

Appendix A: Revised Management of Sickness Absence Policy

Policy Statement

South Cambridgeshire District Council values the contribution of all staff in the delivery and maintenance of quality services to the community.

This document sets out the policy for the management of attendance and the procedures to be followed with regard to the reporting of sickness absence. The policy should be used as guidance, as each ill health case will be considered individually, however consistency of approach across the Council is important. The policy defines short term and long-term absence, and clearly outlines the roles of the employee and the manager in maximising attendance at work.

The Council aims to ensure that employees maintain good health and that absence due to sickness is minimised, by offering a safe working environment coupled with flexible working practices, family friendly policies and the positive promotion of good health. The procedure seeks to establish a positive attendance culture by providing a balance between the needs of employees to receive fair, consistent and sympathetic treatment, and service provision.

Managers will have responsibility for ensuring that all employees are fully conversant with the absence notification procedures, that they comply with them, and know where to locate an absence management policy. For new employees, information about sickness absence management should form part of their departmental induction, and will be included with their contract pack.

The HR/ Payroll team will advise and support both managers and employees to ensure that the policy is applied in a fair and consistent way, and may be contacted at any stage in the process.

Scope

The sickness absence management policy and associated procedures and guidance apply to all employees of the Council. The policy does not apply to agency temporary staff, to people employed on a consultancy basis or anyone working on a casual basis where no work is guaranteed.

Principles

- Good attendance is valued, is essential to the quality of services provided by the Council;
- Employees are expected to attend work unless prevented by ill health;
- Open and honest communication between managers and employees is expected;
- If an employee believes that their work is affecting their health they should raise the issues with their manager or alternatively a member of the HR team;
- Matters raised relating to an employee's attendance do not imply any distrust of employees;
- Sickness absence will be dealt with in a way that is non-discriminatory and in accordance with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy;
- Employees will be dealt with consistently and the procedures applied fairly;

- The initial approach to the management of sickness absence will always be positive and preventative rather than punitive;
- Employees suffering from ill-health will be dealt with in a sensitive and supportive manner;
- Sickness absence cases will be conducted with respect for confidentiality and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection and Access to Medical Reports Acts;
- All employees who become disabled during the course of their employment will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Disability Discriminations Act 1995(as amended);
- Abuse of the sickness absence procedures or sick pay scheme may result in disciplinary action being taken.

This policy is intended to complement and work in conjunction with the following Council guidance, policies and procedures:

- Capability Policy and Procedure;
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Procedure

Sickness absence monitoring

All sickness absences must be recorded in accordance with the Council's Sickness Absence System. The Council has to provide corporate sickness absence level statistics as part of its Best Value Performance Indicators and in order to monitor the success of the Sickness Absence Policy and identify causes for concern. Statistics will not provide information on individual cases.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring new employees are aware of these procedures. All employees are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the correct procedure and if they are unsure should seek advice from their line manager.

Each manager is required to monitor sickness absence with their team and take further action as necessary when trigger points are reached and/or where there are concerns about an employee's absence levels.

An essential part of the monitoring of sickness absence is to establish and maintain contact between the employee and their manager during the sickness absence, always taking into account the nature of the employee's illness and the effect such contact might have on their recovery. The line manager needs to ensure that work is reallocated and service delivery is maintained. Regular telephone contact should be established early on in a period of prolonged absence and maintained throughout the duration of a period of sickness absence. Regular review meetings should take place between employees and their manager, consideration will be given to visiting the employee at home if this seems to be appropriate.

If requested by the manager, a member of the HR/ Payroll team can maintain contact. If an employee contacts HR directly because of the sensitive nature of their illness, employees will always be encouraged to speak to their manager themselves, but confidentiality will be maintained.

Notification

Employees must inform their manager of the nature and likely duration of their sickness absence either

- before their normal start time on the first day of absence or
- adhere to the arrangements specific to the particular area of service.

The latest time for notification is 10 a.m.

Contact should be by telephone. Notification by text message, voicemail message or e-mail message is not acceptable. In exceptional circumstances, for example, hospital admittance or loss of voice, someone else can ring in on behalf of the employee. Employees must continue to keep their manager informed of their likely return date.

Failure to adhere to the notification procedure without reasonable grounds could result in the absence being regarded as unauthorised, and therefore without pay. Persistent breaches of the notification rules may result in disciplinary action being taken.

It is the responsibility of employees to adhere to the reporting procedure for sickness absence including keeping their manager informed of absence should it continue.

Line managers have a duty to maintain service delivery, minimize disruption and take into account the effects of absence on other employees who may have to provide cover. This means all employees need to be prepared to discuss any work commitments that may need rearranging.

Certification

A self-certification form must be completed for every period of sickness. Managers will initiate the form when an employee rings in to report a sickness absence.

For up to 7 days continuous absence:

A self-certification form only needs to be completed. Absence includes non-working days such as Saturdays and Sundays where absence occurs across a weekend, or part days, such as leaving work early due to illness.

For absences lasting 8 continuous days or more:

a medical certificate covering the period commencing on the 8th day of absence is required in addition to the self certificate. This must be provided within 3 working days of the start date of the medical certificate.

If an employee is admitted into hospital they should obtain a medical certificate on their discharge. The ward staff, such as the Sister or Staff Nurse, will usually issue this.

Where there is continuing sickness absence the employee must submit consecutive medical certificates to cover the whole period of absence.

Medical certificates authorise payment of statutory sick pay so delay in providing the certificate may result in delays of payment, or stoppages of pay. Medical certificates

should be forwarded by the line manager to the HR/ Payroll team as part of the sickness return.

The production of medical certificates by an employee does not prevent action being taken under this procedure. The policy and procedure relate to the management of attendance, it does not suggest that employees may not be genuinely ill.

The Council may consider it necessary for some employees to produce a medical certificate before the 8th day where the nature of the employee's sickness record warrants this. The Council will meet any reasonable cost incurred in obtaining this certificate. This facility would not normally be used until the first informal meeting stage.

In certain circumstances employees will require a medical certificate that they are fit to return to work. Return to work certificates with a date for return would usually be expected after

- an employee has had major surgery e.g. a hysterectomy, heart bypass surgery
- a long period of absence due to a musculo-skeletal problem e.g. back problem
- industrial injury
- long term mental health problem
- any event involving a loss of consciousness e.g. a serious road traffic accident, a fit, stroke or seizure.

For certain sections, for example, where absences are covered by agency staff, employees are expected to let the section know they will be returning to work the day before return.

Conduct

Whilst on sick leave, an employee must not engage in any activity, which may delay his/her recovery and is expected to be available with reasonable notice to attend meetings.

Failure to follow this may lead to disciplinary action being taken and/or deduction of sick pay.

The Council is required to take the appropriate investigatory action when allegations are received suggesting that an employee is fraudulently claiming either Occupational or Statutory Sick Pay. Line managers must consult with the HR team before commencing an investigation, as it must take account of the right to privacy under the Human Rights Act. In exceptional circumstances covert surveillance may be considered necessary, which must be properly authorised under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) by an appropriate officer.

Returning to Work

Return to work meetings have been shown as the most effective way of monitoring sickness and reducing non-genuine absence. Managers are required to conduct a 'return to work interview' after **every** period of sickness absence of a day or more for **every** employee. This must be done within 3 days of the employee returning to work, but ideally, should be carried out on the first day.

The purpose of the discussion is to welcome the employee back to work, ensure there is an accurate record of the absence and appropriate certification and update the employee on work issues.

In rare circumstances a member of the HR/ Payroll team can carry out the return to work interview after discussion with the manager if the employee has requested this.

Further guidance on conducting a return to work interview can be found in appendix 2.

Role of the Council's medical advisers

The main role of the Council's medical advisers is to provide advice and guidance to managers on the impact of an employee's health on their ability to undertake their duties. They will also outline what measures can be put in place to support the employee. They will also provide advice on new employees through pre-employment screening and advise on rehabilitation periods and phased returns to work. Advice is always given in the context of the role and job descriptions.

The HR team are responsible for all liaison between the Council and the Council's medical advisers.

The Council's medical advisors, with the employee's consent, may request information from the employee's General Practitioner (GP) or other appropriate medical specialist to enable them to make an informed judgement.

After any referral to the medical advisors, a meeting will usually be held involving the employee and their manager and a member of the HR team, to discuss the advice received. A trade union representative or work colleague may accompany the employee to this meeting.

Short term absence

If an employee experiences several short-term absences and reaches the 'trigger points' as set out below, the line manager will initiate the short term absence procedure. HR/ Payroll can assist managers to confirm triggers have been reached if requested. Absence calendars can be produced from the HR/ Payroll computer system if requested.

The trigger points are one or more of the following :

- 3 separate episodes of sickness absence, within a rolling four-month period;
- 2 or more periods of absence totalling more than 10 working days, whether certificated or not in a rolling 12 month period;
- any recurring pattern of absence, which gives reasonable cause for concern, will require investigation. For example, if the absence recurs on the same day of the week, or regularly falls immediately before or after a period of annual leave or bank holidays.

If an employee reaches these triggers, managers will follow the procedure below.

Informal action

An informal review meeting will be held with the employee to discuss the absence record, explore the reasons, identify areas for support, review/update risk

assessment, set targets for improvement and clarify what further action may be taken if improvement targets are not met. Review meetings should be held as soon as possible after a trigger point has been passed but would not normally be combined with a return to work interview.

Each case must be dealt with according to its merits, but possible outcomes will normally include the following:

- Agreed action plan for attendance;
- Advice may be sought from the Councils' medical advisers, particularly if there is a repeating reasons for absence;
- Other support mechanisms such as training, counselling or referral to outside agencies may be identified and implemented;
- Reasonable adjustments such as changes to workload, work practices or work pattern or the possibility of redeployment may be identified (this may require medical guidance);
- The employee may be required to submit a medical certificate from their doctor for every instance of absence;
- Formal action under this policy may be taken;
- Formal action may be taken under the Disciplinary procedures where abuse of the sick pay scheme is involved, for example, claiming to be sick whilst working elsewhere. If it becomes apparent that the outcome may be formal action under the Disciplinary procedure, the meeting should be halted and re-convened as a Disciplinary meeting to allow for the notice of meeting and representation provisions to be adhered to.

A further meeting will be arranged to review progress. Depending on the circumstances, this will usually be within two to three months of the first meeting. The types of progress looked for may include

- No further absence in the continuing pattern;
- Overall reduction in the frequency of absence;
- Overall reduction in the actual numbers of days absence.

The manager/ team leader will write to the employee within 5 working days of the meeting, confirming points discussed, the need to improve attendance and timescale for review. A copy will be placed on the personnel file.

Having reviewed the circumstances the manager may choose to take no further action. However, it is recommended that in these circumstances a note be made of the meeting and the decision to take no further action.

Formal Action

First formal review

If there is an insufficient improvement within the review period in the employee's sickness absence record, a formal review meeting will be held with the line manager where reasons for the continued absence levels will be explored.

The emphasis at each stage of the process should one of problem solving to reduce sickness absence. The particular circumstances of each case need to be sensitively taken into account in determining action.

The employee will be given 5 working days written notice of the meeting. The employee may be accompanied by their trade union representative or work colleague.

During the meeting the issues to be discussed may include:

- the reasons for continued high absence;
- any previous reviews;
- impact on continued absence on service and colleagues;
- support that has been provided will be outlined;
- what further support may be appropriate
- a requirement to attend the Council's medical advisors for medical advice;
- action by the manager or employee to improve attendance;
- need for tangible improvements will be emphasised.

At the end of the meeting the manager will consider all aspects of the case and issue a first formal warning for capability if appropriate. Generally warnings for capability will not be used where there is an underlying medical reason for the absences.

A first written warning for capability will state that the employee's sickness absence record is not satisfactory and that it must reach a satisfactory level for a sustained period or this will normally lead to a further warning. The line manager will write to the employee within 5 working days of the formal review meeting, confirming the points discussed and actions agreed. A copy of this letter should be placed on the personnel file. Maintained improvement will be expected over a 12-month period from the date of the letter.

Second formal review

Failure to improve to an adequate level after a further review period will lead to a further meeting. If after considering the information the manager feels that satisfactory improvement has not been maintained a final written warning will be issued. A final written warning for capability will state that the employee's sickness absence record is not satisfactory and that it must reach a satisfactory level for a sustained period or this may lead to termination of employment on the grounds of capability. The manager will write to the employee within 5 working days of the formal review meeting, confirming the points discussed and actions agreed. A copy of this letter should be placed on the personnel file. Maintained improvement will be expected over a 24-month period from the date of the letter

Failure to improve

Failure to improve after a final written warning for capability and a further review period could lead to a dismissal on the grounds of capability. Failure to improve after a final written warning will be referred to the appropriate Corporate Manager for a case review meeting.

Sickness should continue to be reviewed throughout the 12 month/ 24 month period and if there is no improvement consideration can be given to holding a further review meeting before the period set is due for completion. Cases such as this should be discussed with a member of HR/ Payroll team before action is taken to provide consistency of approach.

Improvements in attendance

Improvements in attendance should be recognised and where these are adequate and sustained, employees should be seen and removed from the process.

Appeals

At each formal stage there is a right of appeal to an appropriate 2nd or 3rd tier officer against the warning issued. In the case of 2nd or 3rd tier officers or someone reporting directly to them, the appeal will be to the Chief Officer or the Chief Officer may nominate another officer to hear the appeal. A written notice of appeal against a formal warning for capability should be sent to the relevant person within 10 working days of the issue of the warning. An appeal hearing will be arranged as soon as practicable.

Long term absence

Long-term absence is defined as absence of 28 or more continuous calendar days. In the vast majority of cases, employees will be able to return to work in due course.

If an employee reaches this trigger point, the manager should continue to keep in contact with the employee. Contact should be appropriate to the nature and duration of the illness, in order that the employee does not feel as if they are being pressured into returning to work before they are fit to do so.

The manager may wish to contact the employee to arrange an informal interview, in order to determine if a return to work is expected and to keep updated on the medical condition.

The meeting can be held at the employee's home or place of work, depending on which is more suitable for them. A trade union representative, or a work colleague may accompany the employee.

Home visits should be arranged with the employee at a time, which is suitable for them. In addition, the employee may request that another member of staff who is the same sex as the employee accompanies the manager.

Managers must consider referring the employee to the Council's medical advisor when sickness absence becomes long term. The main purpose of a referral will be to provide an indication of the likely duration of the employee's absence and whether any steps can be taken to help the employee return to work.

When the medical report has been returned to HR, the manager should meet with the employee, to discuss the results and possible action to be taken. Possible action could include:

- Full return to work. A formal return to work interview should be conducted.
- Phased return to previous post with reduced hours for a limited period of time;
- Return to post with elements, which aggravate the ill-health, removed, if possible;
- Reasonable adjustments made to the post to allow a return to work;
- If the post cannot be suitably altered and the employee cannot return to it, the redeployment process will be initiated to identify to suitable alternative employment with the help of HR;
- Ill-health retirement – if supported by LGPS occupational health provider

- Case review if a suitable alternative post cannot be identified, or reasonable adjustments to the post have been if considered, discussed and exhausted-

In most cases employees will return to work in due course. However in some cases, this may not be possible due to the actual or anticipated duration of the absence. Therefore, providing all the necessary steps have been taken to try and facilitate a return to work beforehand, it may be necessary to terminate the employee's employment on the grounds of long term ill health. This should be dealt with sensitively and sympathetically. Redeployment options must be explored before consideration of any termination of employment on the grounds of long-term ill health.

Private health care

The Council will not usually pay for medical treatment to be performed privately. Such payments have tax and National Insurance implications for the Council and the employee. Exceptions may be made for counselling services (outside of the Employee Support Helpline). Where the Council's medical advisors feel that further advice is required from a consultant and there is a considerable delay the Council may consider paying for a referral to a consultant. Each case will be considered on its merits by the relevant Corporate Manager and the HR Manager. There is no central budget for any such exceptional referral.

Phased return

In many cases of long-term sickness absence, a structured phased return to work will be appropriate. Phased return may involve working shorter hours, less days, working from home, different tasks etc. Any phased return will usually involve the Council's medical advisors, the employee's GP/ consultant and the relevant line manager. Any phased return would normally last for no more than 3 months. If the phased return is longer than this period and involves a reduction in hours a temporary variation to contract will be considered.

Light duties

A return to work on light duties will be considered to allow an employee to work whilst waiting for planned surgery or other treatment. However, there is a no right to work on light duties and if light duties are not possible the employee will be asked to submit a medical certificate or transfer onto a temporary part time contract.

The Council cannot create posts to facilitate light duties. The Council reserves the right to ask an employee to see their GP for a medical certificate if the level of work falls to an extent where is not viable or there are health and safety concerns for the employee.

Case Review Meetings

If a long-term period of absence is continuing and options that would enable the employee to remain in employment have been unsuccessful or an employee has an underlying medical condition causing short term absence or a final warning for capability has not improved attendance or options to improve attendance have been exhausted, the employee may be asked to attend a Case Review meeting.

The line Manager, the relevant Corporate Manager and the HR team member dealing with the case, should discuss the need for a Case Review Meeting. If in agreement, HR will arrange a Case Review meeting.

The purpose of the Case Review meeting will be to consider whether, in line with legal options, there are any further actions that the Council and employee can take to assist the employee in continuing their employment or whether the employment should be terminated due the employee's incapability to undertake their duties, effectively because of ill health.

Although ill health retirement will normally require an employee to be legally dismissed, a Case Review meeting will not be required if ill health retirement has been granted.

The appropriate Corporate Manager, accompanied by a member of the HR team not previously involved with the case, will chair the Case Review meeting. The HR representative will take notes of the meeting.

The employee will be given at least 5 working days notice of the intention to hold a Case Review meeting. A trade union representative or workplace colleague may accompany the employee.

Case review meetings are not disciplinary hearings but many of the provisions made for disciplinary hearings will be good practice for Case Review meetings. In particular it is very important to allow the employee and/or their representative to question what is said and to present their own submission.

Management, usually the relevant line manager, supported by the member of the HR team involved in the case will set out the history.

If the employee fails to attend, or is too ill to attend, any written submission or representations made on their behalf by a fellow employee or representative will be considered along with any documentary evidence submitted by the employee.

The Corporate Manager will consider such issues as:

- Medical advice received;
- The impact of the employees' absence and ill health on other employees and service;
- The employee's absence record;
- Financial implications;
- The need for the work to be undertaken;
- Representations made by the employee and/or their representative;
- What actions have been taken to attempt to enable the employee to continue in employment.

This list is not exhaustive and the weight attached to each will depend on the circumstances of the case, balancing the needs of the employee and the Council.

Any actions will be discussed with the employee and their representative, if applicable, before any final decisions are made. In all instances employees will be treated in a fair and reasonable manner, appropriate to their particular case.

The employee will be informed of the decision and this decision will be confirmed in writing in 5 working days.

If the Corporate Manager feels that further action could be taken, the manager with assistance from HR is responsible for putting that action into place.

If the Corporate Manager considers that dismissal on the grounds of capability is the appropriate option, they will make a recommendation to the Chief Executive to confirm the decision. (This can be done by e-mail but the e-mail trail must show confirmation by the Chief Executive).

If a decision to dismiss is made, the dismissal letter will inform the employee of notice of termination of employment and the date it will take effect. Employees will be paid in lieu of notice as they are either too ill to attend work or are not capable of working on a consistent basis.

The employee has the right to appeal against decisions to terminate employment on the grounds of ill health. In order to exercise this right, the employee must write to the HR Manager within 10 working days of receipt of the letter confirming dismissal. The employee must state the grounds for their appeal.

A panel of the Employment Committee will hear the appeal. A trade union representative or work colleague may accompany the employee at the hearing.

The panel is not competent to hear appeals against the refusal of an ill health retirement by the second independent doctor.

The decision of the panel is final within the authority's internal procedures.

Special Circumstances

This list is not exhaustive and managers and employees are recommended to consult with HR if a situation arises which is not covered in loose terms in this policy. However, here are some of the more 'common' special circumstances, which may arise:

Employees on probationary period

The procedure for notification, recording and monitoring sickness absence apply equally to employees on their probationary period. If an employee begins to have frequent short-term sickness absence, which causes concern, it is advisable that the manager speaks to the employee without delay, to establish the reasons. The difficulties caused to colleagues and service provision should be pointed out, and the employee should be encouraged to identify any problems, which may be contributing to the absences.

The manager should advise the employee that s/he will continue to review their absence for a specified period (say, 1 month), after which, a formal follow-up interview will be arranged. Managers may wish to consider referral to the Council's medical advisors for additional medical guidance, and must be mindful of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (see below).

The employee must be informed that if the pattern continues, termination of their contract will result.

If the pattern of absence improves, managers may extend the probationary period for a period of time equivalent to that which the employee has been absent for.

Employees on annual leave

Employees on sick leave (long or short term) accrue annual leave in the usual way. Employees are responsible for ensuring that any holiday taken whilst off sick does not prolong their absence from work.

If an employee becomes ill during a period of annual leave, leave may be reinstated on production of a medical certificate from a doctor. Only days covered by the certificate will be reinstated.

Employees are not entitled to paid holiday where contractual sick pay has expired.

Employees with a Disability

Many employees with a disability or who become disabled during the course of employment will not have sickness absence problems. For other employees with a disability, increased sickness absence may happen for a number of reasons.

Employees with disabilities are subject to the same procedures as regards management of attendance with the following provisos:

All organisations have a statutory requirement to make reasonable adjustments to physical aspects of the workplace or working arrangements to aid employees with a disability, so that they are not disadvantaged in the workplace. Reasonable adjustments may include an expectation of higher than normal levels of sickness absence but this should be documented as a reasonable adjustment after suitable medical advice.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 a disabled person is defined as someone with "a physical or mental impairment, which has substantial long term affect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities", where 'long term' is defined as having lasted for at least 12 months, or is likely to last at least 12 months, or is likely to recur. Some conditions, such as cancer, are considered as disabilities from the point of diagnosis.

Normal day to day activities means at least one of these areas must be substantially affected:

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- understanding of the risk of physical danger.

The Act says that any treatment or correction should not be taken into account, including medical treatment or the use of a prosthesis or other aid (for example, a hearing aid). The only things which are taken into account are glasses or contact lenses. For

example, if, as a result of a hearing impairment, an employee experiences difficulty hearing someone talking at a sound level which is normal for everyday conversations in a moderately noisy place, it would be reasonable to regard this as having a substantial adverse effect. If the impairment affects mobility, being unable to travel a short journey as a passenger in a vehicle would reasonably be regarded as having a substantial adverse effect. So would only being able to walk slowly or with unsteady or jerky movements.

If an employee has a medical condition that does not fall under the definition, but the nature of their condition may require adjustments to be made in order to assist the individual to continue working, this should be considered, as a matter of good practice.

Employees diagnosed with a progressive illness

There are a number of illnesses, for example cancer, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, HIV/ AIDS, which can be progressive. Best practice is for managers to refer the employee to the Council's medical advisors for advice through HR, at the point of diagnosis. This allows the employee to establish a relationship with the advisors so their condition can be monitored and appropriate adjustments made during the course of the illness.

Appeals

Managers will treat all discussions and information in the strictest confidence and apply the procedure and conduct meetings in a professional and consistent manner. If an employee feels that they are being treated unfairly with regard to the application of the procedure or the conduct of the meetings, s/he has the right to express their concerns to a higher level and should pursue the grievance procedure in this instance.

Representation

Employees are entitled to be accompanied to any formal meeting by a trade union representative, or a colleague who is a South Cambridgeshire District Council employee. Employees would not normally be represented at return to work meetings or informal meetings.

Referral to Council medical advisors

Employees are required to go to the Council's medical advisors if they are referred, in order that the Council can assist the employee with any health issue.

Appendix 1 Self-certification form

Part A must be completed by the office manager or designated administrator when they are notified of an employee's absence. Parts B, C & D must be completed by the line manager or supervisor at the Return to Work interview within three days of the employee's return. Please note the reasons for absence in Part B are for monitoring purposes, and the reason for absence in Part A is to record the initial information given by the employee.

Once completed in full, this form must be returned to the to the Payroll section with a copy to relevant P.A.

N.B. Provision of false information may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Part A Employee Details

Section	Forename	Surname	Payroll Number (compulsory)
Full time or part time?			
If part time then number of hours worked per week?		Please specify days of week worked	
Date and Time last worked:			

Notification Details

Day 1 notification	Time of Notification & Name of Person taking call		
Name of Caller		Relationship to Employee	
Symptoms / reason for Absence		Expected Return date	
Day 7 Notification:	Time of Notification & Name of Person taking call Remind Employee to submit any Medical Certs within 3 days		
Expected Return date:			
Next contact day if expected return date not available			
Any change in Symptoms / Reasons for Absence:			

Date fit to return to work: (e.g. would the employee have been fit enough to return to work on a Saturday had it been a working day?)

Date of actual return:

Part B Reasons for Absence: (please tick)

Back problem		Pregnancy related	
Other muscular-skeletal problems		Stomach, liver, kidney digestion	
Stress/depression & mental health		Heart, blood pressure, circulation	
Viral infection		Chest, respiratory	
Headaches and migraines		Ear, nose, mouth, eye	
Operation & post operative recovery		Other (please specify)	
Genito-urinary			

Part C If you were injured at work:

How did the accident happen?

Where and when did the accident happen?

Were there any witnesses? Yes No

If so, please provide names and addresses:

Was an accident report completed? Yes No

Name and address of Doctor:

Part D

Return to Work Interview has taken place Yes No

Comments and Action to be taken:

Does this employee qualify for travel compensation? Yes No

Signed: _____ Manager Dated: _____

Signed: _____ Employee Dated: _____

Appendix 2 Return to work meetings

The return to work meeting is informal in nature and has several purposes:

- Ensures that there is an accurate record of the nature and duration of the absence;
- Enables the manager and employee to discuss all aspects relating to the employee's health and welfare, and can identify support if required, such as counselling, work station assessment, special leave etc.
- Helps to apply the absence management procedure and interviews in a fair and consistent way.

Return to work meetings are held after every period of sickness absence within 3 days of the employee returning to work, but ideally, should be carried out on the first day back.

All discussions and information are held in confidence

A line manager may ask HR to conduct the return to work interview, but this would be in exceptional circumstances, and the reasons for it must be explicitly explained to both HR and the employee.

A note should be made of the fact that the meeting took place and details of any action agreed to be taken. Usually the result of the conversation will be recorded on the Sickness Statement form. Additional sheets can be attached to the form if necessary. The record does not need to be a verbatim account of the whole conversation. Both the line manager and the employee should sign the form, if the employee does not want to sign the form the reason for their refusal should be recorded on the form.

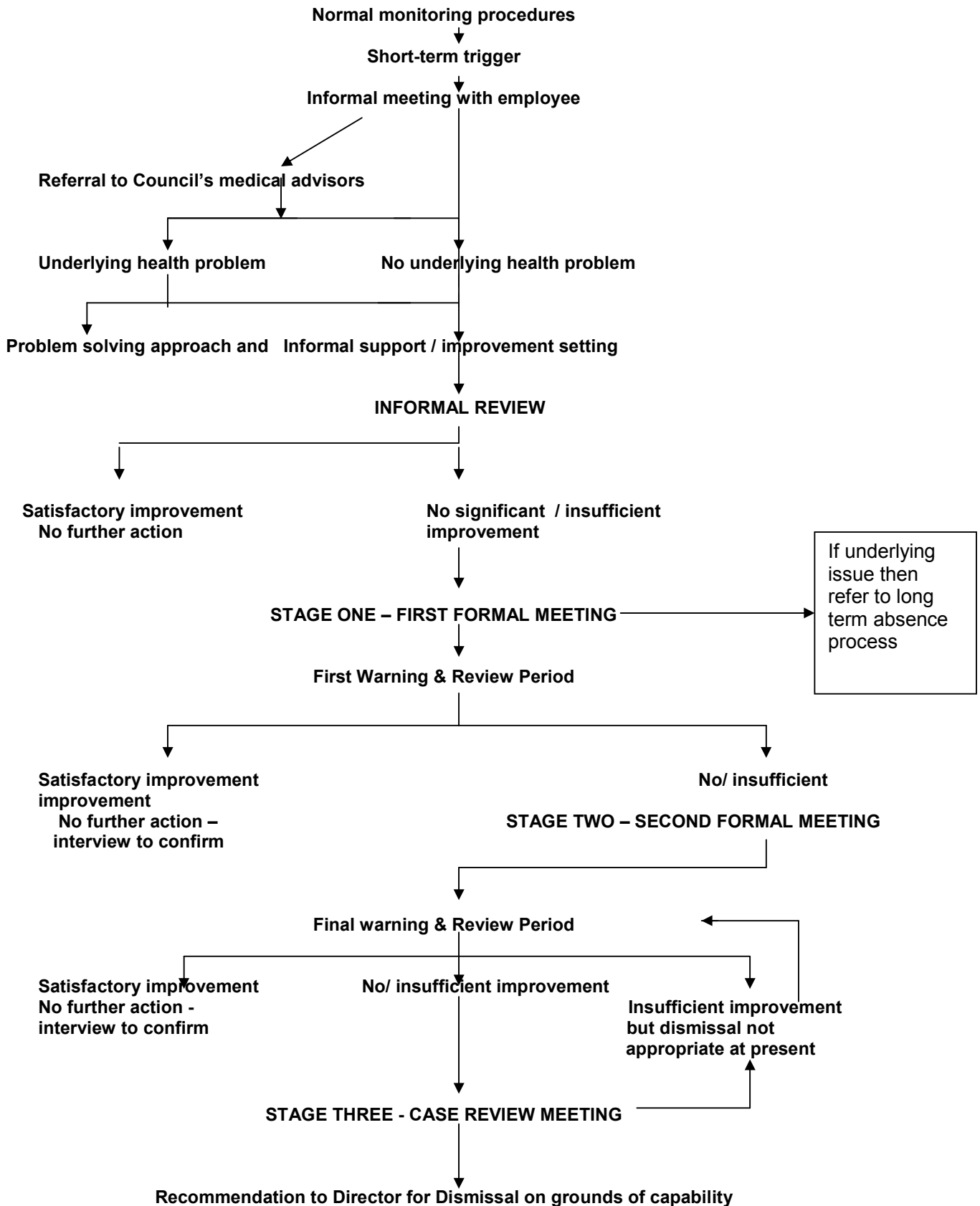
If the manager feels "out of their depth" or feels that they have been given information they are not sure how to deal with they should tell the employee that they need to seek advice, even if the employee has asked them to keep the conversation confidential. Confidential advice and support is always available from the HR team.

The following pro forma is intended as guidance.

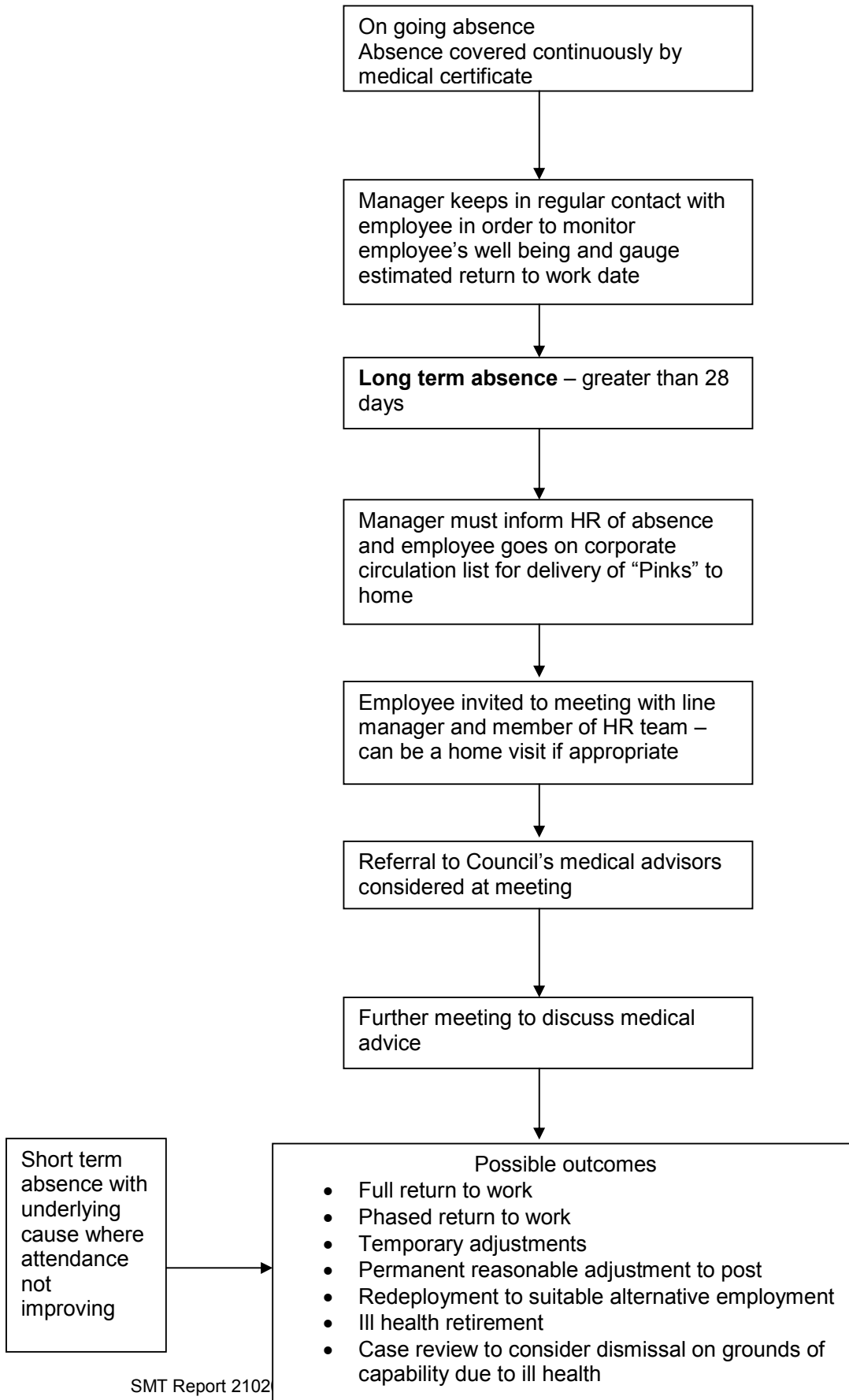
Preparation for the meeting	Exact dates of period of absence	
	Previous periods of absence in recent past (exact dates and the nature of the sickness)?	
	What contacts were made with the employee during the absence?	
	What were the effects of the absence on the service, colleagues and workload?	
During the meeting	Welcome the employee back	
	Establish the nature of the sickness.	How are you feeling?
	Establish if the employee has fully recovered	Have you fully recovered?
	If the absence has been for a longer period (e.g. more than a couple of days) managers should use the	Sorry you have been sick. We covered you work by

	interview to help employees catch up with information.	You need to read these particular e-mails.. I need you to concentrate on this area of work.....
	Discuss whether any support or assistance is required. If you feel there are social or welfare issues that the employee needs to get help on you can suggest they contact HR or the Employee Support Helpline (0800 282193). Record on the return to work record that this has been suggested. Let the employee take the responsibility themselves of making the contact.	Is there anything we can do to help?
	If appropriate, remind the employee that this particular absence represents (for example) the second or third absence within a specified period of time.	
	Give the employee full opportunity to discuss their sickness record and any other relevant details, which affect work performance or attendance. This should be used to establish if there is a work related problem.	Is work contributing to your sickness? Are there any no-work related matters contributing to your sickness? Did you see your GP?
	If appropriate, inform the employee that the particular absence represents a problem and that a further meeting or action is now necessary	
	It is important to balance the needs of the employee and the concerns about service delivery and the needs of other members of the team.	Your sickness had quite an impact on the team.....

Appendix 3 Short term absence flowchart



Appendix 4 Long term absence flowchart



Appendix 5 – standard letters

Wording may be changed to meet individual circumstances.

__ and [] indicate where information should be added to or removed from the letter that is used.

Model letter 1 - Informal Action Letter

Dear _____

I am writing to confirm the details of our recent meeting held to discuss your sickness absence on **[date]**.

I explained that the reason for my concern was that you have had ____days/instances of absence during the past ____ months.

As you are aware, we have met on _____ occasions prior to this review meeting, at return to work meetings, where we have discussed your sickness absence levels, what support is available to you such as the Employee Support Helpline, referral to the Council's medical advisors, counselling, **[delete what is not relevant]** and what further actions to take, which have included _____

At the meeting we discussed the reasons for your absence and your response was _____

We agreed that the following measures would be put in place –

[Help could include counselling, Employee Support Helpline, regular supervision meetings, temporary change of working pattern/duties/hours, advice from the Council's medical advisors, training (list is not exhaustive)]

[Include reference to targets set, with timescales]

I explained that it was important that if you continue to experience problems that affect your attendance record you discuss these with me, so that we can determine whether any further support can be made available to you.

I hope that the measures we have agreed will help you to improve your attendance. However, if there is insufficient improvement in your attendance levels during the next **[insert the time period, usually about 2 – 3 months]** months, I may need to discuss the matter again with you on a formal basis which may lead to warnings for capability.

I hope this clarifies the points we discussed and that there is a significant and sustained improvement in your attendance level.

Yours sincerely

[Manager name]
[Manager job title]

Copy HR, Employee file

Model letter 2 – Invite to formal meeting

Dear

I am writing to advise you that a formal meeting under the provisions of the Sickness Absence Management Policy is necessary.

This meeting will be held at **[location]** on **[date]** at **[time]** and its purpose is to consider your on-going sickness absence problems. As you are aware we met informally/ formally **[delete as appropriate]** on **[dates]**. I attach copies of the relevant correspondence from these meetings. **[It may also be appropriate to attach copies of self-certificate forms or letters from the Council's medical advisors].**

You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative to support or advise you. **[Indicate who apart from the line manager will be attending].**

Yours sincerely

[Manager name]
[Manager job title]

Copy HR, Employee file

Model letter 3 – Further informal review

Dear _____

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the formal review meeting I held with you on **[date]**. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss with you my concerns relating to your levels of sickness absence. Also present at this meeting was/were **[insert names and job titles]**.

I explained that I had concerns regarding your absence levels. The reason for these concerns was that you have had ____ days/instances of absence during the past ____ months.

As you are aware, we have met on ____ occasions prior to this formal review meeting. At the previous meetings your absence record was discussed, support was provided to you such as _____ and actions were agreed such as _____.

I am aware that there are a number of issues surrounding your sickness. However, we need your attendance levels to improve. Having considered the situation, I feel a further review period is appropriate.

We agreed the following measures would be put into place –

[include references to support measures agreed and targets set, with timescales]

I reiterated that it was important that if you continue to experience problems that impact on your attendance record you should raise these with me so that any further support could be identified.

I hope that the measures that we have agreed will help you to improve your attendance. However, if there is an insufficient improvement in your attendance levels during the next **[insert time period usually between 3 and 6 months]** months, there will be a further formal review meeting at which a warning for capability may be issued.

I hope that this clarifies the points we discussed and that there is a significant and sustained improvement in your attendance level.

Yours sincerely

[Manager name]
[Manager job title]

Copy HR, Employee file

Model letter 4 – Warning letter

Dear _____

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the formal review meeting I held with you on **[date]**. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss with you my concerns relating to your levels of sickness absence. Also present at this meeting was/were **[insert names and job titles]**.

As you are aware, we have met on **[insert numbers of occasions]** occasions prior to this formal review meeting. At the previous meetings your absence record was discussed, support was offered to you such as **[insert detail]** and actions were agreed such as **[insert detail]**.

I explained that I still had concerns regarding your absence levels and that you had not achieved the agreed target for improvement.

After consideration of all the circumstances I explained that I had decided to issue you with a first/final **[delete as appropriate]** written warning for capability.

This warning requires you to improve and maintain the improvement in your attendance for a period of 12/ 24 months **[delete as appropriate]**.

There will a further review during this time period **[insert details, e.g. after 1/3/6 months/every month]**. **Continued** failure to improve your attendance may mean a further formal review meeting being held to consider a further written warning/ case review meeting, which could lead to dismissal on the grounds of capability.

You have a right of appeal to **[insert name]**, against my decision to issue this warning. You should put the reasons for your appeal in writing to **[insert name]** within 10 working days of this letter. **[Person hearing appeal]** will arrange an appeal meeting as soon as practicable.

I hope your attendance levels will improve. I must reiterate that it is important that if you continue to experience problems that impact on your attendance record you should raise these with me so that any further support could be identified.

Yours sincerely

[Manager name]
[Manager job title]

Copy HR, Employee file

Model letter 5 – Satisfactory improvement

Dear _____

Following our meetings to discuss my concerns about your attendance levels I am pleased that your attendance levels have improved and the improvement has been maintained. I am pleased to inform you that you have been taken out of the system for dealing with short-term absence and no further action will be taken.

I hope you continue with your improved health and attendance levels and that there will be no need to begin action again within the short-term absence process.

Yours sincerely

[Manager name]
[Manager job title]

Copy HR, Employee file