



SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Absence Policy

Version	Adopted Policy Date	Minute Reference	Review Date
1	April 2019	F&E 538-19	2022
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Introduction

1.1 You are expected to be available to work during your normal working hours. You must make every effort to attend work.

1.2 If you cannot attend work you must comply with the following rules:

- You must telephone your line manager within 30 minutes of your scheduled start time on your first day of absence. You should not leave a message at reception or with a colleague. If you cannot make contact with your line manager you should try to speak to another manager. You must state the reason for your absence and the date on which you expect to return to work.
- If you are unable to return to work on the date expected you must call your line manager again as outlined above.
- If your absence lasts for less than 8 calendar days, on your return to work you must complete an Absence Self-Certification (which is available from your line manager) explaining the reason for your absence.
- If your absence lasts for 8 or more consecutive calendar days then you must:-
 - Get a medical certificate (MED3) from your GP confirming your inability to attend work. This form must be sent to your line manager immediately.
 - If you cannot return to work when your medical certificate expires, you must obtain another medical certificate from your GP and send it to your line manager immediately. Certificates are required to cover the total period of your absence.
- You must telephone your line manager at least one working day before you return to work so that arrangements can be made for your return.
- If your last medical certificate does not specify a date on which you can resume your duties before you return you must supply the Council with a medical clearance certificate confirming that you are fit to return to work.

Sickness Scheme

2.1 The scheme is intended to supplement Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit so as to maintain normal pay during defined periods of absence on account of sickness, disease, accident or assault.

2.2 Employees are entitled to receive sick pay for the following periods:

During 1 st year of service	1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half-pay
During 2 nd year of service	2 months' full pay and 2 months half pay
During 3 rd year of service	4 months' full pay and 4 months half pay
During 4 th & 5 th years of service	5 months' full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 years' service	6 months' full pay and 6 months half pay

- 2.3 The Council shall have discretion to extend the period of sick pay in exceptional cases.
- 2.4 The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence shall be calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day the aggregate of periods of paid absence during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of absence.
- 2.5 In the case of full pay periods sick pay will be an amount which when added to Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit receivable will secure the equivalent of normal pay.
- 2.6 In the case of half pay periods sick pay will be an amount equal to half normal earnings plus an amount equivalent to Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit receivable, so long as the total sum does not exceed normal pay.
- 2.7 Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.
- 2.8 If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery or the employee's own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional sport or injury while working in the employee's own time on their own account for private gain or for another employer sick pay may be suspended. The Council shall advise the employee of the grounds for suspension and the employee shall have a right of appeal to the appropriate committee of the Council. If the Council decide that the grounds were justified then the employee shall forfeit the right to any further payment in respect of that period of absence. Repeated abuse of the sickness scheme should be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
- 2.9 Where, for the purpose of qualifying for sick pay under the scheme, the Council requires a doctor's statement from an employee, the Council will reimburse the employee the cost of such a statement on the provision of a receipt.
- 2.10 An employee who falls sick during the course of annual leave shall be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of a doctor's statement.
- 2.11 Maternity leave will not be treated as sick leave and will not therefore be taken into account for the calculation of the period of entitlement to sickness leave.

Fit to Work Notes

- 3.1 Should your GP issue a "may be fit to work note" the Council will take into account any advice / recommendations given by your GP in that note.
- 3.2 The Council will usually request that you attend a meeting to consider the following:
- the advice that has been given by your GP and whether further advice is required;

- your ability to return to/remain in your job in view both of your capabilities and the Council's business needs and any adjustments that can reasonably be made to your job;
- possible redeployment opportunities and whether any adjustments can reasonably be made to assist you to redeploy;
- where you are able to return to your job or a redeployed job, lighter duties; agreeing a return to work programme.

- 3.3 You should at all stages seek to inform the Council as to any duties/roles that you feel that you might be able to still safely undertake despite your ill health.
- 3.4 Where you disagree with the advice given by your GP the Council may at its discretion obtain a further opinion from an alternative medical expert/ occupational health advisor or may write to your GP requesting clarification.
- 3.5 The Council cannot guarantee that it will be able to implement any adaptations /adjustments recommended by your GP or any other medical expert/ occupational health advisor.
- 3.6 If it is not possible for the Council to implement such adaptations / adjustments it will explain the reasons for this to you. If this is the case, the Council will agree a time-scale for review and/or a further meeting.