



Bridlington Town Council

Absence Policy

Adopted
for the Bridlington Town Council Partial Term 2025/2026
minute Ref 157.25/26

1.0 Scope of policy

1.1 This policy covers the procedure of reporting absence, eligibility for Statutory Sick Pay, Annual leave, absence through sickness and other leave.

2.0 Procedure of reporting absence

If you are away from work because of sickness you must:

- Telephone The Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer or Deputy Clerk, before your contractual (or normal start time for work) on the first day of absence providing details and how long you expect to be off. If you are unable to call personally, someone else may call for you. It is your responsibility to ensure the Council is notified. You must then telephone again each day (unless otherwise agreed with the Clerk).
- If you are away for seven days or less (including weekends and other non-working days), you must complete a self-certification form and provide it to the council when you are back at work. (*Appendix A*)
- If you are away for more than seven days (including weekends and other non-working days), you must send in a 'fit to work' statement from your doctor and continue to do so as each new certificate is issued to you. This certificate gives details as to whether you are too ill to work or whether you are well enough to work with suitable support from the Council. This gives you and the Council the opportunity to discuss suitable arrangements which will support your return to work. The form also gives more space for the doctor to provide information about your condition and helpful tick boxes to suggest common ways to help you return to work.
- All sickness or injury absence will be entered on your employment record and will be monitored from time-to-time.

3.0 Return-to-work meetings

On the first day back at work after a period of sickness absence your line manager will ask if you require or request a return-to-work informal meeting. If this is not possible on your first day back, the meeting may take place later. If required/requested the return-to-work meeting should take place in a private place, and all discussions should be private and confidential. The meeting would normally include:

- a welcome back to work
- outline the purpose of the return-to-work meeting, which is to manage and monitor absence and attendance to identify any problem areas and offer support where appropriate
- a discussion about the reasons for absence, in a supportive way and to understand whether the council can take any steps to help the employee's attendance
- explain that the absence will be recorded
- establish if medical advice has been sought (*if appropriate*)
- ensure the self-certification form has been completed or a fit note from the doctor has been provided dependant on the period of time taken
- a discussion on absence over the last 52 weeks, the impact on pay and any next steps
- a handover of work where appropriate.

4.0 Medical appointments

The council recognises that employees will, from time to time, need to attend medical appointments. Please try to arrange medical appointments in your own time or, if this is not possible, at times that will cause the minimum amount of absence from work or inconvenience to the council. The council will allow reasonable time off work with time to be made up for such appointments. There is no legal requirement to pay time off for medical appointments, except antenatal appointments. Please see the Maternity and Parental leave policies for details. A council may decide that staff should make up the time (if possible) or take it without pay. If a council decides to offer payment for medical appointments, it is sensible to put some limit on this.

5.0 Statutory Sick Pay

If you are ill and unable to attend work, you may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). SSP is currently paid after 4 Qualifying Days absence from work. The Qualifying Days are your normal working days that are in your contract. Tax and National Insurance will be deducted from SSP and if you earn below the lower earnings limit, you will not qualify for SSP.

6.0 Council's Sick Pay

Provided that the employee complies with the Council's requirements regarding sickness absence, you will receive sick pay when you are absent from work because of sickness, as follows:

• during 1 st year of service	one month's full pay (after completing 4 months of service)
• during 2nd year of service	2 months half pay
• during 3rd year of service	2 months' full pay and 4 months half pay
• 4 th & 5th year of service	4 months' full pay and 4 months half pay
• After 5 years of service	5 months' full pay and 5 months half pay
	6 months' full pay and 6 months half pay

On completion of the outlined sick pay timescales Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will commence along with a requirement for updates via an Occupational Health Assessment as an update to the initial prognosis of your likely recovery and or fitness to resume work and any recommended treatment.

Payment is, however, conditional upon you complying with the council's procedure for notifying your manager of the absence, attending an interview with your manager on request to discuss the absence, and completing a self-certification form on return to work or providing a fit note when requested. We may also ask you to attend an interview/examination with a nominated doctor at the request of the Council.

We may not pay you sick pay where:

- you have failed to comply with the Council's sickness absence notification and evidence requirements
- you unreasonably refuse to attend a sickness absence meeting with the Council on request
- you are unable to work because you hurt yourself in dangerous sports / activities or any other occupation you have
- you have misled the council about your fitness to work
- you have resigned
- where disciplinary proceedings are pending against you.

7.0 Injury or Assault

The Council has the necessary insurance in place. In the event of death or permanent disablement arising from a violent or criminal assault suffered in the course of employment then all insurance payments will be made in accordance with the council's responsibilities.

8.0 Medical advice

The Council may want to obtain advice on your fitness for work from occupational health advisers or medical practitioners. Examples of when the Council might refer to occupational health or a medical practitioner include the following:

- to seek a medical report on your illness or injury
- to establish when you might be able to return to work
- to understand when you are likely to be fully fit to resume your normal duties
- to understand what alternative duties you might be fit to undertake if you are unfit to resume your normal duties
- to understand when you are likely to be fit to undertake any alternative duties
- to ask for guidance on your condition, for example if there is a possibility that you are disabled or ambiguity as to the exact nature of the condition
- to ask what reasonable adjustments could be made to working conditions or premises to facilitate a return to work
- to understand the likely recurrence of the illness or injury once you have returned to work
- to discuss any adjustments that could be made to accommodate your disability, if you are disabled.

The Council will pay the cost of the report and you will have the right to see it. The Council will also be provided with a copy of the report and once we have seen it, we will want to meet you to discuss the findings and consider options available to you. If you choose not to consent to an Occupational Health referral, any decisions in relation to your employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

9.0 Persistent short-term absence

Persistent short-term absence is where an employee is frequently absent from work for relatively short periods due to sickness.

We understand most employees will have some short-term sickness absence from time to time. However, if you are frequently and persistently absent from work, this can damage efficiency, productivity and place an additional burden of work on your colleagues and councillors.

Therefore, it is essential that frequent absence is dealt with promptly and consistently and in some circumstances, the Council may begin a capability or disciplinary procedure as part of the absence management process. If we do so, we will meet with you to set attendance targets. Following a review meeting we may issue a formal warning if those targets are not met. You will be given written notice in advance of any formal meeting, and you can be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. You may appeal against a formal warning. If your absence remains unacceptable after a second formal warning, the council may bring your employment to an end following consultation with you.

If frequent absence is due to an underlying long-term health condition then we will also request, with consent, a medical report either from an Occupational Health Physician or your G.P. or consultant to establish further information about your health and how the council can support your attendance.

When considering the reasons for absence, and deciding on whether a formal meeting is appropriate, the council will not consider any pregnancy related absence.

The council will also make adjustments where absences are related to a disability by allowing a higher level of absence before considering whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

The council will consider any alternative employment options before making any decision about ending employment. You will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at formal meetings and a right of appeal against a formal warning or dismissal sanction. The monitoring of absence operates on a rolling 52-week period.

Where it appears that there is no acceptable reason for an absence or if you have not followed the correct absence notification procedure, the matter should be treated as a conduct issue and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

10.0 Long-term absence

As a guide, long term absence is any absence which lasts or is expected to last over 4 weeks. In all cases of long-term absence, it is essential for the Council to maintain contact with you. In cases where the return date is less certain this will take the form of consultation and will include:

- Discussions at the start of the absence and periodically throughout
- Obtaining better information on your health and likely prognosis, ideally through an Occupational Health Physician
- Where appropriate alerting you to the fact that your absence is becoming a problem
- Allowing you the opportunity to state your opinion of your condition and giving consideration to that opinion

Where ill-health means that you are unlikely to return to work for a long period of time, the council may need to consider bringing your employment to an end. In these circumstances, the council will:

- Review your absence record to assess whether or not it is sufficient to justify dismissal
- Consult with you
- Obtain up-to-date medical advice
- Advise you in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility

- Discuss whether you may be able to access benefits from the Local Government Pension Scheme (where appropriate)
- Meet with you to discuss the options and consider your views on continuing employment before any decisions are made, allowing you to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative
- Review if there are any alternative jobs that you could do prior to taking any decision on whether or not to dismiss
- Allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss you on grounds of long-term ill health
- Following this meeting, inform you of the final decision

11.0 Absence as a result of disability

Where you experience sickness absence as a result of a disability it will be treated in line with the provisions contained within the Equality Act 2010 (formerly as part of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). This will include considering whether any reasonable adjustments can be made.

12.0 Data protection

The Council will treat personal data collected during the absence management process in accordance with its data protection policy on processing special categories of personal data. When relying on legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing your data, you can object to the processing.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

13.0 Related Policies: Maternity Policy
 Paternity Policy
 Menopause Policy

-policy ends here-

Signed:

Date:

Note:

Health information is considered to be personal sensitive information under Data Protection legislation and particular care must be taken when processing medical information. The Information Commissioner website (<https://ico.org.uk>) contains guidance.

An Occupational Health report can comment on an individual's health in relation to the employee's role. It will be important to provide the OH physician or nurse a referral form with full details of the employee's job, the concerns you have about their health in relation to their work and be specific about the questions you need answering. Any report should then be discussed with the employee before the council decides on any follow up actions. If the report makes recommendations, these must be carefully considered and discussed with the employee.

B. Health and wellbeing

All employers have duty to provide a safe place of work which includes the physical environment as well as mental health. There are a range of initiatives that can promote health and wellbeing (see Fit for Work: <https://fitforwork.org>). Also, the Health and Safety Executive have useful information on their website including a stress risk assessment (www.hse.gov.uk/stress/risk-assessment.htm).

Appendix A

SELF CERTIFICATION SICKNESS FORM

You are required by your Conditions of Service to complete this certificate to cover your period of absence due to sickness or injury (including third party claim) from the first day of absence.

Part 1 (to be completed by employee)

Name (in full):

Position.....

Address:.....

Part 2 (to be completed by employee)

Period of sickness/injury *(Where the absence is not more than 7 calendar days)*

Date First actual day of *sickness/injury.....

Last day of *sickness/injury..... *(include all days that you were unfit to work even if you were not normally working those days)*

Expected date of return (if known).....

Do you consider absence to be work related: Yes · No ·

Reasons you consider the absence to be work related:

.....
.....

Is this absence related to a disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010: Yes · No ·

Reason *(give broad indication of nature of sickness/injury):*

.....
.....

N.B: If absence continues after 7 calendar days, a Fit Note will be required (if third party claim please indicate)

Declaration (to be signed by employee) I confirm that:-

a) I have not worked or taken part in any activity not consistent with the reasons given for my absence.

b) I am now fit to return to duty.

I declare that the above statement is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Part 3 (to be completed by the Manager) I confirm that the absence is in accordance with sickness regulations and that the above information is correct.

Signed: Date:

Position