



# Barrowby Parish Council

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## Sickness Absence Policy

### Document control

- **Owner:** Staffing Committee
- **Responsible officer:** Clerk / Proper Officer
- **Adopted:** 11.05.2026 (Minute ref: 8e [26/008])
- **Version:** 2026.1
- **Review:** Annually or earlier if legislation/guidance changes
- **Next review due:** January-March 2027 at Staffing for formal adoption at Parish Council May 2027

### 1. Status and scope

**1.1** This Sickness Absence Policy sets out how the Council manages sickness absence and supports employees to return to work.

**1.2** This policy is non-contractual and may be updated or amended by the Council at its discretion. Contractual entitlement to sick pay is set out in employees' contracts of employment.

**1.3** This policy applies to all employees of the Council.

### 2. Aims and principles

The Council aims to:

- support employees who are unwell, including mental health and long-term conditions;
- manage absence fairly, consistently and sensitively;
- minimise disruption to Council services; and
- meet legal responsibilities including health and safety, equality and data protection.

Employees are expected to:

- report absence promptly and correctly;
- keep in touch during absence;
- provide required evidence (self-certification / fit notes); and
- engage with return-to-work and review processes.

### 3. Reporting sickness absence

#### 3.1 Who to notify

If you are unable to attend work due to sickness or injury, you must telephone your **designated reporting manager** (normally the Chair of the Staffing Committee or nominee) by your usual start time on each day of absence, stating:

- that you are unfit for work;
- a general reason (e.g., migraine, stomach upset, musculoskeletal pain); and
- (if known) an expected return date or next update.

For longer absences, once contact arrangements are agreed, daily calls will not be required provided the employee follows the agreed update schedule.

If you are unable to notify personally due to the nature of the illness, someone else may make contact on your behalf. It remains your responsibility to ensure the Council is notified.

Failure to follow the reporting procedure may result in occupational sick pay not being paid and may result in disciplinary action.

### **3.2 Contact arrangements and keeping in touch**

For absences of up to 7 calendar days, daily contact is expected unless agreed otherwise.

For absences of 8+ calendar days, the designated reporting manager (or nominee) will agree a reasonable "keep in touch" schedule (normally weekly unless a different arrangement is more appropriate).

## **4. Evidence of sickness absence**

### **4.1 Self-certification (up to 7 calendar days)**

A self-certification system operates for absences not exceeding 7 calendar days (including weekends and non-working days). Immediately on your return you must complete and return a self-certification form.

### **4.2 Fit notes (8+ calendar days)**

For absence exceeding 7 calendar days (including weekends and non-working days), you must provide a fit note from your doctor or consultant.

If your absence is ongoing, you are expected to post your fit note upon receipt or alternatively send a photograph of both sides of the fit note, with the original to follow.

### **4.3 "May be fit for work"**

If a fit note suggests you "may be fit for work" with adjustments (e.g., phased return, amended duties, altered hours), the Council will discuss this with you and implement reasonable measures where practicable.

### **4.4 Medical reports and occupational health**

Where appropriate (for example, repeated short-term absence, long-term absence, or concerns about fitness for work and/or workplace adjustments), the Council may request a medical report from the employee's GP/specialist and/or an occupational health assessment. Any request will be reasonable, necessary and proportionate. The Council will request only information needed to manage absence, consider support and adjustments, and determine fitness for work.

The Council will not seek access to an employee's full medical records. Where a report is requested from a doctor, this will be done with the employee's written consent and in accordance with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 (where applicable).

Health information will be kept confidential, stored securely, and access limited to those who need it for legitimate management purposes.

## **5. Recording absence**

All sickness or injury absence will be recorded on your employment record. The Council maintains accurate absence records to ensure consistent management and to meet statutory and audit requirements.

## **6. Sick pay**

### **6.1 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)**

SSP will be paid where the employee meets eligibility criteria, in accordance with legislation.

### **6.2 Occupational/contractual sick pay**

Sickness absence is paid in line with the Council's contractual sick/injury pay scheme (inclusive of SSP) which provides payment during periods of certificated sickness as follows:

- **During 1st year of service:** 1 month full pay, and (after 4 months' service) 2 months half pay
- **During 2nd year of service:** 2 months full pay, 2 months half pay
- **During 3rd year of service:** 4 months full pay, 4 months half pay
- **During 4th & 5th year:** 5 months full pay, 5 months half pay

- **After 5 years' service:** 6 months full pay, 6 months half pay

Occupational sick pay includes any SSP due and is subject to normal deductions (PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions etc.).

### **6.3 Withholding sick pay**

Where reporting requirements or evidence requirements are not met without good reason, the Council may treat the absence as unauthorised and/or withhold occupational sick pay.

## **7. Infectious illness**

The Council recognises that some illnesses can be contagious. Employees should not attend work if they are unwell and likely to transmit infection.

Where an employee feels well enough to work but there is a transmission risk, the Council may consider (where duties allow):

- temporary home working;
- temporary alternative duties; or
- other reasonable measures.

## **8. Medical appointments**

### **8.1 Appointments:**

Staff are required to make GP and dentist appointments outside normal working hours wherever possible.

### **8.2 Hospital or specialist appointments**

Staff attending hospital or specialist appointments are required to show an appointment card or letter to the **designated manager/officer** prior to attending the appointment (or as soon as reasonably practicable).

### **8.3 Time off for medical appointments**

Time off for medical appointments will be managed reasonably, taking account of service needs and the nature of the appointment. The Council recognises that some appointments (including specialist, urgent, disability-related or pregnancy-related appointments) may only be available during working hours.

### **8.4 Emergency department / urgent care attendance:**

Where an employee attends an emergency department (A&E) or urgent treatment center during working time and this results in time away from work, the employee must provide evidence of attendance where reasonably practicable (for example, an attendance/discharge letter, appointment text/email, or other confirmation). If written confirmation is not provided on the day, it should be supplied as soon as it becomes available.

## **9. Return to work and support**

### **9.1 Return-to-work discussion**

A return-to-work discussion will normally take place after any sickness absence to:

- welcome you back and confirm you are fit to return;
- check whether any support or adjustments are needed;
- identify any work-related factors; and
- update absence records.

### **9.2 Adjustments and phased return**

Where appropriate (including for long-term conditions), the Council will consider reasonable adjustments and/or a phased return to support a sustainable return to work.

## **10. Absence monitoring and trigger points**

### **10.1 Trigger points**

The Council will review sickness absence when any of the following trigger points are reached:

**Short-term absence triggers (either):**

- 3 occasions of sickness absence in any rolling 6-month period; or
- 8 working days sickness absence in any rolling 12-month period.

**Long-term absence trigger:**

- 4 weeks continuous absence (or earlier if medical advice indicates a longer absence is likely).

Trigger points prompt a review; they do not automatically lead to formal action. The Council will consider context (including disability-related or pregnancy-related absence) and medical information where relevant.

Absence related to disability or pregnancy will be considered carefully and reasonable adjustments to triggers may be applied where required by the Equality Act 2010.

**10.2 Informal absence review**

Where trigger points are reached, an absence review meeting may be held to:

- explore reasons for absence and any patterns;
- consider support, adjustments and expectations;
- agree an improvement plan and review period.

**10.3 Formal action (capability process)**

If attendance does not improve or absence remains unsustainable, the Council may take formal action under its capability procedure, which may include consideration of termination on grounds of capability, following a fair process and medical advice where appropriate. Employees have the right to be accompanied at formal meetings by a work colleague or trade union representative.

**11. Long-term sickness absence**

For long-term absence, the Council will:

- maintain supportive and regular contact;
- obtain appropriate medical evidence (fit notes and, where appropriate, occupational health advice and/or medical reports in accordance with section 4.4);
- consider reasonable adjustments and phased return options; and
- review the position at appropriate intervals.

**12. Mental health and stress**

The Council recognises that mental health conditions are health conditions. Employees are encouraged to raise concerns early. The Council will consider reasonable support and adjustments, and will treat such matters sensitively and confidentially.

**13. Equality and disability**

The Council will not discriminate unlawfully and will consider reasonable adjustments where an employee has, or may have, a disability. Disability-related absence will be managed fairly and in line with legal obligations.

**14. Misconduct / false reporting**

If there is reason to believe that sickness absence is not genuine, or that procedures have been deliberately breached, the Council may investigate and may deal with the matter under the disciplinary procedure.

**15. Confidentiality and data protection**

Health information is **special category personal data**. The Council will:

- only record and use information necessary to manage absence and support employees;

- keep records securely and limit access to those who need the information for legitimate management purposes (for example, the designated manager, Clerk / Proper Officer where appropriate, those involved in staffing matters, payroll where necessary, and any external HR/OH adviser);
- retain information in line with the Council's retention arrangements and privacy information; and
- handle health information confidentially and in accordance with data protection law.

Employees are expected to respect confidentiality and not share colleagues' health information.

## **16. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice.

## **Appendix A Sickness Absence Procedure - Quick Guide for Staff**

### **1) If you are unwell and cannot work**

You must telephone your **designated reporting manager** (normally the Chair of the Staffing Committee or nominee) by your usual start time on each day of absence.

If you are too unwell to call, someone else may contact on your behalf - but it is your responsibility to ensure the Council is notified.

When you call, please give:

- that you are unfit for work;
- a general reason (e.g., migraine, stomach upset, back pain); and
- how long you expect to be off (if known) and when you'll next update.

If you do not follow this procedure, sick pay may not be paid and it may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

### **2) Keep in touch while you are off**

For short absences, daily contact is expected unless agreed otherwise.

For longer absences, the designated reporting manager (or nominee) will agree a sensible "keep in touch" schedule with you (e.g., weekly).

### **3) Evidence you must provide**

#### **Days 1-7 (calendar days, including weekends):**

You can self-certify.

On your return to work, you must complete a self-certification form.

#### **Day 8 onwards (8+ calendar days):**

You must provide a fit note (doctor/consultant).

If your absence is ongoing, send the fit note as soon as you receive it by either:

- posting it to the Council; or
- sending a photo of both sides (original to follow).

Fit notes must cover the whole period of absence (provide new fit notes as required).

### **4) Return to work**

When you return, you will have a short return-to-work discussion to:

- confirm you are fit to return;
- check if any support/adjustments are needed; and
- update the absence record.

If your fit note says "may be fit for work", the Council will discuss any recommended adjustments (e.g., phased return / altered duties) where reasonable.

### **5) Sick pay (summary)**

Sick pay is paid in line with your contract and the Council's scheme (inclusive of SSP) and is subject to normal deductions.

If you do not follow the reporting/evidence procedure without good reason, occupational sick pay may be withheld.

### **6) Medical appointments (reminder)**

GP/dentist appointments should be outside working hours wherever possible.

For hospital or specialist appointments, show the appointment card/letter to the designated manager/officer in advance (or as soon as practicable).

### **7) Need support?**

If you think you will be off for a while, or you need adjustments to help you return (including for mental health or a long-term condition), speak to your designated reporting manager as early as you can. The Council will aim to support a safe and sustainable return to work.

## **Appendix B — Self-certification form (template)**

**Name:**

**Role:**

**Dates absent:** From            to

**Total working days/hours missed:**

**General reason for absence:**

**Contacted designated reporting manager by start time?** Yes / No (if no, why?)

**Are you now fit to return?** Yes / No

**Support/adjustments needed:**

**Employee signature/date:**

**Manager signature/date:**

## **Appendix C — Return-to-work discussion record (template)**

**Date:**

**Manager:**

**General reason for absence / any ongoing issues:**

**Fit note provided?** Yes / No

**Any adjustments recommended/needed:**

**Trigger reached?** Yes / No

**Actions agreed / review date:**

**Employee signature/date:**

**Manager signature/date:**

## Appendix D : Sickness Absence Procedure – Quick Guide for Staff

### 1) If you are unwell and cannot work

You must telephone your designated reporting manager (normally the Chair of the Staffing Committee or nominee) by your usual start time on each day of absence.

If you are too unwell to call, someone else may contact on your behalf — but it is your responsibility to ensure the Council is notified.

When you call, please give:

- that you are unfit for work
- a **general** reason (e.g., migraine, stomach upset, back pain)
- how long you expect to be off (if known) and when you'll next update

**If you do not follow this procedure, sick pay may not be paid and it may be treated as a disciplinary matter.**

### 2) Keep in touch while you are off

- For short absences, **daily contact** is expected unless agreed otherwise.
- For longer absences, the designated reporting manager (or nominee) will agree a sensible “keep in touch” schedule with you (e.g., weekly).

### 3) Evidence you must provide

**Days 1–7 (calendar days, including weekends):**

- You can **self-certify**.
- On your return to work, you must complete a **self-certification form**.

**Day 8 onwards (8+ calendar days):**

- You must provide a **fit note** (doctor/consultant).
- If your absence is ongoing, send the fit note **as soon as you receive it** by either:
  - posting it to the Council, **or**
  - sending a **photo of both sides** (original to follow)

Fit notes must cover the whole period of absence (provide new fit notes as required).

### 4) Return to work

When you return, you will have a short **return-to-work discussion** to:

- confirm you are fit to return
- check if any support/adjustments are needed
- update the absence record

If your fit note says “**may be fit for work**”, the Council will discuss any recommended adjustments (e.g., phased return/altered duties) where reasonable.

### 5) Sick pay (summary)

Sick pay is paid in line with your contract and the Council’s scheme (**inclusive of SSP**) and is subject to normal deductions.

If you do not follow the reporting/evidence procedure without good reason, occupational sick pay may be withheld.

### 6) Medical appointments (reminder)

- GP/dentist appointments should be outside working hours wherever possible.
- For hospital appointments, show the **appointment card/letter to the Clerk** in advance (or as soon as practicable).

## **7) Need support?**

If you think you will be off for a while, or you need adjustments to help you return (including for mental health or a long-term condition), speak to the Chairman of the Staffing Committee as early as you can. The Council will aim to support a safe and sustainable return to work.