



**Great Baddow Parish Council**  
**Managing Attendance Policy and Procedure**

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## **Section 1 – Policy and Procedure Overview**

### **1.0 Policy Statement**

Great Baddow Parish Council aims to ensure that all employees are committed to maintaining maximum levels of attendance to ensure effective delivery of services to the Parish of Great Baddow.

This policy provides a framework to enable sickness absence to be managed fairly and equitably to achieve and maintain maximum levels of attendance.

### **2.0 Principles**

Great Baddow Parish Council's key policy principles relating to managing attendance and sickness absence are to:

- Promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees
- Allow for the exercise of managerial judgement
- Ensure all employees are treated fairly and equitably and in accordance with relevant legislation

### **3.0 Scope of this Policy**

This procedure applies to all Great Baddow Parish Council employees.

This policy does not apply to employees who are in their probationary period (as the issue of attendance will be addressed within the probation monitoring period).

### **4.0 Monitoring**

The application of the policy will be monitored by the Clerk reporting to the Organisation, Methods and Personnel Committee who will receive regular reports.

## 5.0 Procedure Overview

Stage	Action	Timescales	Responsibility
<b>Informal</b>	<p>Issue of absence raised with the employee as part of the normal supervisory process</p> <p>The line manager will deal with any issues at this stage and keep notes of their discussion on file. Attendance targets will be agreed.</p>	As quickly as possible	Line Manager or Chairman of OM & P Committee in the case of the Clerk
<b>Formal</b>	<p>Employee invited to <b>Stage One</b> formal review meeting</p> <p>Attendance targets will be agreed and monitored</p>	First meeting will be arranged when an absence trigger has been met.	Clerk or Chairman of OM & P Committee in the case of the Clerk
	<p>Employee invited to <b>Stage Two</b> formal review meeting</p> <p>Attendance targets will be agreed and monitored</p>	Formal Stage Two will be triggered if identified level of attendance has not improved (target)	Clerk or Chairman of OM & P Committee in the case of the Clerk
	<p>Employee invited to Formal <b>Stage Three</b> Meeting (Contractual review meeting)</p>	Formal Stage Three meeting (Contractual review meeting) will be triggered if level of attendance has not improved	Clerk and 2 Members of the OM & P Committee or the Chairman of the Council and 2 Members of the OM & P Committee in the case of the Clerk
<b>Appeal</b>	Employee has right of appeal to a different set of 3 OM & P Committee Members against outcome of the Stage Three meeting	Appeal meeting will be arranged giving at least 10 working days' notice. Outcome confirmed in writing within 10 working days of meeting. (No further appeal stage)	3 Different members of the OM & P Committee

## 6.0 Links to the Disciplinary Policy

The following are examples of issues which will be dealt with under the disciplinary policy and procedure:

- Failure to attend work when medically fit to do so and not on authorised leave
- Failure to follow the sickness absence reporting procedure without good reason
- Failure to provide fit notes when required
- Undertaking paid or unpaid employment while absent on sick leave
- Deliberate falsification of self-certification or fit notes
- Incapability at work whilst being under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs
- Failure to attend occupational health appointments or informal/formal meetings without good reason

***Important note:*** *if there is a disciplinary issue unrelated to the absence of the employee, both processes will be run simultaneously unless it is considered appropriate to suspend one of the procedures.*

## **Section 2 – Procedure**

### **1.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

Great Baddow Parish Council expects employees and the Clerk to work together during periods of sickness and during phased returns to work to support the employee to return to work as soon as possible.

The Clerk is expected to:

- Encourage regular attendance at work
- Monitor all sickness absence
- Recognise sickness and promote early intervention
- Track and record absences and identify when an absence meets a trigger point
- Set attendance target levels
- Maintain appropriate contact with employees during any sickness absence
- Seek advice from the HR provider for additional advice and support as needed, completing appropriate referral paperwork for Occupational Health
- Provide support during sickness absence and rehabilitation, contacting the employee at regular intervals and undertaking home visits as appropriate
- Identify and deal with abuse of the managing attendance policy
- Undertake all formal reviews with employees at the appropriate time addressing any concerns about an employee's attendance
- Undertake all return to work interviews as soon as practicably possible and complete all appropriate paperwork and retain on the employee's personal file (in the Parish Office)
- Keep accurate records of all contact with the employee and retain on the employee's personal file
- Ensure all employees are treated fairly and equitably ensuring that issues of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity and religion or belief do not affect any decisions made
- Review and consider reasonable adjustments to enable an employee to undertake the full range of his/her duties or to enable regular attendance at work

Employees are expected to:

- Attend work unless they are not well enough to do so
- Comply with the reporting sickness absence procedure
- Safeguard their health and take appropriate action to facilitate their return to work
- Maintain appropriate contact with their line manager whilst on sickness absence
- Participate in return to work meetings and appointments with occupational health if required

- Attend informal and formal sickness review meetings
- Inform the Clerk if they have a disability should this disability affect their ability to fulfil their role or maintain regular attendance
- Advise the Clerk if they are taking any medication which may impair their ability to undertake their duties

## 2.0 Sickness Reporting Procedure and Certification

Day(s)	Employee Action	When
Sick during working day	Employee must notify the Line Manager and complete a time sheet	On the day, in person, before leaving work
Employee at home and unable to attend work	<p>Employee must notify their Line Manager by phone*.</p> <p>A relative/friend may call on employee's behalf if they are too ill in the first instance.</p> <p>It is however the responsibility of the employee to ensure that the relative/friend can provide the necessary sickness absence reporting information for the employee and to let the Line Manager know when the employee will be contacting them.</p> <p>The employee must call the Line Manager when it is reasonably possible.</p>	<p>As soon as possible.</p> <p>If the employee knows they will be unable to attend the next working day, notification should be made before the employee is due to start work OR within the hour on the first day of absence of their start time.</p> <p>If the individual is not able to do so, then a relative/friend can make the initial contact.</p>
Sickness absence of more than three calendar days	Employee must notify their Line Manager by phone*. The same reporting requirements as above will apply.	Fourth day of absence and as soon as possible and if possible within one hour from when the employee is due to start work.
All periods of sickness absence of less than eight calendar days	If employee has returned to work a self-certification form must be completed.	As soon as possible and prior to the return to work interview with the Clerk
Sickness absence of eight calendar days or longer	Employee must notify their Line Manager by phone* and submit a Fit Note.	By start of eighth day (which includes weekends) a Fit Note posted/handed to Clerk immediately.

Continuing absence	Employee must notify their Line Manager by phone* and submit a Fit Note as required ensuring there are no gaps between certificates or communication.	On the day which will be no later than the expiry date of the previous doctor's certificate, which must be posted immediately.
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\* If the Line Manager is not available to take the employee's call the employee should call the Clerk. If neither are available a message should be left with another member of staff and when available the Clerk will make contact with the employee, preferably on the first day of absence. Should an employee fail to comply with these reporting arrangements the absence may be determined to be unauthorised and pay may be stopped.

**Emails, answer phone messages and Text Messages are not acceptable.**

### 3.0 Medical/Doctors' Appointments and Sickness Recording

Doctors' appointments are not treated as sickness absence unless treatment is administered. Wherever possible these appointments should be taken within the employee's own time or time made up where possible.

Medical appointments which are beyond the employees control will be given during working time. **An employee is not required to make this time up.** Medical appointments such as this, should be evidenced by an appointment card and shown to the line manager, eg. Hospital appointment.

Antenatal appointments are treated as paid leave and the employee does not need to make this time up. However, the appointment should be evidenced by an appointment card.

**4.0 Sickness Absence Review Trigger Points**

Trigger points identify when an employee has reached a certain level or patterns of sickness absence that may need intervention by the manager.

**Short-term Sickness Absence Triggers**

A total of ten working days or more over three separate occurrences in a rolling 12 month period

Five separate absences in any 12 month rolling period

A pattern of absence which causes concern

**Long-term Sickness Absence Triggers**

Four weeks continuous absence (28 calendar days or 20 working days)

Where an employee is likely to be absent for such a period due to illness, operation or post-operative recovery

An underlying medical condition which causes persistent short-term absence

**Exceptions**

**Pregnancy related sickness absence** - Any pregnancy related sickness absence is not taken into account as a sickness absence trigger.

**Accident at work** - Absence caused by an accident at work should be discussed with the Council’s Human Resources provider to determine the appropriate application of this policy.

**Disability related sickness absence.** The Managing Attendance policy will still apply to employees whose absence is related to their disability. However, guidance from Great Baddow Parish Council Human Resources provider should be sought and Occupational Health advice may be helpful to determine if a reasonable adjustment should be made to the sickness absence triggers for an employee with a disability.

**5.0 Return to Work Discussions**

The Clerk will undertake a return to work discussion with all employees after every period of sickness absence. This should be carried out in private and the information treated

confidentially. If the employee's sickness absence is giving cause for concern, the Clerk should raise this as part of the discussion.

The Clerk and the employee will discuss and agree on the required attendance target and this will be monitored by the Clerk.

The discussion will be recorded on the return to work form and will be completed by both parties. A copy of the paperwork should be placed on the employee's personal file.

Following this discussion, the Clerk may decide to arrange an informal sickness absence meeting to carry out a more thorough review of the employee's sickness absence record and to discuss improvements needed or may move straight to the formal procedure if appropriate.

The Return to Work meeting record is at Appendix 1.

## **6.0 Short-term Absence**

### **Informal Stage**

If any concerns about the employees' sickness absence have not been addressed during the return to work discussion, an informal managing attendance meeting can be held. The purpose of this meeting is to enable the Line Manager and the employee to agree ways of improving attendance, support health improvement and to establish or review attendance targets. Whilst this is an informal meeting, notes of the meeting can be held and retained locally by the Clerk.

The employee should be given one day's notice of the meeting and, as this is not part of the formal managing attendance procedure, there is no right for the employee to be accompanied.

If there is a need, the Clerk may move to the formal managing attendance procedure at any stage during this informal procedure.

## **7.0 Formal Stage One Meeting**

### **7.1 Guide for The Clerk – Formal Stage One Managing Attendance Meeting**

Where further absences have occurred or there are concerns re attendance, the employee will be asked to attend a formal managing attendance meeting to discuss the continuing concerns about their sickness absence. The employee should be given five working days' notice of the meeting and the opportunity to bring a union representative or work colleague with them. The invitation to the meeting letter can be found at Appendix 2.

The aims of this meeting are to:

- Signal that the employee's time off is a cause for concern
- Advise the employee about the implications of their absence

- Review the attendance target
- Allow the employee to inform the Clerk of any on-going medical issue
- Give the employee an opportunity to explain any other reasons for sickness e.g. home commitments, stress or an alcohol or drug related problem for example
- Offer support to the employee if there are underlying reasons for the persistent absence
- Agree steps for improvement in the form of an improvement plan which should be signed by both parties

The outcome of this meeting and the improvement plan should be recorded on the **Summary of Stage One Meeting and Improvement Plan** which can be found at Appendix 4.

The summary sheet should be sent to the employee with the outcome letter which can be found at Appendix 3 and sent to the employee as soon as possible after the meeting and within five working days if possible.

## **8.0 Formal Stage Two Meeting**

### **8.1 Guide for The Clerk – Stage Two Formal Managing Attendance Meeting**

Should there not be the appropriate improvement in the employee's attendance following the Stage One meeting, a Stage Two formal meeting should be arranged. The employee should be given five working days' notice of the meeting and be advised of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague. The invitation to the meeting letter can be found at Appendix 5.

The aims of this meeting are to:

- Continue to discuss the sickness absence and the reasons for it
- Identify any reason for the lack of improvement
- Review the attendance target
- Consider a referral to occupational health
- Advise the employee of the service implications of their absence
- To consider the appropriateness of redeployment as an option\*
- Warn the employee that their employment may be at risk if there is not an improvement in their attendance
- Confirm a further improvement plan to be signed off by both parties

*\* Redeployment will not attract any salary protection*

The outcome of this meeting and the improvement plan should be recorded on the **Summary of Stage Two Meeting and Improvement Plan** which can be found at Appendix 7.

The summary sheet should be sent to the employee with the outcome letter which can be found at Appendix 6 and sent to the employee as soon as possible after the meeting and within five working days if possible.

Where a sustained improvement in attendance has been evidenced by the employee, a contractual review (Stage Three meeting) will not be needed.

### **9.0 Formal Stage Three Meeting (Contractual Review)**

If there has not been the required improvement in the level of attendance, then a Stage Three meeting should be arranged. This meeting will be to consider whether the employee's contract should be terminated because of the inability of the employee to meet their contractual obligation to attend work. The employee should be given 10 working days' notice of the meeting and be advised of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague. The Council's Human Resources provider will provide advice at this meeting where possible. The invitation to the meeting can be found at Appendix 8.

### **9.1 Guide for The Clerk – Formal Stage Three Managing Attendance Meeting (Contractual Review)**

The aims of this meeting are to:

- Review the sickness absence record of the employee
- Consider the level of improvement achieved as appropriate
- Consider the support offered to the employee to improve
- Consider any reasonable adjustments put in place if appropriate
- Review occupational health guidance as appropriate
- Consider redeployment options\*
- Consider the impact of the employee's absence on the service

*\* Redeployment will not attract any salary protection*

The Clerk with 2 Members of the Organisation, Methods and Personnel Committee will make a decision regarding the outcome of the meeting. These outcomes may include one of the following:

- Dismissal with appropriate notice on the basis that the employee is not able to meet their obligation to work due to sickness absence
- Give a further time period for improvement and a deferral of the decision to terminate the contract
- No further action
- A letter confirming the decision should be sent to the employee within five working days of the meeting

## 9.2 Appeals

The employee can appeal against the decision to terminate their employment by writing to the Chairman of the Organisation, Methods and Personnel Committee within 10 days of receiving the decision in writing. The employee will be required to state the ground for their appeal. The appeal will be heard by 3 different Members of the Organisation, Methods and Personnel Committee who were not involved in the decision made at Formal Stage Three of the procedure.

## 10.0 Long-term Absence

The same procedure should apply for managing long-term absence as for short-term absence i.e:

- Stage One Meeting
- Stage Two Meeting
- Stage Three Meeting (Contractual Review)
- Appeal

However, the following should be taken into account:

- The Clerk should keep in regular contact with the employee either by phone or home visit as appropriate from the first date of absence unless there are circumstances where this contact is not appropriate.

The Clerk should in addition:

- discuss with the Council's Human Resources provider or Occupational Health any adjustment(s) needed to the formal review process taking into account the employee's reason for absence and their likely return to work;
- consider the appropriateness of a referral to Occupational Health or other support mechanisms;
- consider the need for temporary additional staffing to cover employee's role

The following adjustments may need to be made to the usual formal review process:

- the location of the review meetings
- whether the employee is fit enough to attend a review meeting and if this may need to be held in their absence with a representative attending
- whether a case conference would be appropriate to discuss the case in more detail
- whether ill health retirement (for members of the Local Government Pension Scheme) should be considered by Occupational Health

### **11.0 Occupational Health Service**

One of the key functions of an Occupational Health service is to interview and/or examine employees who are, or have been, absent from work due to sickness or injury and provide advice to the employer on their fitness to work.

The advice of the Occupational Health service may be sought where the advice of an occupational medical specialist can provide additional guidance and information to the manager in dealing with cases of absence.

### **12.00 Ill Health Retirement (Local Government Pension Scheme Members)**

Where the manager or the Council's Human Resources provider consider that the employee on long-term sickness absence may be eligible for ill health early retirement, occupational health can be asked to consider the case against the scheme's criteria.