

HELMINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL SICKNESS & ABSENCE POLICY

Prepared by: Parish Clerk
Adopted by Resolution of : Helmingham Parish Council **on** 15th May 2026
Reviewed & Re-Adopted:
Date of Next Review: May 2027

This policy sets out our arrangements for sick pay and for reporting and managing sickness absence; abuse of sickness absence, including failing to report absence or falsely claiming sick pay will be treated as misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedure. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

Reporting When You Are Sick

If you cannot attend work because you are sick or injured you should telephone the Chairman of the Council as soon as possible and no later than 30 minutes after the time when you are normally expected to start work.

Evidence Of Incapacity

You must complete a self-certification form for sickness absence of up to seven calendar days. For absence of more than a week you must obtain a certificate from your doctor stating that you are not fit for work, giving the reason. You must also complete a self- certification form to cover the first seven days. If absence continues beyond the expiry of a certificate, a further certificate must be provided. If your doctor provides a certificate stating that you "may be fit for work" you must inform the Proper Officer immediately. We will hold a discussion with you about how to facilitate your return to work, taking account of your doctor's advice. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, you will remain on sick leave and we will set a date for review. If you are off sick for an extended period of time (e.g. one month or more) the Council may require you to return Council equipment until you are well enough to return to work. If you do not return to work following a period of sickness absence, you will be required to return all outstanding Council equipment on the date of termination of your employment.

Statutory Sick Pay

You may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you satisfy the relevant statutory requirements. Qualifying days for SSP are Monday to Friday, or as set out in your employment contract. The rate of SSP is set by the government in April each year. No SSP is payable for the first three consecutive days of absence. It starts on the fourth day of absence and may be payable for up to 28 weeks.

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After completing your probationary period you will qualify for Company sick pay provided you comply with this policy and any further requirements set out in your contract. Company sick pay is inclusive of any SSP. No Company sick pay will be paid for the first three consecutive days of absence. If you are absent from work on account of sickness or injury, it is your responsibility to inform the Council of the reason for your absence as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the working day on which the absence first occurs. Provided that you comply with the Council's sickness absence policy, you will receive sick pay when you are absent from work because of sickness, in accordance with the details written in your employment of contract.

Return-To-Work Interviews

After a period of sick leave your manager may hold a return-to-work interview with you. The purposes may include:

a. ensuring you are fit for work and agreeing any actions necessary to facilitate your return

b. confirming you have submitted the necessary certificates

c. updating you on anything that may have happened during your absence

d. raising any other concerns regarding your absence record or your return to work.

Managing Long-Term or Persistent Absence

The following paragraphs set out our procedure for dealing with long-term absence or where your level or frequency of short-term absence has given us cause for concern. The purpose of the procedure is to investigate and discuss the reasons for your absence, whether it is likely to continue or recur, and whether there are any measures that could improve your health and/or attendance. We may decide that medical evidence, or further medical evidence, is required before deciding on a course of action.

HPC will notify you in writing of the time, date and place of any meeting, and why it is being held. We will usually give you a week's notice of the meeting. Meetings will be conducted by the Proper Officer. You may bring a companion to any meeting or appeal meeting under this procedure. Your companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague, who will be allowed reasonable paid time off from duties to act as your companion. If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified you should let us know as soon as possible and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time. If you have a disability, we will consider whether reasonable adjustments may need to be made to the sickness absence meetings procedure, or to your role or working arrangements.

Medical Examinations

We may ask you to consent to a medical examination by a doctor or occupational health professional or other specialist nominated by us (at our expense). You will be asked to agree that any medical report produced may be disclosed to us and that we may discuss the contents of the report with the specialist and with our advisers. All medical reports will be kept confidential and held in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Initial Sickness Absence Meeting

The purposes of a sickness absence meeting or meetings will be to discuss the reasons for your absence, how long it is likely to continue, whether it is likely to recur, whether to obtain a medical report, and whether there are any measures that could improve your health and/or attendance; In cases of long-term absence, we may seek to agree a return-to-work programme, possibly on a phased basis; In cases of short-term, intermittent absence, we may set a target for improved attendance within a certain timescale.

If Matters Do Not Improve

If, after a reasonable time, you have not been able to return to work or if your attendance has not improved within the agreed timescale, we will hold a further meeting or meetings. We will seek to establish whether the situation is likely to change and may consider redeployment opportunities at that stage. If it is considered unlikely that you will return to work or that your attendance will improve within a short time, we may give you a written warning that you are at risk of dismissal. We may also set a further date for review.

Final Sickness Absence Meeting

Where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, and the situation has not changed significantly, we will hold a meeting to consider the possible termination of your employment. Before we make a decision, we will consider any matters you wish to raise and whether there have been any changes since the last meeting.

Appeals

You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure. If you wish to appeal you should set out your appeal in writing to the Chairman of the Parish Council, stating your grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you. If you are appealing against a decision to dismiss you, we will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will be dealt with impartially and, where possible, by two members of Council who have not previously been involved in the case. We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. There is no further right of appeal. The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of

an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.

Related policies and procedures

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Council's Health & Safety, Discipline and Grievance policies.