



Pembroke Dock Town Council

Staff Absences

1. AIMS

- 1.1 To ensure that all sickness is responded to in a caring and sympathetic manner
- To ensure that all absence is monitored and controlled;
 - To ensure that systems and procedures relating to absence are applied consistently to all employees;
 - To develop systems and procedures whereby employees receive counselling and help where appropriate.

2. Steps Necessary to Achieve Aims

- 2.1 All employees will receive a copy of this Policy Statement together with details of the procedures and form for notifying any episode of sickness absence.
- 2.2 When returning to work after an absence (other than authorised leave) the employee will be required to complete the appropriate form.
- 2.3 The Town Clerk will conduct a return to work interview to discuss the reason for absence. This is to ensure that all absence is reported and recorded so that the Town Council has a clear picture of sickness absence, both individually and departmentally, and is able to respond to any problem.
- 2.4 All aspects of sickness absence will be dealt with in a caring and sympathetic manner.
- 2.5 If there is reasonable concern over the level of an employee's sickness absence, he/she will be asked to discuss the matter with the Town Clerk. He/she may be accompanied by a trade union or other representative if they wish. Concern for the employee's health and the needs of the organisation will be borne in mind.
- 2.6 All medical information about the employee will be treated confidentially by the Town Council on a strict need to know basis. It is recognised that the employee may find it difficult or embarrassing to discuss medical issues which will be treated in a sensitive manner. Decisions can only be made on the basis of information available and, therefore, it is generally considered in the best interests of employees to avoid delaying or withholding information unnecessarily.
- 2.7 Any employee can approach the Town Council for advice.

3. Authorised Absences

- 3.1 All periods of absence are to be recorded by the Town Clerk on the appropriate forms. Prior authority must be obtained for any period of absence during office hours.
- 3.2 Absence for such matters as personal medical or dental appointment must be timed to ensure minimum disruption to the office otherwise than in an emergency situation.
- 3.3 Absences to care for sick relatives or friends should not normally be taken without prior authority and, in serious cases, may amount to compassionate leave (See policy on Special Leave)
- 3.4 Although each case will be dealt with on its merits, frequent short term absences may be deemed to amount to “incapability” and thus activate the Capability Procedures.

4. Sickness Absences

- 4.1 On the first day of sickness absence:

The employee must telephone the Town Clerk stating the reason for their absence, the likely date of their return to work and when they became unwell. The employee should ensure that they telephone as soon as possible, and certainly no later than one hour after their usual start time. Failure to report their sickness as above may result in loss of occupational sick pay. If the employee is too ill to be able to telephone personally, then a phone call from a relative or friend will suffice.

- 4.2 On the fourth day of sickness absence:

(Please note: Saturdays, Sundays, Bank Holidays, Extra Statutory days etc., are included)

A further telephone call is required (as above) to notify the Town Clerk of the continuing sickness absence. Should the fourth day of absence fall on a non-working day, then a telephone call should be made on the next working day. For example, if the employee reports sick on Friday, they need to ring in on Monday.

Failure to report continued sickness may result in loss of occupational sick pay.

- 4.3 More than seven days of sickness absence:
(Please note: including non-working days)

The employee must visit their doctor immediately (if they have not already done so) and submit a medical (fit) certificate to the Town Clerk.

4.4 Continuing sickness:

The employee must continue to submit a medical certificate (as above) each time their doctor certifies them unfit for work. If they are absent for more than fourteen days, they must obtain a declaration from their doctor before they return, stating that they are fit for work. Additionally, they must complete a "Statement of Absence Form".

4.5 Persistent Short Term Sickness

The procedure for the effective monitoring and control of persistent short term sickness absences is as follows:

- (A) Employee's absence records must be monitored by the Town Clerk to ascertain if any employee has been absent due to sickness for a total of five working days or on three separate occasions in any period of three months.
- (B) Upon the return of the employee from sick leave, the Town Clerk must investigate promptly the reason for the absence (i.e. health, welfare or conduct).
- (C) The employee's record will be kept under review during the next three months (the employee must be informed accordingly) and if still poor, an interview should be arranged where the employee should be given an opportunity to discuss the situation. The employee will be informed of his or her entitlement to have a trade union representative present if they wish.
- (D) Once the cause has been ascertained the remedy may become apparent. If the problem is of a disciplinary nature, one of two courses of action should be taken:
 - (i) defer action for a further specified period during which the employee will be required to produce medical certificates for every absence, the cost of which may be refunded.
 - (ii) refer the employee for a medical examination by an Occupational Health Physician.
- (E) The medical will be held in working hours wherever possible. However, time off in lieu will be given to anyone who has to attend in their own time. Failure to attend such a medical without giving at least 48 hours prior notification may result in the cost of the medical being charged to the employee.
- (F) A continuation of a poor sickness record following confirmation that the employee is fit for work may result in action being taken under the agreed Disciplinary Procedure.

4.6 Long Term Sickness

The procedure for the effective monitoring and control of long term sickness absences is as follows:-

- (A) Once an employee has been absent due to illness for four weeks he or she must be sent the appropriate form by the Town Council requesting their consent to the Town Council obtaining a Medical Report from an Occupational Health Physician and permission for an Occupational Health Physician to approach their General Practitioner or Consultant.
- (B) In the event that the employee is deemed to be permanently unfit the Occupational Health Physician will provide a Certificate of Incapacity for work together with brief details of the nature of the illness (where this is not detrimental to the employee)
- (C) Upon receipt of the Occupational Health Physician's Certificate of Permanent Unfitness the Town Clerk must:
- arrange for a member of staff to visit the employee's home or ask the employee to visit the office;
 - advise the employee of the Occupational Health Physician's decision or opinion concerning their medical condition and the fact that their condition renders them permanently unfit for their normal duties and responsibilities;
 - consider the possibilities of redeployment (if appropriate) or advise the employee of the decision that their employment is to be terminated with the reason
 - advise them of their rights of appeal
 - deal with any holiday or pay enquiries
 - advise them of the employer's intention to arrange a formal interview approximately two weeks later
- (D) At the formal interview the employee must be fully informed of their rights of appeal. The employee must also be informed that if their family doctor disagrees with the Occupational Health Physician's decision that arrangements could be made for an independent medical examination to take place.

4.7 Scale of Allowance

An employee absent from duty owing to illness shall be entitled to receive an allowance based on the following periods

During 1 st year service	1 months full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay
During 2 nd year service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
During 3 rd year service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During 4 th year service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 years service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

4.8 Following exclusion or exhaustion of SSP:
If the employee is not entitled, or has exhausted their entitlement to SSP, they must continue to forward medical certificates. These will be forwarded to the DWP. The employee should also complete form SSP1. When benefit is received a copy of the employee's entitlement notice must be forwarded to the Town Clerk.

4.9 On return to work:
For any period of sickness absence the employee must complete and sign a Statement of Absence Form, which is obtainable from the Town Clerk covering the whole period of absence (including Saturdays, Sundays, Bank Holidays, Extra Statutory days etc.)

The information provided on this statement will confirm the employee's entitlement to sickness payment and failure to complete the form will result in adjustments to their sickness pay entitlement.

As soon as they return to work they should meet with the Town Clerk where appropriate to discuss the reasons for their absence and also to be issued with their Statement of Absence Form which they need to complete before signature.