

STANION PARISH COUNCIL

ABSENCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

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Document Information

Master Document: The electronic version of this document is the master. Printed copies may not contain the latest changes and should not be relied upon. The master document is published on the Stanion Parish Council (SPC) website.

Purpose: The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to provide governance to the management of absence from work and outline the procedures for SPC staff and councillors to follow when dealing with absence from the work place.

Distribution: this Policy and Procedure will be made available to all SPC councillors and SPC staff via the SPC website.

Implementation: This Policy and Procedure will be implemented following consideration and adoption by the full Council.

Review: This document will be reviewed three years after its adoption, unless there are changes in legislation, or recommended best practice guidelines, in which case, it will be reviewed earlier, to comply with the statutory or recommended changes.

EIA Requirement: An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and no adverse impact has been identified.

Financial Implications: This Policy and Procedure has no financial implications for SPC other than those required by law in relation to the payment for sickness absence.

Policy Statement

This Policy is a formal, strategic level document, which provides a statement of intent explaining how SPC will comply with the legislation and any related directives of its subject matter.

This is a mandatory document and does not allow for variations of practice. It is relevant to all members of SPC, staff employed by SPC. Non-compliance with this Policy may result in formal complaints being registered and/or disciplinary action.

This Policy provides a corporate framework on which absence management procedures have been developed. It will be reviewed by a nominated councillor every three years unless there are changes in the legislation, directives, or recommended best practice guidelines that warrant earlier review

and amendment. All amendments require the agreement of the full council and for agreement to be formally recorded.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this Policy.

Duty to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment

Public sector organisations have a legal duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups. Due regard comprises proportionality and relevance.

The EIA Tool

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool to ensure that we don't unwittingly exclude anybody from accessing the services we provide. Undertaking an EIA involves assessing the likely effects of our policies on people according to their 'protected characteristics'.

These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy
- maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

An EIA should be applied to a Policy, Strategy, Plan, Function, Project, Service and Event. EIAs help to identify any inequalities in the provision of services, employment, or procedural practices, and minimise the risk of exposure to claims of discrimination.

Introduction

This Policy establishes a procedure to ensure compliance with employment law legislation and provide transparency and consistency in the method by which absence from the work place is dealt with. The method outlined in this document provides a standardised transparent process, which ensures that a fair and equitable approach is taken in dealing with absence from work. This process is managed by members of SPC.

Policy Statement

Stanion Parish council is committed to improving the health, wellbeing and attendance of its employee(s). We value the contribution our employee(s) make to the success of our work, and when

an employee is unable to work for any reason, we recognise the deleterious effect that absence has on our ability to deliver our services to the Parish. This absence policy explains:

- What we expect from the employee line manager and employee when handling absence, and
- How we will work to reduce levels of absence to a target of no more than **3** days per employee, per year

Key Principles

This Absence Policy is based on the following principles:

1. As a responsible employer we undertake to provide payments to employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness
2. Regular, punctual attendance is an implied term of every employee's contract of employment. We ask each employee to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance
3. We support employees who have genuine grounds for absence for whatever reason. This support includes:
 - Special leave for necessary absences not caused by sickness
 - A flexible approach to the taking of annual leave
 - Access to counsellors where necessary
 - Rehabilitation programmes in cases of long-term sickness absence

We will consider any advice given by the employee's GP on the Statement of Fitness for Work. If the GP advises that an employee 'may be fit for work', we will discuss with the employee how we can help them to get back to work. For example, on flexible hours/days, or altered/reduced duties

We will use an Occupational Health Advisor where appropriate, to help identify the nature of an employee's illness and advise the employee and their line manager on the best way to improve the employee's health and wellbeing.

The Parish Council's disciplinary procedures will be implemented if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or cannot be substantiated.

We respect the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness. This policy will be implemented in line with all data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1998.

Notification of Absence

If an employee is absent from work due to illness or injury, they are required to notify their line manager, or another member of the Council if they are unable to contact their line manager, within one hour of their normal start time on their assigned day of work, or before, if it is possible to do so. They are required to give a clear indication of the nature of the illness, and a likely return to work date.

The line manager will ask the employee if there is anything that the Parish Council needs to know about current outstanding or important work tasks. If the employee does not contact their line

manager (or another member of the Council) within the required timeframe, the line manager (or another member of the Council) will attempt to contact the employee at home.

It is understood that an employee may not always feel able to discuss their medical problem with their line manager, and the line manager will ensure that they are sensitive to individual concerns, and will attempt to make alternative arrangements, where appropriate.

Evidence of Incapacity

An employee may use the Council's self-certification arrangements for the first seven days of absence. Thereafter, a Statement of Fitness for Work is required to cover every subsequent day.

If the absence is likely to be protracted, for example, for more than for 14 days continuously, there is a shared responsibility for the Council and the employee to maintain contact at agreed intervals.

May be Fit for Some Work

If the employee's GP advises on the Statement for Fitness for Work that an employee 'may be fit for work', the line manager will discuss with the employee ways of helping them to get back to work. This might mean talking about a phased return to work or amended duties for an agreed period of time.

If it is not possible to provide the support an employee needs to return to work, for example, by making necessary workplace adjustments, or an employee feels unable to return, then the Statement will be used in the same way as if the GP advised that the employee was 'not fit for work'.

Return to Work Discussions

The line manager will discuss absences with the employee when they return to work to establish:

- That the employee is fit to return to work
- The work catch-up Plan (if required)
- Any support that the employee needs

If an employee's GP has advised that they 'may be fit for work' the return to work discussion can also be used to agree in detail how their return to work might work best in practice.

A More Formal Review

A more formal review will be triggered by:

- Frequent short-term absence
- Long-term absence
- Recurring recognisable patterns which give rise to concern, such as frequent absenteeism on the scheduled day of work, absenteeism during school holidays, or absenteeism coinciding with deadline dates or peaks in workloads

The review will look at any further action required to improve the employee's attendance and wellbeing.

The trigger points for part-time staff are:

- Working 1 day a week = 2 days absence within any 3-month period
- Working 2 days a week = 4 days absence within any 3-month period
- Working 3 days a week = 6 days absence within any 3-month period
- Working 4 days a week = 8 days absence within any 3-month period

Absence due to Disability or Maternity

Absences relating to the disability of an employee, or to pregnancy, will be recorded separate from sickness absence records.

Review

This policy will be reviewed by Stanion Parish Council every three years.

Signed: Signed on original

Date: 11.3.19