical condition shall be entitled to receive an allowance in accordance with



the following scale:

Length of Service	Sick Pay
During probationary period (6 months) for employees without Local Government Continuous Service	Statutory Sick Pay if applicable
Up to 1 <sup>st</sup> year of service	1 months full pay and 1 months half pay
Up to 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
Up to 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of service	3 months full pay and 3 months half pay
Up to 4 <sup>th</sup> year of service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
Up to 5 <sup>th</sup> year of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 years' service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

17.2 For the purpose of sick pay entitlement records a week is equivalent to 5 working days.

The entitlement to sick pay is calculated over a 'rolling' ~~twelve~~ month ~~twelve-month~~ period. On day one of each new sickness absence period, the number of days of sickness absence an employee has taken over



the previous 12 months will be calculated and deducted from their current sick pay entitlement. The sick pay entitlement in place at day one of the current period of sickness absence will remain unchanged until they return to work.

The amount of sick pay already received by an employee over the previous 12 months will be offset from an employee's overall entitlement, until staff have completed 12 months without sickness absence, only then will their entitlement reach the maximum available again.

## 18. General Information

### 18.1 Medical Appointments

18.1.1 Where possible employees are asked to make routine medical appointments at the beginning or end of the day to minimise the impact on service delivery. However it is recognised that this is not always possible and every effort will be made to allow employees to attend medical appointments in work time when necessary. Staff will be required to take annual leave, flexi, unpaid leave or make up the time when attending medical appointments. This provision will not apply to those donating blood locally (up to an hour travel time included). For antenatal appointments please refer to the [Family Friendly Policy](#)

18.1.2 The exception to this are appointments for day surgery or that will involve a medical procedure that will leave the employee too unwell to return to work, in which case this may be taken as sick leave.

18.1.3 Any employee undergoing fertility treatment has the right to time off for the purpose of undergoing the treatment. Employees should provide written confirmation of these appointments to their line manager. Time off for appointments should be taken as annual leave but if the employee is off sick



due to the treatment then the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure applies.

18.1.4 Employees should discuss with Human Resources and their manager any cosmetic/elective procedures and surgery prior to commencement to determine the most appropriate form of absence.

## 18.2 Annual Leave and Sickness

18.2.1 If an employee becomes ill whilst on annual leave it may be appropriate for them to redesignate their annual leave as sick leave. In such circumstances the employee must inform their line manager on their first day of sickness as per policy point 10.1.1, provide a 'Statement of Fitness to Work' note if ~~relevant~~ relevant for the period concerned and comply with the absence reporting procedures. The Council will pay a maximum of £25 upon receiving a receipt for the cost of a statement.

18.2.2 Where employees are on long term sick leave, they may request to take their annual leave during this period. However, employees are not expected to go on holiday when absent due to sickness unless this is supported by their GP and would aid the employees recovery. If an employee's sick pay has reduced to half or no pay and the employee wishes to use annual leave to continue to receive payment, this needs to be authorised by their line manager or HR.

## 18.3 Other work and Sickness

Whilst an employee is on sick leave they must not undertake any other work (either for themselves, another person or an organisation) or engage in any other activity which their illness would normally prevent as this could delay recovery and result in additional time of work.



## 18.4 Medical Suspension

18.4.1 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to medically suspend an employee. This would occur in the following scenarios:

- Where the employee and their GP consider that the employee is fit to be at work or return to work the Council may, on occasions, need further clarification/endorsement from our Occupational Health provider before allowing the employee to be at work

and/or

- if the GP recommends any adjustments which, after careful consideration, the manager can not accommodate, the employee will remain off sick until further clarification can be obtained from Occupational Health.

18.4.2 Medical suspension will be on contractual pay and does not impact on sick pay.

18.4.3 Review of medical suspension should take place once the required medical information is received by Occupational Health. If this information indicates that the employee should be on sick leave or remain on sick leave, sick pay will be applied from that date that Occupational Health indicates is appropriate. This means for example, that sick pay may be applied retrospectively to be to the date the suspension began or the date of the occupational health assessment, as indicated by Occupational Health.

18.4.4 The decision to medically suspend an employee will be taken by the Head of Service (or their representative) in consultation with HR.

