

LANDFORD PARISH COUNCIL STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

TITLE	Sickness Absence Management Procedure
NUMBER	HR 4
DATE EFFECTIVE	25 March 2019
DATE LAST REVISED	June 2024
DATE OF MEETING	10 th July 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

Landford Parish Council (“the Council”) recognises the importance of a positive approach in the management of sickness absence. Having a procedure gives the Council and its employees a structured framework to work within and assists in ensuring fair and consistent treatment of employees. The purpose of the policy is to:

- Ensure employees are aware of their rights and obligations under this procedure and understand the recording and monitoring the Council may use in regard to sickness absence management;
- Provide the Council with a structured framework to assist them in managing sickness absence;
- Ensure employees are treated with fairness and consistency;
- Create an opportunity for positive action to be taken to improve the welfare of employees by assisting them to overcome any difficulties that may affect their ability to work effectively.

2. NOTIFICATION OF SICKNESS ABSENCE PROCEDURE

2.1 Day 1

An employee who is prevented by illness from attending work should contact his/her line manager/Chair of the Council by telephone as early as possible on the first day of absence (normally within one hour before the employee’s normal starting time) to explain they are unwell and to give an estimate of the probable duration of absence. This will allow the line manager/Chair to plan any work schedule and review the need for any temporary cover. In most circumstances, it is expected that the employee would contact his/her line manager/Chair personally rather than pass the information through a third party, although it is recognised there may be occasions when the employee, because of the nature of his/her illness, is unable to do so.

The line manager/Chair must record all periods of sickness absence i.e. when the employee is off sick and the Chair, HR Group will create a file note in the employee's Personnel file and inform the Lead Councillor of the Finance Group of the duration of the absence.

2.2 Absences of Four to Seven Days (Self Certified Leave)

For a period of absence which lasts 4 to 7 days, including non-working days (e.g. Saturdays/Sundays and rest days), an employee's statement of sickness form (SC2) i.e. "self-certificate" must be completed by the employee to show the reason for his/her sickness absence. It is the employee's responsibility to obtain, complete and submit this form to the line manager/Chair, who should promptly forward it to the Lead Councillor of the Finance Group. These forms are available from General Practitioners' surgeries, from Hospital Outpatients and from DWP offices or by visiting:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-sick-pay-employees-statement-of-sickness-sc2>.

Where an employee normally works for less than 5 days per week the employee's statement of sickness form (SC2) must be submitted where the period of sickness including non-working days amounts to 4 or more days. Employees who have no entitlement to statutory sick pay must submit the form as evidence of the cause of the absence.

2.3 Absences of more than Seven Days

For a period of sickness absence which continues beyond 7 days in total, an employee will be required to submit form SC2 and a Med 3 form (Statement of Fitness to Work) from his/her General Practitioner. If the sickness absence continues beyond the initial period specified on the Med 3 form, the employee must provide further Med 3 forms to cover all further periods of sickness absence until he/she returns to work. These should be submitted before the expiry date on the current Med 3 form.

3. RETURN TO WORK

3.1 Return to Work Certification

On the first day of an employee's return to work, the employee should call his/her line manager/Chair to confirm their return. Where an employee has been on sickness absence for a continuous period of four weeks or more, or has sustained a physical injury, he/she should be given a signed 'or until' date by their GP on the Med 3 form before they report back for work. This acts as their 'fit to return to work' date. This may be given on the initial Med 3 form but if not, a further Med 3 form with this information must be obtained.

If given at short notice, employees should contact their line manager/Chair before they return to work to confirm their 'fit to return to work' date. This will allow a review of work schedules and any temporary cover arrangements. An employee will not be allowed to return to work before the 'fit to return to work' date unless it is with the written consent of their Medical Adviser.

4. ENTITLEMENT TO PAY DURING SICK LEAVE

Providing employees have followed the correct reporting procedures, they are entitled to receive statutory sick pay (SSP) for up to 28 weeks. Periods of sickness that start more than 8 weeks after a previous one are not linked, and employees will be entitled to another 28 weeks SSP. Entitlement to payment is subject to notification of absence and production of medical certificates as required. For the purpose of calculating entitlement to SSP, "qualifying days" are those on which the employee is normally required to work. Payments made to the employee under its sick pay provisions in satisfaction of any other contractual entitlement will go towards discharging the Council's liability to make payment to the employee under the SSP scheme.

5. NOTIFICATION OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

5.1 Uncertified Sickness Absence

From initial notification of sickness absence, where the required medical certificates have not been received, the Council reserves the right not to make any payments for this period until the appropriate certificates have been received. Once the appropriate certificates have been received, the Council reserves the right not to pay backdated occupational sick pay but will pay any statutory sick pay due.

5.2 No Notification of Absence

Sickness absence that has not been notified in accordance with Council procedures will be treated as unauthorised and unpaid absence.

6. ANNUAL LEAVE

6.1 Holiday Accrual During Sickness Absence

While an employee is on paid sickness absence, holiday will accrue at the usual rate as detailed in his/her contract of employment. When an employee is on unpaid sickness absence, holiday entitlement will no longer accrue (this is subject to the minimum requirements as stated in the Working Time Regulations). An employee is entitled to request to take annual leave while on sick leave. This request must be made in writing.

6.2 Sickness Absence Occurring during Annual Leave

In the event of the employee falling sick during his/her annual leave, he/she will be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of the medical certificate and further annual leave will be suspended from that date, unless a request has been approved under clause 6.1.

6.3 Leave Untaken at End of Leave Year

Any annual leave left untaken when an employee is on sickness absence at the end of the annual leave year (31 March), can be carried forward, but the entitlement would not exceed 29 days (contractual annual leave entitlement).