

Finance and Corporate Services  
HR and Organisational Development

# Supporting Attendance at Work Policy

(For all Local Government employees, craft operatives and Chief Officers, excluding Teachers)



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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy replaces the Council's previous Managing Absence Policy and Abatement of Annual Leave Policy and takes effect immediately.
- 1.2 The Council and Trade Unions recognise that high attendance levels are vital in providing the efficient operation and delivery of Council services and can contribute positively to the provision of quality services. Where unsatisfactory levels of attendance exist, employees at work may experience additional workloads which over a period of time can have an adverse affect on morale, motivation and service delivery. The Council will provide support and assistance to employees who require it to attend work and where appropriate will deal with unsatisfactory levels of attendance.
- 1.3 In times of economic constraint, managing the cost of absence becomes even more important, therefore the Council and recognised Trade Unions are committed and agree to work together to improve employee attendance levels across the Council. The Council has introduced a number of initiatives to help support employee attendance and these will continue.
- 1.4 The Council strives to embrace a positive attitude towards attendance at work create a working environment which is inclusive of everyone regardless of ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, carer responsibility, race nationality, social or economic status, trade union membership or activity.

## **2. Purpose and aims**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's aims and objectives in supporting attendance, to identify the different types of absences that occur and to outline the responsibilities of managers and employees in maximising attendance levels.
- 2.2 The aims of this policy are to:
- Provide managers with a consistent process for supporting attendance;
  - Encourage employees to seek help at an early stage with any problems they may have which are resulting/or may result in poor attendance at work;
  - Treat employees fairly and consistently throughout the process;
  - Advise employees of support provisions which may be of help to them and how these can be accessed;
  - Re-enforce recording and monitoring arrangements to measure attendance levels and identify patterns of absence which may require management attention.
- 2.3 Employees who suffer ill health will be treated sympathetically. In some circumstances, special considerations or reasonable adjustments may be required to enable them to attend work protecting them in line with their rights as defined by the

Equality Act 2010, for example employees whose absence is related to their disability or pregnancy/maternity or employees with a terminal or progressive illness.

2.4 Sickness absence relating to a disability or pregnancy must be recorded separately. Pregnancy related absences must not count towards an employee's total absence record.

2.5 In cases of long term sickness absence (over 20 days), termination of employment on the grounds of lack of capability due to ill health may be considered after other relevant alternatives have been considered including ill-health retirement.

### **3. Scope**

3.1 This policy applies to all Council employees, excluding Teachers. Managers should contact HR and Organisational Development for information and advice on Teachers supporting attendance procedures.

### **4. Supporting attendance guidance**

4.1 Supporting attendance guidance for managers and employees is available on [Renfo](#).

4.2 The supporting attendance guidance provides information on the full supporting attendance procedure to be followed and the support mechanisms in place to maximise attendance. The guidance covers:

- Early intervention, support and reasonable adjustments enabling employees to attend work;
- Information about the support services available to employees;
- Responsibilities of managers and employees involved in this process;
- The introduction of a more structured process of formal meetings and associated action if required.

4.3 The revised procedures include a 3 stage interview process and a specific process for managers to follow when supporting long term sickness absences.

4.4 The supporting attendance guidance will be updated in line with best practice and changes to legislation as appropriate.

### **5. Responsibilities**

5.1 The Council, managers, employees, HR and Organisational Development and trade unions all have responsibilities in supporting attendance within the Council. These responsibilities are outlined in the supporting guidance which is available on [Renfo](#).

### **6. Supporting employee attendance**

6.1 The Council's Occupational Health provider is able to advise managers and employees on all matters regarding health and fitness. In addition, they can offer advice about an employee's capability to work in relation to their health. Advice

given by Occupational Health can also assist in making suitable arrangements to initiate a return to work and future employability with the Council where possible.

- 6.2 Managers are encouraged to seek Occupational Health advice through the Early Intervention Service if they have any concerns regarding an employee's health including the appropriateness of an Occupational Health referral.
- 6.3 A confidential counselling service is also available to all employees and includes access to a free, confidential 24 hour telephone helpline. Further details about Occupational Health and the Employee Counselling Service are available from [Renfo](#).
- 6.4 Employee absences may not always be due to ill health. Circumstances in an employee's personal life may impact on them attending the workplace and in some circumstances the Council's Special Leave Policy may be used to help maximise attendance at work. Details of how the special leave can support attendance are outlined in the supporting attendance guidance.

## **7. Abatement of leave following sickness absence**

- 7.1 In the event of an employee being absent for more than 3 months, the Council will abate the employee's leave entitlement (which includes annual leave and public holidays) subject to the statutory minimum of 28 days per year (pro-rata equivalent for part time employees / employees working varied flexible working patterns). Further information is available in the supporting attendance guidance.

## **8. Learning and development**

- 8.1 The Council offers learning and development in supporting attendance to help managers develop their knowledge, skills and competence. The Council will also provide reasonable facility and training time for trade union representatives to support attendance at work. Further details of the courses available can be found on the Corporate Course Planner on [Renfo](#) or from HR and Organisational Development.

## **9. Confidentiality**

- 9.1 Information relating to employee ill health should only be recorded and maintained by the relevant Service, HR and Occupational Health where appropriate. Information will not be divulged to third parties without written expression from the employee. Further information on handling confidential and sensitive information is contained within the Council's Guidance on the Responsible Use of Confidential and Personal Data, Information Security Policy and Data Protection Policy.

## **10. Impact assessment**

- 10.1 This policy has been impact assessed in line with the Council's obligation to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Copies are available on request.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

11.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly and in line with any legislative and organisational changes. Any changes or amendments to this policy will be done in consultation with the recognised Trade Unions.