

Upper Rissington Parish Council

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY – May 2021

1. Absence Policy

- 1.1 Upper Rissington Parish Council wishes to ensure that it delivers quality services. This can only be achieved if it is possible to provide consistency and ensure that disruption to service provision, due to staff absence, is minimised. In dealing with sickness absence the organisation must balance the needs of individual employees against the need to provide and manage quality services, and the cost of employing temporary staff to cover absences.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that there will be occasions where employees will be absent through sickness or ill health. Policies and procedures are designed to ensure that any such absences are dealt with fairly and consistently, whilst taking into account individual circumstances. The Council is sympathetic where employees have genuine sickness, but extended or recurrent absence that affects the level of service provided by the Council must be addressed.
- 1.3 Where, following discussion with an employee, problems relating to patterns of absence have been identified, and where counselling is considered a way forward in helping to identify and resolve those issues, that shall be the first step taken before any formal action is considered. The Council will also make use of Occupational Health experts where health assessments are appropriate.
- 1.4 The responsibility for managing absence lies with the Parish Clerk and individual employees. The provision of management information and advice and guidance on managing absence and employee rights is the responsibility of the Parish Council.
- 1.5 Absence will not normally be regarded as a disciplinary matter, but if the reasons for absence are considered unsatisfactory or if an employee is in breach of the absence procedures, it may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.
- 1.6 Where an employee's persistent short-term absence or long-term absence is a cause for concern and/or affecting the services provided, the Council may seek to terminate an employee's contract.

2 Reporting Sickness

- 2.1 Employees are required to notify the Chairman as soon as possible and within an hour of their agreed start time that they are unable to come to work, giving an indication of the likely length of absence. If they are unable to contact the Chairman, they should contact the Vice-Chairman or another councillor. If an employee's sickness is likely to last longer than originally indicated, the employee must keep in regular contact with the Chairman about the likely date of return.
 - 2.2 Employees must complete an Absence Notification Form on return to work and return it to the Chairman.
 - 2.3 Where an employee is absent for more than seven consecutive days (including weekends) they are required to obtain a Medical Certificate from their Doctor or Hospital. The Medical Certificate should be sent to the Chairman as it is received and forwarded to the Parish Council's payroll department in order that sick pay is processed.
- 1.1 Where an employee does not submit a Medical Certificate for a period of absence over seven days they are not entitled to, and will not be paid, sick pay and may be disciplined for unauthorised absence.
 - 1.5 Where an employee returns to work within seven days, a Sickness Absence Notification Form must be completed and returned to the Chairman.

2. Probationary Period

2.1 Whilst it is recognised that there may be some genuine absence during the probationary period, prolonged or frequent absence during a probationary period may result in failure to confirm an employee in post or the termination of the contract prior to the completion of the probationary period.

3. Review of Sickness

3.1 The Clerk shall keep records of sickness absence.

3.2 Absence is not normally regarded as a disciplinary matter, but if the reasons for absence are considered unsatisfactory or if an employee is in breach of the absence policies and procedures it may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures

3.3 Where the Council is concerned about an employee's absence record or length of absence from work, they must meet with the employee to discuss their sickness record. The Council may require an employee to produce a Medical Certificate for all absences and where there is continued concern employees should receive first and final warnings that their absence records could lead to the termination of their contract.

3.4 Examples of absences causing concern include:

- an absence repeated in three consecutive months
- where there are four periods of absence in any six months
- where there is a long history of intermittent sickness

3.5 Where an employee's persistent short-term absence or long-term absence is a cause for concern and/or affecting the services the Council provides, it may seek to terminate an employee's contract. This will only be done after:

- Discussion with the employee
- Having sought Independent Medical Advice at no cost to the employee
- Offering suitable alternative employment, where appropriate
- Offering counselling, if appropriate

3.6 Employees have the right to refuse any independent medical examination, and the right to see, or withhold the results of any such examination and the right of appeal against any termination on the grounds of ill-health.

3.7 An employee's absence may be for reasons other than ill-health. Where it is clear this may be the case, the Council should consider alternative appropriate action to resolve the difficulties facing the employee.

4.0 Statutory Sick Pay

4.1 Employees are eligible for SSP only after 7 or more days incapacity for work, including weekends and holidays. Employees must complete an Employee's Statement of Sickness (SC2) self-certifying their absence or provide a Medical Certificate. Employees only receive SSP if their earnings are above a statutory minimum. Employees will not receive SSP if they do not advise Council of their absence or there is good cause to doubt their incapacity for work.

4.2 SSP is not paid where employees are entitled to other benefits e.g. Maternity or Disability Benefits, they are over 65, or they have exceeded the maximum for payment of SSP.

This policy was reviewed and approved on 10th May 2021. Next review due May 2022.