



## **POLICY CONTENTS PAGE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Within the framework of this procedure the Council will:
- Require employees to comply with the procedures for notifying absence to their manager/supervisor, and for claiming Occupational Sick Pay/Statutory Sick Pay.
  - Seek medical advice from the Council’s Occupational Health provider and the employee’s General Practitioner (GP) where appropriate.
  - Ensure that line managers/supervisor make contact with an employee on his/her return to work following sickness absence. The manager/supervisor must arrange a suitable time at this stage to complete a return to work interview. This should be completed ideally on the first day face to face but within 5 working days of a return to work.
  - Treat fairly, sympathetically and confidentially, all cases of absence in consultation with the employee concerned, having regard to individual circumstances and in accordance with procedures.

1.2 Throughout this Procedure reference is made to “Sickness Absence” and unless otherwise specified this relates to “Absences due to sickness, industrial injury or disability related illness”.

### **1.3 Reasonable Adjustments**

1.3.1 The Council will comply with its obligations to make reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

1.3.2 The Council will consider all reasonable adjustments which could be made in respect of an employee's work in order to facilitate their return to work or to assist them after a return to work. Such adjustments may include a reduction in hours, phased return, lighter duties, physical adjustments and retraining. These adjustments will be confirmed by Occupational Health and will be reviewed. In certain circumstances they may be adopted as a permanent request. the Council will review available posts or deal with through ill health or in conjunction with the Capability Policy should the adjustment be deemed as permanent. Each case will be dealt with individually and in its own merits. The Council may also consider suitable alternative employment or application for ill health, if the adjustment is deemed permanent and cannot be accommodated within their own role.

1.3.3 Disability related absences will be identified by Occupational Health. The absences will not be counted as a sickness absence for purposes of sickness triggers.

## **2. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE**

Also refer to:

- Appendix – Summary: Notification Procedures for Sickness Absence.

### **2.1 Sickness Absence 1-3 Calendar Days**

An employee must notify his/her immediate line manager/supervisor as early as possible on the first day of absence, normally no later than two hours of his/her normal starting time. In the event that an employee’s immediate line manager is not available it is acceptable to advise an alternative officer nominated by the line manager. Asking a colleague to notify the employee’s line manager is not acceptable. Notification by ‘text message/email’ to

any Council employee is not acceptable. Only by exception is it permissible for a third party to report an employee's absence for example in the case of an employee being unexpectedly admitted to hospital.

The line manager should establish:

- The reasons for the absence (nature of illness or disability).
- The likely duration (how long likely to be absent).
- Whether or not medical advice/intervention has been sought.
- The first day of sickness.
- From the employee any duties that need to be carried out on his/her behalf while off work.
- If this absence is a result of/or caused by an alleged accident at work.

**NB:** Due to operational reasons alternative arrangements for notification of absence may be required in some Service Areas eg refuse collection with an early starting time or shift workers.

**Notification by text message or email is not acceptable.**

The immediate line manager must also nominate another member of staff to whom absence should be reported in the event that he/she is not available.

It is important that regular contact is maintained with employees in line with this procedure. Moreover, in line with best practice, line managers should maintain an acceptable level of contact with the employee for the duration of the absence.

*Certification Required: The line manager receiving the notification will record on the electronic system.*

## **2.2 Sickness Absence 4-7 Calendar Days**

Where absence exceeds 3 days, the employee must contact their line manager/supervisor on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of absence, normally no later than two hours of his/her normal starting time to update on their absence and probable duration of absence.

*Certification Required: A self certification form (obtainable from his/her GP, intranet under forms A-Z or at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/sc2.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/sc2.pdf)) must be presented on day 4 to cover this period of absence, but no later than 7 days from the first day of absence.*

## **2.3 Sickness Absence 8 or More Calendar Days**

Where an illness is likely to go beyond 7 calendar days from the first day of absence from work, the employee must personally contact his/her immediate line manager/supervisor normally within two hours of his/her normal starting time on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of absence.

*Certification Required: A Statement of Fitness to Work (fit note) provided by a GP must be submitted to HR without delay and no later than the 8<sup>th</sup> day.*

The employee must keep his/her line manager/supervisor fully up to date throughout the period of sickness absence and provide further fit notes to cover for absence, where such absence extends beyond the period covered by the initial certificate or fit note. Self-

Certification forms/fit notes must be forwarded to the Human Resources Section within the relevant timeframe.

If the employee is admitted into hospital and is unable to adhere to the process above, they must nominate a person who will be able to communicate the information to the line manager/supervisor or HR in a timely manner and keep them informed of any relevant information relating to the period of sickness.

Please Note:

- Further fit notes must be submitted no later than 5 days after the last fit note has expired. The employee must advise HR if there is going to be a delay and confirm if further fit note is going to be submitted after expiry date of previous fit note.
- On occasions, employees may have difficulty obtaining an early appointment with their GP. They should therefore seek an appointment as soon as possible if they think that their absence may exceed a week to ensure that they can submit a Statement of Fitness to Work (fit note) by the 8<sup>th</sup> day. If an employee does experience a difficulty in obtaining an appointment, then he/she should advise his/her immediate line manager/supervisor/HR as soon as possible.
- An employee is not permitted to return to work before the end date of a (GP) fit note without notifying his/her line manager/supervisor or HR.

**Failure to provide certificates in a timely manner or gaps in fit notes may result in sick pay being withheld or disciplinary being invoked.**

### **3. RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW**

Also refer to:

- Appendix – Summary: Notification Procedures for Sickness Absence.
- 3.1 On each occasion of return to work, following a period of sickness absence, the line manager/supervisor must conduct a return to work interview ideally on the first day face to face but within 5 working days using the appropriate return to work form on the computerised system and forward the completed form to the Human Resources Section immediately. If the form is not completed within the timeframe, the line manager/supervisor must state on the form the reason for the delay.
  - 3.2 Return to work interviews are an effective tool in the management of sickness absence and are an integral part of attendance management control strategies. It is essential that return to work interviews are carried out immediately or if this is not possible, within 5 working days. This will be monitored by HR.
  - 3.3 Return to work forms must be completed by line managers/supervisor after every instance of absence, without exception. If trigger points have been met the employee must be advised that a 1<sup>st</sup> Absence Review meeting will be held within 5 days of the return to work interview
  - 3.4 The purpose of the return to work interview is primarily to:
    - Welcome the employee back to work.
    - Give the line manager the opportunity to ensure that the employee is fit to return to work.

- Update the employee on any relevant work matters.
- If an employee returns to work on the day after the fit note expires, an additional fit note confirming the employee is fit for work is not required.

**NB:** In order to ensure employee welfare and receive advice on any reasonable adjustments to duties eg phased return or similar, an appointment may be made with the Occupational Health Service before an employee returns to work.

An employee is **not** permitted to return to work before the end date of a (GP) fit note without the approval of his/her line manager/supervisor. The line manager/supervisor must seek advice from Human Resources on each and every occasion to ascertain the appropriate course of action eg referral to Occupational Health.

- Enable the line manager/supervisor to highlight any concerns in relation to the employee's level or pattern of absence and identify if a trigger point is close to or has being reached.
  - Discuss any reasonable adjustments, light duties or phased return, if appropriate. If a Doctor advises on a fit note that the employee 'may be fit for some work' the specific recommended arrangements need to be outlined on the fit note or established through Occupational Health referral.
  - Consider a referral to the Occupational Health Service, if appropriate.
  - Allow the employee to raise any concerns he/she may have including any welfare or work related issues.
- 3.5 In exceptional circumstances, of a sensitive nature, an employee may request that the return to work interview is carried out by another line manager/supervisor of the same gender as the employee. The line manager/supervisor should consider any such request carefully and sympathetically. The employee does not have an absolute right to have such a request granted; the circumstances of each case will be carefully considered and looked at on their own merit
- 3.6 On occasions an employee may request that they be represented or accompanied at a return to work interview. There is no entitlement to have such a request granted as this is not part of the formal review process, but consideration will be given to the request in the individual circumstances of the case.
- 3.7 In situations where the employee work base is remote from his/her line manager/supervisor, suitable arrangements must be made for reporting for duty upon return to work. It is suggested that in these circumstances the employee should speak to his/her immediate line manager by telephone on the first morning of return and they should meet within 5 working days to conduct the return to work interview. The line manager/supervisor is responsible for maintaining appropriate contact with remote employees and ensuring that suitable arrangements are put in place.

#### **4. ABSENCE REVIEW PROCESS**

##### **4.1 Trigger Points**

- 4.1.1 A Formal Review of Absence will be conducted once appropriate trigger points indicate to management that a particular employee's pattern of absence has reached a point where there may be cause for concern and a need to investigate. The use of trigger points will

ensure a consistent approach to the control of absence in such circumstances. The trigger points are as follows:

Where in any rolling 12 month period an employee has met any of the following criteria:

- (i) Recorded at least 6 days' intermittent/short term absence (whether self-certified or medically certified).
- (ii) Recorded at least 4 periods of absence (whether self-certified or medically certified).
- (iii) Displayed an unacceptable pattern of absence (eg regular Fridays and Mondays, absences after annual leave and/or bank, public, extra statutory days, weekends or shifts).
- (iv) 20 days' continuous absence (long term absence).

Numbers (i), (ii) and/or (iii) above would trigger the Short Term Absence Review process below. Number (iv) above would trigger the Long Term Absence Review process at point 6.

## **5. SHORT TERM ABSENCE REVIEW**

### **5.1 Definition of Short Term Sickness Absence**

5.1.1 This is a series of short term intermittent periods of sickness absences (each episode is less than 20 working days) which *may or may not* be related to an underlying and ongoing medical condition. An appointment with the Occupational Health Service (OHS) may be arranged if deemed appropriate in order to confirm/provide a diagnosis of any potential medical condition to both the Council and the employee, and provide advice on minimising any impact on the ability to work.

5.1.2 It is essential that persistent intermittent absence with no confirmed underlying medical condition is dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently in order to show both the employee concerned and other employees that absence is regarded as a serious matter and may result in dismissal.

### **5.2 1<sup>st</sup> Absence Review Meeting**

5.2.1 The 1<sup>st</sup> Absence Review will take place after the return to work interview from the absence which led to the employee breaching the trigger point. This meeting will be arranged within 5 working days of the date of the return to work interview. It will be conducted between the employee, the line manager/supervisor and HR. The employee may attend accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative, if they wish.

5.2.2 The interview is also an opportunity for the employee to express their views and to raise any issues/concerns they may have.

5.2.3 The main purpose of the review meeting is for the line manager/supervisor to:

- Notify the employee that an absence trigger has been met and discuss concerns in relation to the employee's absence record.
- Discuss the employee's absence and the reasons for it.
- Agree with the employee on the improvement required and how this improvement is to be achieved.

- Consider referral of the employee to the Occupational Health Service if an underlying medical condition may be present or intermittent absences with no underlying link (Human Resources must be consulted).
- Consider offering counselling facilities or arranging any relevant training.
- Consider redeployment, reduction in hours or a change in duties (Human Resources must be consulted).
- Inform employee that this is the first step in a 4-stage review process.
- Place notes of meeting on personal file.

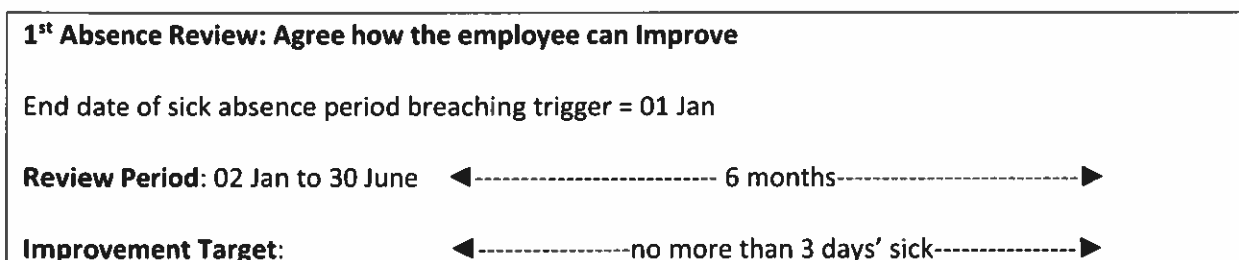
5.2.4 Depending on the particular circumstances the line manager must implement **one** of the following outcomes:

- Agree how the employee can improve in order to minimise further sick absence. Specifically this will involve:
  - Setting an improvement target. Review period will normally be set at no more than 3 days\* sick absence in 6 months\* commencing with the end date of absence, which breached the triggers of the policy as outlined at Figure 1.
  - Issuing a First Improvement Notice confirming that the employee's level of attendance is below the level of what is expected within the Council and requires improvement.

\*These parameters may vary depending on the particular circumstances in each case.

- Defer option a) above in order to obtain further medical information by referring the employee to Occupational Health.
- No action (only an option when an employee has **not previously met a trigger** and this is regarded as a one-off period of illness, unlikely to be repeated or due to specific circumstances).

Figure 1



5.2.5 If at any time during the 6 months' review period the employee's absence exceeds the improvement target this will trigger a 2<sup>nd</sup> Absence Review Meeting.

5.2.6 The First Improvement Notice must be recorded during the meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Absence Review Pro-forma. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days and will include the right to appeal (if applicable) the improvement notice to a more senior manager. Employees must notify HR of their intention to appeal in writing, within 5 working days of receipt of the decision being issued in writing.



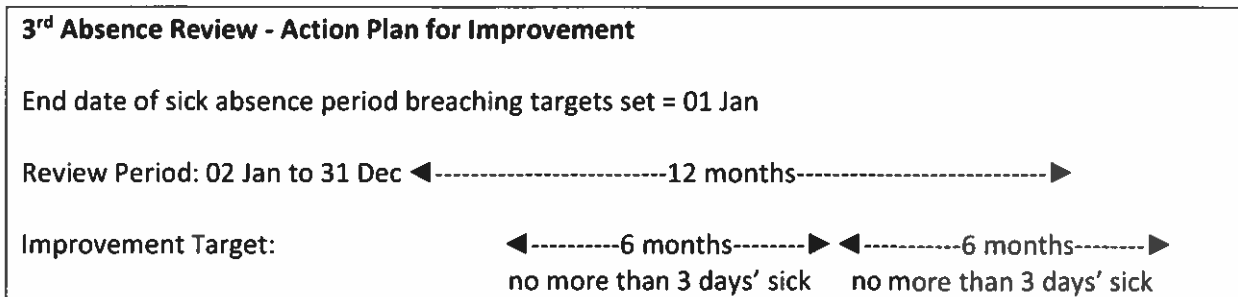
### 5.3 2<sup>nd</sup> Absence Review Meeting

- 5.3.1 If the improvement agreed at the 1<sup>st</sup> Absence Review is breached, or there is insufficient improvement in the employee's attendance, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Absence Review meeting will be convened with the line manager. The employee will be given 5 working days' notice of the meeting in writing.
- 5.3.2 In this letter the employee will be given written notification of the reasons for the meeting and informing them of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow employee. A member of Human Resources will also be present.
- 5.3.3 Medical advice may be sought at any time and in particular, the employee may be referred to Occupational Health.
- 5.3.4 Details of the lack of improvement will be discussed at the review meeting, together with any other relevant information. The employee will be invited to give his/her views before a decision is made.
- 5.3.5 Depending on the particular circumstances the line manager/supervisor must implement **one** of the following outcomes:
- a) Agree a further improvement which will specifically involve:
    - Setting improvement targets and a review period of 12 months. This will normally be set at no more than 3 days\* sick absence in any 6 months\* commencing with the end date of the sick absence period which breached the 1<sup>st</sup> Absence Review as depicted at Figure 2.
    - Issuing a Second Improvement Notice for a period of 12 months confirming that the employee's level of attendance is below the level of what is expected, that it requires improvement and failure to do so may put his/her future employment at risk.
  - b) Defer option a) above in order to obtain further medical information by referring the employee to Occupational Health.
  - c) No further action to be taken.
- 5.3.6 If at any time during the 12 months' review period the employee's absence exceeds the improvement targets set, this will trigger a 3<sup>rd</sup> Absence Review Meeting.
- 5.3.7 The Second Improvement Notice must be recorded during the meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Absence Review Pro-forma. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days and will include the right to appeal (if applicable) the Improvement Notice to a more senior manager. Employees must notify the Council of their intention to appeal in writing, within 5 working days of receipt of the decision being issued in writing.



5.4.7 The Improvement Notice must be recorded during the meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Absence Review Pro-forma. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing (using template outcome letter) to include the right to appeal (if applicable) the Improvement Notice to a more senior manager. Employees must notify the Council of their intention to appeal in writing, within 5 working days of receipt of the decision being issued in writing.

Figure 3



**5.5 Formal Case Review**

5.5.1 If following a 3<sup>rd</sup> Absence Review the employee breaches the improvement, a Formal Case Review will be held to consider dismissal on capability grounds. (ill health retirement may be explored as the first option). The employee may therefore be terminated on the grounds that they are no longer capable of providing a service to the Council and as such are in breach of contract of employment due to unacceptable levels of absence. The employee will be given 5 working days' notice in writing of the hearing with the Head of Department. In this letter the employee will be advised that an ill-health dismissal is being contemplated, written notification of the reasons for the hearing and informing them of their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow employee.

5.5.2 A member of the Human Resources will be present at the Formal Case Review hearing and must be consulted in advance of any decision to dismiss.

5.5.3 Medical advice may be sought at any time and in particular, the employee may be referred to Occupational Health.

5.5.4 Details of the lack of improvement will be discussed at the hearing, together with any other relevant information. The employee will be invited to give his/her views before a decision is made.

5.5.5 In determining what action to take the line manager/supervisor should take into account:

- a) Advice from the Occupational Health Service and any other available medical evidence.
- b) The employee's length of service.
- c) Reasons and/or patterns of sick absence.
- d) The likelihood of an improvement in attendance.
- e) The availability of suitable alternative work (if applicable).
- f) The degree of disruption caused by the sick absence.

5.5.6 If it is decided to dismiss on the grounds that he/she is no longer capable of providing a service to the Council and as such is in breach of his/her contract of employment due to

unacceptable levels of absence, the employee will be advised of his/her right to appeal this decision.

5.5.7 The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days and will include the right to appeal (if applicable) in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the decision to dismiss, to a more senior manager. If dismissed, the Council reserves the right to make a payment in lieu of notice.

5.5.8 Outcomes other than dismissal may include the following:

- A further Final Improvement Notice for an extended period.
- Suitable alternative employment, if applicable.

5.5.9 It should be noted that the above list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive.

## **6. LONG TERM ABSENCE REVIEW**

6.1 Definition:

Long term sickness absence may be defined as one period of continuous absence lasting for more than four consecutive weeks (20 working days).

6.2 While the Council will extend every support and understanding to the employee in this situation, it is important to emphasise that the need to provide an efficient and effective service is of paramount importance.

6.3 Employees who are on long term absence will be managed fairly and consistently through the steps of the absence review process set out below at sections 6.6 to 6.10.

6.4 Contact:

During long term absence line managers/supervisor should keep in regular touch with their absent employee on a fortnightly basis by telephone, dependant on reason for absence. The purpose of maintaining regular contact is to provide updates about the duration of the sickness absence and allow line managers to:

- a. Provide appropriate support to the employee.
- b. Establish the current position in relation to the employee's health. (An employee who prefers not to discuss their medical condition with the line manager/supervisor, because of the sensitive or personal nature of the information, may choose instead to be referred to an officer within the Human Resources Section).
- c. Establish when the employee will be able to return to work.
- d. Ascertain if there are any steps the employee and/or employer can take to aid recovery including whether any reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate the employee's return to work.
- e. Keep updated as to the general progress in relation to the employee's absence.

6.5 Once an employee has been, or it is known will be, absent from work for a period of four weeks or longer the line manager should discuss the absence with an officer from Human Resources.

## **6.6 Referral to Occupational Health Services (OHS)**

- 6.6.1 The employee will normally be referred to the Occupational Health Service once absence duration is 4 weeks or more. Employees will be referred immediately to occupational health or a registered medical practitioner in circumstances where the absence is work related or due to stress, alcohol, drug related, mental health or where information needs to be gained expediently.
- 6.6.2 Advice will be sought from OHS in relation to:
- a. The likely duration of the absence.
  - b. Whether the absence is work related and any remedial steps that may be taken.
  - c. Whether the employee is able to carry out the duties of their job and if not, whether this is a temporary or permanent restriction.
  - d. Whether the medical condition is regarded as a disability or is pregnancy related.
  - e. Whether there are any reasonable adjustments that can be made to facilitate the employee's return to work eg changes to working pattern, duties and responsibilities, provision/modification of equipment or redeployment.
- 6.6.3 Employees unwilling to attend OHS appointments will be advised that any decision concerning continued employment will be made on the facts available. The Council reserves the right to request any evidence, written or otherwise, which prevents employees from attending OHS appointments.
- 6.6.4 In the event of a difference in medical opinion, the opinion of the Occupational Health Service supersedes medical advice provided by the employee or the employee's GP. If this is the case, a third medical opinion will be sought from Occupational Health.

## **6.7 1st Absence Review Meeting**

- 6.7.1 An Absence Review meeting will normally be arranged within 2 weeks of Council receiving the Occupational Health report (which will have already been copied to the employee directly if they have consented to this information being disclosed) to discuss the appropriate action to take in view of the report. The meeting will normally be conducted by the line manager/supervisor, who will be accompanied by an officer from Human Resources.
- 6.7.2 The line manager/supervisor will discuss the Occupational Health report (and any other medical evidence), including:
- Welcome the employee back to work.
  - Give the line manager the opportunity to ensure that the employee is fit to return to work.
  - Update the employee on any relevant work matters.
  - The employee's current health and prognosis.
  - Informing the employee that the report deems him/her fit for work and indicate a date and time by which they should return to work.

- The employee's views on the report/medical evidence.
- Any medical recommendations made.
- Anticipated time frames for a return to work.
- A further review period if deemed appropriate.
- Any mitigating circumstances put forward by the employee or Occupational Health Consultant.
- A return to work plan including possible outcomes such as reasonable adjustments and/or suitable alternative employment.
- The operational needs of the Council.

Where an employee is considered by the Occupational Health Physician to be permanently unfit for work an application will be made for ill health retirement through the local government pension scheme (NILGOSC) should occur. An application for ill health retirement can be requested at any stage in the procedure; however, if the application is not successful Council will proceed to termination of employment in line with Council procedures.

## **6.8 2nd Absence Review Meeting**

6.8.1 If an employee remains on sickness absence, he/she will be invited to a 2nd Absence Review meeting.

6.8.2 Where there is no indication of a return to work date the employee will be advised that this may put their future employment at risk. Consideration may also be given to the feasibility of ill-health retirement through the local government pension scheme (NILGOSC). If this is not applicable, the employee must be advised of possible termination of their employment on grounds of ill health at the next stage of the procedure.

In the event that the application for ill health retirement is not approved by NILGOSC employment will be terminated in line with Council procedures. The employee will be advised of this when signing the form applying for ill health retirement. An appeal process can be undertaken by the employee by writing to NILGOSC in accordance with their rules and procedures.

## **6.9 Formal Case Review**

6.9.1 Where an employee remains absent, a Formal Case Review hearing will be convened. The employee will be given 5 working days' notice in writing and advised that:

- The Hearing will be conducted by a Senior Officer (eg Director) who will be accompanied by an officer from Human Resources.
- An ill-health dismissal is a potential outcome of the meeting.
- There is a right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow employee.
- The purpose of the Hearing is to consider ill-health dismissal on the grounds that the employee is no longer capable of fulfilling his/her employment role and as such is in breach of his/her contract of employment.

- Should an ill-health dismissal occur, there is a right of appeal within 10 days of receipt of the decision to dismiss.

Before undertaking a Formal Case Review, the Human Resources representative will take appropriate advice from the Occupational health consultant, as to whether the employee potentially falls within the definition of disabled as in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. If so consideration will be given to whether any reasonable adjustments may be made to enable the employee to return to work.

6.9.2 An employee who is subject to dismissal may (if not already processed) make an application to NILGOSC for ill health retirement, but the Council's decision to dismiss is not based on a successful application for ill health retirement. None of the formal procedures above supersede the employee's and the Council's obligations to ensure that there is reasonable and adequate communication maintained throughout the employee's absence from work.

6.9.3 In determining what action to take the Senior Officer will take into account:

- a) Advice from the Occupational Health Service and any other available medical evidence which has been provided.
- b) The employee's length of service.
- c) Reasons and/or patterns of sick absence.
- d) The likelihood of an improvement in attendance.
- e) The availability of suitable alternative work (if applicable).
- f) The degree of disruption caused by the sick absence.

6.9.4 If the employee is dismissed through capability, the outcome of the Hearing will be confirmed in writing. Outcomes other than dismissal may include the following:

- Redeployment for a temporary or permanent period.
- Return to work on lighter duties if requested on the fit note or provided on the report from Occupational Health. Light duties, may be considered for a specific period and will not be indefinite.

***It should be noted that the above list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive.***

## **6.10 Return from Long Term Sick Leave**

6.10.1 On return from a period of long term sickness, at the return to work interview, an assessment will be made on whether improvement and/or review period and improvement targets should be considered. The criteria set out below shall apply:

- a) Advice from the Occupational Health Service and any other available medical evidence which has been provided.
- b) The employee's length of service.
- c) Reasons and/or patterns of sick absence.
- d) The likelihood of an improvement in attendance.

e) The availability of suitable alternative work (if applicable).

f) The degree of disruption caused by the sick absence.

6.10.2 The outcome of this assessment will be confirmed in writing. This may lead to an Absence Review meeting under the Policy and the employee will be warned of the implications of this including that their future employment may be at risk.

It should be noted that on occasions justification may be undertaken to shorten this process dependant on the illness.



## **APPENDIX A – SUMMARY: NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE**

### **What do you do if you are Sick?**

1. Telephone (**notification by text message or email is not acceptable**) your line manager/supervisor or nominee as close to normal starting time as possible on the first day of your illness, but at least within two hours of your normal starting time.
2. Co-operate with answering a series of questions so that your line manager can fully complete the Absence Form.
3. Make your line manager/supervisor aware of any duties that need to be carried out on your behalf while you are off work.
4. Ensure that you submit the necessary certificates on time to cover your absence.
5. Be in regular contact with your line manager whilst you are absent. This may include your line manager/supervisor contacting you or someone you have nominated e.g. if you are in hospital or recuperating from an operation and are unable to hold a conversation. Ask for your manager or telephone number of manager as appropriate. If your line manager/supervisor is not available, you should speak to his/her nominee.

### **What Certificates do you have to submit?**

#### **Absence 1 – 3 days**

Telephone the line manager/supervisor to notify your absence as outlined above.

#### **Absence 4 days and Over**

You must provide a self-certification form *Certification Required: A self certification form (obtainable from his/her GP, intranet under forms A-Z or at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/sc2.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/sc2.pdf)) must be presented to cover this period of absence, no later than 7 days from the first day of absence.*

#### **Absence 8 days and Over**

You must provide a GP Fit Note (*Statement of Fitness to Work*) to HR no later than the 8<sup>th</sup> day of sick absence.

Following your return to work you will be required to complete a return to work interview form which will be signed off by the employee and line manager and returned to HR.

***Failure to provide certificates in a timely manner or gaps in your sick notes may result in sick pay being withheld/disciplinary action being invoked.***

### **What happens if you are off on Long Term Sick ie more than 20 days' sick absence?**

Week 2	Your line manager/supervisor will contact you to find out how you are.
Weeks 4-6	You will receive an appointment to attend Occupational Health. This may be sooner dependant on the nature of your illness, eg personal/work related stress/drugs/alcohol. An appointment will be sought as soon as reasonably practicable.
Weeks 5-8	A meeting will normally be arranged between you and your line manager. A representative from Human Resources will also be present. The report received from Occupational Health will be discussed.
On-going	Further appointments may be made for you to attend Occupational Health and further meetings with your line manager/supervisor and Human Resources may be required. Discussions will also ensue in regard to capability and Ill health retirement should the period of absence continue.

### **What should you do when you return to work from any period of sick leave?**

1. Telephone your line manager to confirm you are returning to work.
2. Ensure that you attend a meeting which will be arranged within 5 working days of your return to work by your line manager/supervisor to complete a Return to Work Interview form.
3. Ensure that all your certificates have been submitted to cover the full period of your absence. If you are returning to work following a period of sick leave which required fit notes ensure that you bring to work with you on the first day a signing off certificate, if not already provided.
4. Advise of any on-going related medical appointments which have been arranged and when these are taking place.

Remember you cannot return to work before the end date of a (GP) fit note without the approval of your line manager/supervisor, who must seek advice from Human Resources before agreeing to your return to work in this circumstance.