

Clerk: Mrs Sarah Rimell

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Absence Management Policy

Introduction

Illogan Parish Council is committed to providing effective, high-quality services and recognises that this depends on the regular attendance and wellbeing of its employees. The Council aims to create a safe, supportive working environment and expects employees to take reasonable care of their own health and attend work when fit to do so.

The Council recognises that genuine ill-health may periodically prevent attendance. All sickness absence will therefore be managed in a fair, sensitive and consistent manner, while balancing individual needs with the Council's responsibility for effective use of public resources. The approach set out in this policy aligns with ACAS principles of early intervention, consistency, clarity and support.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that the Council:

- Provides appropriate support to employees affected by ill-health.
- Encourages attendance through early and constructive management.
- Sets out clear roles, responsibilities and procedures.
- Monitors absence levels consistently.
- Takes proportionate action to address frequent short-term or long-term absence where support has not led to improvement.

Responsibilities

Employees

Employees are responsible for:

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- Attending work regularly.
- Reporting sickness absence promptly and in line with this policy.
- Maintaining appropriate contact during periods of sickness absence.
- Providing certification as required.
- Accurately recording periods of absence.

Management

- The Clerk is responsible for recording, monitoring and managing employee absence on a day-to-day basis.
- The Staffing Committee is responsible for managing the Clerk's sickness absence and has overall oversight of absence management.
- Managers must apply this policy fairly, consistently and with due sensitivity.

Reporting Sickness Absence

Employees who are unable to attend work due to illness or injury must:

- Telephone their line manager as soon as possible, and no later than 9:30am on the first day of absence (or before their normal start time where practicable).
- Provide details of:
 - The nature of the illness or injury.
 - The date the illness or injury began.
 - The likely duration of absence.
 - Any urgent work commitments requiring cover.

If unable to make contact personally, employees must arrange for someone else to do so on their behalf. Regular contact must be maintained for absences lasting more than one day.

Failure to follow reporting procedures may result in the absence being treated as unauthorised and could lead to loss of pay or disciplinary action.

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Minute Number: GR26/04/8.2

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Certification

Up to 7 Days

Absences of up to seven calendar days (including weekends) require completion of a self-certification form on return to work.

Over 7 Days

Absences exceeding seven calendar days must be covered by a valid medical fit note. Employees must ensure continuous certification where absence continues.

Where a fit note states the employee "*may be fit for work*", the manager will discuss possible adjustments or support. Where reasonable adjustments cannot be implemented, the employee will remain on sick leave and the situation will be reviewed.

Return-to-Work Meetings

Return-to-work meetings are a key part of effective absence management and will take place after:

- Any absence lasting more than three working days; or
- Any absence occurring during an absence monitoring period.

The meeting will normally take place on the first day back and will:

- Confirm the employee is fit to return to work.
- Identify any support, adjustments or welfare issues.
- Update the employee on work-related matters.
- Complete the return-to-work documentation.

Meetings may be held in person or remotely where appropriate.

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Short-Term Frequent Absence

Absence Triggers

A formal review will normally take place where, in any rolling 12-month period, an employee has:

- Four episodes of sickness absence; or
- A total of 10 working days' sickness absence (pro-rata for part-time employees).

Review Stages

The Council uses a staged, supportive approach:

- **Stage 1:** Absence review meeting and 6-month monitoring period.
- **Stage 2:** Further review, formal warning and additional 6-month monitoring period.
- **Stage 3:** Final review which may lead to an Attendance Hearing.

Employees have the right to be accompanied at all formal absence review meetings.

Long-Term Absence

Long-term absence will be managed sympathetically, with regular contact and review meetings. Employees absent for four weeks or more may be referred to Occupational Health.

Where a return to work is not foreseeable within a reasonable timescale, a Final Absence Review Meeting may lead to an Attendance Hearing.

Occupational Health and Reasonable Adjustments

The Council may refer employees to Occupational Health to:

- Support a safe and sustainable return to work.

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- Identify reasonable adjustments.
- Provide medical advice where attendance is affected by a health condition or disability.

Recommendations will be discussed with the employee and considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Personal, Domestic or Work-Related Issues

Where absence is linked to personal, domestic or work-related difficulties, managers will offer a confidential and supportive discussion. Options may include special leave, temporary adjustments to working arrangements or referral to external support services.

Alcohol or Drug-Related Absence

Employees will be encouraged to seek help voluntarily. Time off for approved treatment will normally be treated as sick leave. Failure to engage with support or continued unacceptable behaviour may be managed under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Termination of Employment

Termination may be considered where:

- An employee is permanently unfit for work.
- No suitable alternative role or reasonable adjustment can be identified.
- Attendance levels cannot be reasonably sustained after support and monitoring.
- There is deliberate abuse of sickness absence provisions.

Any dismissal will follow a fair Attendance Hearing with the right to representation and appeal.

Records, Confidentiality and Monitoring

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All sickness absence records will be maintained securely and confidentially in line with data protection legislation. Employees have the right to access their records.

Absence data will be monitored to identify trends, ensure consistency and enable early support.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governance Review Committee or earlier where required.

Reviewed – for Office use only

Review Date:

Reviewed By:.

Amendments:

Minute Number:

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Appendix 1 – Return-to-Work Discussion Record (Template)

- Employee name:
- Job title:
- Date of meeting:
- Dates of absence:
- Reason for absence (brief):
- Fit note/self-certificate provided:
- Is the employee fit to return to duties?
- Any support or adjustments required:
- Actions agreed and review date:

Signed Employee:

Date:

Signed Manager:

Date:

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Appendix 2 – Managing Short-Term Absence (Summary Flow)

1. Absence reaches trigger → Stage 1 Review
2. Improvement sustained → No further action
3. Trigger reached again → Stage 2 Review
4. No improvement → Stage 3 Review
5. Continued absence → Attendance Hearing (may result in dismissal)

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Appendix 3 – Staff-Friendly Summary

What this policy means for you

- If you are unwell, report your absence as early as possible by phone.
- Keep in touch with your manager while you are off sick.
- Provide self-certification or fit notes when required.
- You will normally have a short, supportive return-to-work chat after sickness absence.
- If sickness becomes frequent, your manager will meet with you to understand what support may help.
- The Council's aim is to help you stay well and at work where possible.
- Formal action is only considered where support and monitoring do not lead to improvement.

If you are ever unsure about absence reporting or need support, speak to your manager or the Clerk.