

WHICHAM PARISH COUNCIL

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

Introduction

Whicham Parish Council is committed to improving the health, wellbeing and attendance of its employee. It values the contribution the Clerk make to the successful running of the Parish Council, and greatly misses that contribution when the Clerk is unable to work for whatever reason.

Key Principles:

1. As a responsible employer the Parish Council undertakes to provide payments to the Clerk if unable to attend to work due to sickness in line with the Clerk's Contract of Employment for sick absence and sick pay.
2. The Clerk is asked and expected to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance to cover the work required.
3. The Parish Council will support the Clerk if he/she has genuine grounds for absence for whatever reason. This support includes:
 - (a) "Special leave" for necessary absences not caused by sickness.
 - (b) A fairly flexible approach to the taking of annual leave to fit in with regular Parish Council meetings.
 - (c) Access to counsellors where necessary.
 - (d) Rehabilitation programmes in cases of long-term sickness absence.
4. The Parish Council will consider any advice given by the Clerk's GP on the "Statement of Fitness for Work".
5. The Parish Council's disciplinary procedures will be used if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or is not thought to be satisfactory.
6. The Parish Council respects the confidentiality of all information relating to the Clerk's sickness.

This policy will be implemented in line with all data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

Notification of absence

If the Clerk is going to be absent from work he/she should speak to the Chairman/Vice Chairman as soon as he/she is aware that he/she will not be able to fulfil her contractual hours. He/she should also give a clear indication of the nature of the illness and a likely return date. The Chairman/Vice Chairman will check with the Clerk to ascertain if there is any information that they need to know about the current

workload. If the Clerk does not contact the Chairman/Vice Chairman by the appropriate time, they must attempt to contact the Clerk at home.

Evidence of incapacity

The Clerk can use the accepted self-certification arrangement for the first seven days of absence. Thereafter a "Statement of Fitness for Work" is required to cover every subsequent day. If absence is likely to be protracted, i.e. more than four weeks continuously, there is a shared responsibility for the Chairman/Vice Chairman and the Clerk to maintain contact at agreed intervals. "May be fit for some work" If this is the advice of the GP on the Statement of Fitness for Work, then it will be discussed with the Clerk as to ways of helping her to get back to work, possibly by a phased return or temporarily amended duties.

Return to work discussions

The Chairman/Vice Chairman will discuss absences with the Clerk upon return to work to establish:

- (a) The reason for and cause of absence.
- (b) Was there anything that the Chairman or Parish Council can do to help.
- (c) That the Clerk is fit to return to work. If the Clerk's GP has advised that he/she 'may be fit for work' the return to work discussion can also be used to agree in detail how her return to work might work best in practice.

A more formal review will be triggered by:

Frequent short-term absences or long-term absence. This review should look at any further action required to improve the Clerk's attendance and wellbeing.

Whicham Parish Council is also committed to its Equal Opportunities Policy and Data Protection Policy.