

Absence Procedure

Summary

Gloucester City Council recognises that sickness absence can arise in different ways, from short intermittent periods of sickness to long-term absence, and for different reasons, for example: injuries, recurring conditions; surgery or a serious illness requiring lengthy treatment. It is recognised that absence has an impact on the delivery of our services, the individual themselves and colleagues.

The council is committed to maintaining the health, safety and welfare of its workforce, and will seek to adopt policies, procedures and practices, which establish a positive attendance culture and promote employee welfare. In the interest of the well-being of its employees and in order to operate in an efficient, productive and cost effective way, the council recognises its statutory duty to ensure its employees are both physically and mentally fit to undertake their duties within the workplace. This duty also extends to employees, who are obliged to inform their line manager of any ill health problem that has the potential to prevent them from working in a safe manner.

The council wishes to ensure that the reasons for sickness absence are understood in each case, investigated where necessary and that, where needed, measures are taken to assist those who have been absent by reason of sickness to return to work. Therefore, to achieve these aims it is essential that the council has clear policies and procedures which include arrangements for monitoring and ensuring the effective day to day management of ill health issues and sickness absence.

Managers are responsible for the successful operation of this procedure within the service areas for which they are responsible, supported and advised by the council's human resources service as appropriate.

To support these aspirations, this procedure is established on three key principles:

Employees are to make every effort to attend work for their contracted hours. Managers are to manage absence fairly and consistently.

The council invests in the health and wellbeing of all employees.

It is based on the principles of the ACAS Code of Practice on 'Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures' and aims to be clear, consistent and fair to all.

This Sickness and Absence Procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and is entirely non-contractual. It may be amended, withdrawn, suspended or departed from at the discretion of the council at anytime. Everyone should ensure that they take the time to read and understand the content of this procedure and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. If you need support reading and/or understanding this procedure, please speak with your line manager.

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Who does this procedure apply to?

It applies to all City Council employees

What will happen if an employee fails to follow this procedure?

Employees are required to follow this procedure. Failure to do so or submission of false statements, or information may be treated as a disciplinary matter under the [Disciplinary and Dismissals Procedure](#).

What does the council expect of its managers?

With respect to this procedure, the council expects managers to:

- Ensure they take action to keep sickness absence levels to a minimum.
- Record, monitor and manage all absence whether authorised and unauthorised.
- Deal with individual sickness cases and ensure they are handled with sensitivity and confidentiality, whilst being frank about the need to resolve any problems that absence is causing.
- Ensure that a Sickness Absence is entered and updated via MSS in a timely basis.
- Ensure that Absence Declaration Forms and any medical certificates along with the form are stored confidentially and sent in a batch to the BSC at the end of the absence to be stored electronically.
- Have due regard to factors which may impact on employees' wellbeing.

Line managers must ensure that employees who report to them are aware of their obligations under this procedure.

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What does the council expect of its employees?

With respect to this procedure, the council; expects its employees to:

- Make every effort to attend work, arrive on time and to work their contracted hours.
- Inform their manager of absence in accordance with this procedure. This applies equally to both physical and mental health and with the Authorised Special Leave Policy.
- Follow the advice of healthcare professionals with respect to their own health and wellbeing.
- Keep their manager informed of any prognosis or workplace factors which may affect their attendance at work or wellbeing.

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What happens if an employee has a warning under another procedure?

The council has three inter-related procedures through which concerns about an employee's performance may be formally addressed. These policies and procedures cover three areas of employee performance:

- [Disciplinary and Dismissals Procedure](#).
- [Capability Procedure](#).
- [Sickness and Absence Procedure](#) (this covers both short-term and long-term sickness absence).

There are up to three formal levels of warnings in each procedure:

- First written warning.
- Final written warning.
- Dismissal with notice (or payment in lieu of notice) – or summary dismissal in the case of gross misconduct.

Additional there may be situations where an employee is formally cautioned which may lead to formal action being taken under the appropriate procedure.

Under each procedure, a formal warning remains in force for 12 months (or, in exceptional cases only, for a specified longer period). Any 'live' warning(s) issued in respect of one procedure may be taken into account in determining the subsequent level of warning if other concerns arise but in respect of a different performance area. For example if an employee has a 'live' first written warning for poor work performance they may subsequently receive a final written warning for an unsatisfactory sickness record.

Where this type of situation arises, the formal hearing and any subsequent warning (or dismissal) will be carried out through the [Disciplinary and Dismissals Procedure](#), which operates as the default procedure where the concerns relate to a combination of two or more areas of the employees performance (i.e. a mixture of conduct, capability and/or sickness absence).

In the event that any concerns relate solely to capability or sickness absence, the employee may receive a first written warning, final written warning and/or be dismissed under the [Capability Procedure](#) or Sickness and Absence Procedure (i.e. the matter will not 'default' to the Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure in such circumstances).

What is 'frequent, short term absence', as referred to in this procedure?

Any amount of absence amounting to at least eight days' absence over 3 occasions in the last twelve months, of which no absence lasts longer than four calendar weeks, or other patterns of absence of less than eight days which are a cause of concern for the manager.

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What is 'long-term absence', as referred to in this procedure?

Long-term absence is any continuous period of absence that lasts, or at any point is reasonably expected to last, longer than four calendar weeks.

What should an employee do if sick and not able to come to work?

On the first day of absence, the employee must inform their manager as soon as possible, no later than 9.30 am or before their normal start time, whichever is soonest, indicating the reason for absence and likely return.

The employee must have a telephone conversation with their manager or, if unavailable, another manager in the same service area. No other means of contact is permitted e.g. by text, letter or email

If someone is physically incapable of calling in, a friend, relative or medical professional can call in on their behalf but, as soon as possible, the employee must call in person and provide evidence – in the form of a doctor's letter or Fit Note – of their circumstances.

How does an employee self-certify?

Employees can self-certify for up to seven calendar days sickness. When employees return to work, they must complete the Sickness Absence Declaration Form as part of the return to work process

What if an employee physically cannot call in?

Absence without self-certification will be treated as unauthorised, and pay may be withheld. However, if the manager is subsequently satisfied that the absence was legitimate and for reasons of sickness, the council may agree that contractual sick pay will be paid in arrears.

Does an employee need to regularly update their manager of continued absence?

Yes. Employees must ensure that they keep their manager updated on a regular basis by an agreed means of communication.

Does an employee on sick leave need a Fit Note?

A Fit Note is required to certify sickness from the eighth day of continuous sickness and should be sent to the employee's line manager. Failure to submit a Fit Note may lead to the absence being treated as unauthorised, and sick pay may be withheld.

Can an employee be asked for a Fit Note for any period of absence?

Yes. An employee may be asked to submit a medical certificate at any time in the case of any absence including repeated short-term absence.

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What should an employee do if their Fit Note says they may be fit for work?

If an employee's doctor believes they may be fit for work, the doctor will provide guidance on the Fit Note. Employees should send Fit Notes to their manager as normal and ring them to discuss the details. Employees' managers will discuss with them whether or not the advice on the doctor's Fit Note can be accommodated, bearing in mind the needs of the service. If for any reason it is not possible to accommodate an employee's return to work at this stage, they will remain off sick. If they are on long-term absence they must contact their manager at least two working days prior to any return date in order to allow work programming arrangements to be accommodated.

What if an employee feels they are fit to return to work before the end of a doctor's Fit Note?

Where a doctor's Fit Note says an employee is not fit but, during the period of the Fit Note, the employee feels they have recovered sufficiently and wants to return to work, the employee must contact their manager to discuss their potential return to work. The manager may wish to contact OH to discuss the employee's potential return to work. The manager has the option to decline a return to work until the end of the Fit Note or to ask the employee to return to their GP for an amended Fit Note.

Employees are not normally required to return to work before the given end date of their most current Fit Note.

What if an employee has a planned operation and knows in advance how long they will be off sick?

If an employee has an appointment for a planned, medically-justified operation that has an expected recovery period of more than seven days, the council will need to see a doctor's letter to this effect that states the expected recovery period for the operation in question.

Employees may take this time off as sickness absence or annual leave or a combination of both. If they are still going to be absent after the expected recovery period for reasons arising from the operation or other sickness, employees will need to follow sickness reporting procedures as described above from the end of their projected recovery period onwards.

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Will employees be paid when they are on sick leave?

Employees complying with the reporting procedures described above will be paid contractual sickness pay, up to their entitlement, for the duration of any sickness absence.

The amount of sickness benefit depends on their length of service as follows:

	Full Pay	Half Pay
First year	1 month	2 months ¹
Second year	2 months	2 months
Third year	4 months	4 months
Fourth and fifth year	5 months	5 months
Sixth year onward	6 months	6 months

¹ After completing four months' service.

This entitlement is calculated with reference to attendance in the 12 months preceding the current absence rather than on a fixed calendar year (so, for example, if the employee had already received a week of sick pay in the preceding 12 months, a week of sick pay would be deducted from their entitlement for the current period of sickness absence).

What is a 'return to work' (RTW) meeting?

Return to work (RTW) meetings are an important and integral part of monitoring occupational health issues within the work place to ensure the well-being of employees and maintain an efficient working environment.

Managers must ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to meet with employees as soon as possible after their return, which would normally be the day of their return or before where this might facilitate an earlier return to work. The aims of the meetings are as follows:

- Welcome an employee back to work.
- Ensure they are fit to return, particularly if they have been absent for a prolonged period of time.
- Identify the cause of the absence.
- To consider any problem that may be causing or contributing to the absence
- Agree priorities for the post-absence period.
- Agree any initial support that may be needed when the employee returns.

In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for the employee to work reduced hours over an agreed period of time (also known as a phased return). The phased return would normally be up to 4 weeks in duration and in exceptional cases up to 6 weeks.

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When will an employee have to attend a RTW?

Following some absences, rehabilitation in to the workplace is essential to the recovery process. Where appropriate, suitable and adequate risk assessment should be undertaken by the manager and the employee.

Guidance should be sought from Occupational Health or the City Health and Safety Adviser if necessary.

An employee's manager will ask them to attend an RTW after every period of absence. However, a more detailed meeting may be necessary when:

- An employee has taken a total of eight days' absence over three separate occasions during the last 12 months; or
- They have taken a single period of absence of more than 14 consecutive calendar days; or
- The manager has a concern for an employee's health, such as when adjustments have been made to accommodate a return to work.

Why might an employee be referred to Occupational Health (OH)?

An employee's manager will refer them to OH when:

- The manager has any concerns about the effects of the employee's health on work and work on health even if they are not off sick
- The employee has had a total of at least eight days' absence over at least three separate occasions during the last 12 months.
- An absence is related to mental health illness. An absence is related to musculoskeletal issues.
- The manager is aware that an absence is expected to continue for a period of four weeks or more.

Does an employee have to attend an OH appointment when referred?

Yes. Non-attendance or a failure to cooperate with an Occupational Health referral, without good reason, may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the disciplinary and dismissal procedure and, if the employee is currently on sick leave, could mean their sick pay being suspended. An employee may also be required to pay the full costs incurred if they fail to attend any appointments without informing their manager in advance and providing a good reason

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What is the OH appointment for?

First, it's for the benefit of the employee, as OH can provide a more detailed assessment of their needs, helpful interventions and advice on how to manage a successful return to work.

Second, managers will use the advice and guidance from OH as a basis to talk to employees about their return to work and to help them make informed decisions about how the council can respond appropriately to the needs of its employees.

To make sure that the advice is as complete as possible, OH may ask employees for permission to contact their doctor or other appropriate medical practitioner. Employees are entitled to refuse, but OH can only provide information to the manager based on what they know, and the manager can only make decisions about their employees based on the information available, including that provided by OH.

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Is there an employee assistance programme an employee can access?

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is an independent advisory service and anyone can contact them for support. Freephone 0800 174319 or visit <http://www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk/>. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (**Username and password tba**)

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Can an employee's manager contact them when they are off sick?

Yes. Managers are encouraged to keep in regular contact with employees during any period of sickness absence to enquire about the employee's well-being.

Can a manager undertake a welfare visit when an employee is off sick?

Yes. A manager is entitled to propose a welfare visit as appropriate. Advice may be sought from the ContactUs on 42(5888)

What happens if an employee is ill when on annual leave?

Employees can ask to take sick leave instead of annual leave but only if they have met the normal reporting procedures explained above. They will also be required to make themselves available, as in other sickness absence instances, for a referral to OH.

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What happens to an employee's annual leave when they are sick for a period of time?

When an employee is on sick leave, their annual leave entitlement accrues at the same rate as if they were performing their normal hours of work.

If a period of sick leave will run over the end of the current leave year, the employee will automatically carry over any statutory leave entitlement not taken. If the total leave, both statutory and contractual, is five days (pro rata) or less, then the manager may exercise discretion and allow this to be carried over. Any remaining contractual leave over this total will be lost, other than in exceptional circumstances

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Can an employee go away on holiday whilst on sick leave?

Yes, provided that this arrangement is agreed in advance with their manager. This will normally be recorded as annual leave. In exceptional cases, a holiday taken on medical advice may be eligible to be treated as sick leave.

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What should an employee do if they are not sick but need time off for an emergency?

In such situations, employees should speak to their manager to see if they can take leave, under the '[Authorised Special Leave Policy](#)', which covers compassionate leave and family care leave.

Can an employee have surgery that is not medically required e.g. cosmetic surgery and receive occupational sick pay?

No, occupational sick pay will not be paid for non-essential surgery such as cosmetic surgery unless it is deemed necessary on medical grounds by Occupational Health or a GP or other medical practitioner. Evidence of this is required before occupational sick pay will be issued. Types of evidence that would be acceptable would be a letter from a GP outlining the surgery is due to medical grounds or confirmation of NHS funding. Statutory sick pay will be issued if a fit note is provided regardless of the reason for the cosmetic surgery. Consideration to grant annual leave or unpaid leave should be given by the manager when the surgery is not due to medical grounds. Statutory sick pay and annual leave cannot be paid in conjunction with each other. In the unfortunate event that there are complications after the cosmetic surgery resulting in the member of staff being unfit for work for longer than normal (i.e. post surgery infection) then normal occupational sick pay will apply for the excess recovery period.

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What happens if an employee has to take time off as a result of an accident for which a third party is held liable?

Where an employee is absent from work because of a crime of violence or an injury in respect of which a claim will lie with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, other party or their insurers and the employee is otherwise qualified to receive sick pay, any compensation received relating to earnings for which the council has already paid the employee as sick pay shall be repaid to the council. Where compensation has been made the council shall be free to discount wholly or partly the period of sick leave in calculating the employee's future entitlement to sick pay, as it may see fit on consideration of all the material circumstances.

Are there restrictions placed on an employee whilst they are on sick leave?

If an employee is absent from work they will be expected to behave in a manner appropriate to the illness or condition from which they are suffering. The employee will not be entitled to undertake any other form of paid or unpaid employment or participate in any activity (of a sporting nature or otherwise) that could have an adverse effect on the speed or success of their recovery. If in doubt, please discuss this with your line manager.

The council reserves the right to make contact with an employee during any period of absence.

What will happen if an employee does not follow the reporting procedure or cooperate with an OH referral?

Not following the reporting procedure will lead to the absence being regarded as unauthorised, and may be dealt with as a disciplinary matter under the disciplinary and dismissal procedure. The employee will not receive sick pay, unless there are strong mitigating factors present which are considered as sufficient to justify payment being made as an exception to the usual rule.

Where an employee has not notified their absence within the specified time, the manager will make every effort to contact the employee including calling contact telephone numbers and if appropriate undertake a home visit after contacting ContactUs. A written record of all calls and visits must be kept.

When is suspension or a temporary transfer appropriate?

Suspension or temporary transfer is only appropriate in very exceptional circumstances, in cases of short-term absence, in cases, for example, relating to health protection. No decision on suspension or temporary transfer should be taken without advice from Occupational Health.

Can an employee be offered alternative employment/redeployment?

Yes, should it be appropriate to redeploy a member of staff due to health problems the council's redeployment procedure will be followed. Redeployment, in all cases, due to ill health, does not attract pay protection under the council's pay protection policy.

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What action should be taken if an employee remains absent from work for 3 days or more without any contact?

Where contact cannot be made and the employee remains absent for 3 or more days the manager must ensure that a letter is sent requesting them to make contact urgently and inform the employee that as the employee has not complied with the reporting requirements set out, the manager may consider the absence to be unauthorised. This letter must be hand delivered or sent recorded delivery. Contact must be made with ContactUs before any letter is sent as they are able to provide appropriate wording.

In cases of unauthorised absences, the manager must discuss the matter with the employee concerned immediately on return to duty to ascertain the reason for the absence. If the manager considers there is a good reason for the lack of notification, then the employee will be granted sick or other appropriate leave in retrospect.

If, however, the manager is not satisfied with the reason given, pay will be deducted and the manager will decide whether the matter is to be considered under the disciplinary and dismissal procedure.

What does an employee need to do if they have an infectious disease which could affect them undertaking their role?

If an employee is suffering from an infectious disease the employee must notify their manager and take such precautions as may be advised. The employee may be asked not to attend work where there is a risk that this could spread the infection.

What happens if an employee has an industrial disease or accident?

Where an employee is absent from work as a result of industrial disease or accident (out of and in the normal course of employment, but not attributable to an employee's own misconduct), please contact HR on how this may be covered by National Conditions of Service and other policies.

What happens if an employee is unwell during pregnancy?

Where an employee is absent from work as a result of pregnancy related illness, they will be entitled to the provision of the sickness pay scheme, provided that they comply with the conditions of this procedure, and will not be included in the monitoring of the trigger calculations. If, however, they are absent from work for a pregnancy related reason at any time after the start of the 4th week before the expected week of childbirth, their Ordinary Maternity Leave will commence automatically on the day following the first day for such absence, as in accordance with the council's [Maternity Leave Policy](#). Absence, for any reason, following a period of maternity leave will be managed as normal sickness absence.

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Will an employee's disability be taken into account when dealing with their sickness?

Yes, managers are required at all times to have due regard to an employee's known disability when operating this procedure. In accordance with The Equality Act 2010, managers will seek to make reasonable adjustments to support employees to do their job with assistance from OH and HR where appropriate.

Employees do not need to be registered disabled to qualify as having a disability, so the council may not be aware that an employee has a disability. Employees must bring any disability to the council's attention as soon as they feel it may impact upon their ability to perform their role.

Is there support available for an employee with a disability?

Yes. The Access to Work Service offers financial and practical assistance to people with a disability to try to enable them to continue in work. Again, employees do not have to be registered disabled to qualify for assistance. More information can be found on this website: <http://disabilityrightsuk.org/access-work>.

Contact the Access to Work Service through the Jobcentreplus, tel 02920 423291.

What happens if an employee's disability means they cannot do their job?

If an employee cannot do their current job after reasonable adjustments have been fully explored the council may seek to redeploy them in the first instance

If an employee is permanently disabled, their manager may seek advice from OH in respect of ill health retirement. Dismissal on the grounds of capability due to sickness absence is an option, but not one that will be taken until all other reasonable options have been exhausted.

Can an employee lose pay for being sick?

As long as absence is authorised, the employee follows the notification procedures in accordance with this procedure and they attend appointments as required, sick pay will continue as described above.

However, if an employee receives a formal warning, the employee will normally fail to qualify for the next salary progression scheme increment or be reduced by one increment if they are at the top of the salary band. Once an employee returns to work, qualification for the salary increment may be reviewed after 6 months, subject to an acceptable improvement in attendance.

Can the council suspend sick pay?

Yes. If the council believes after an appropriate investigation that the reason for an employee's absence is due to their misconduct or they have not observed the provisions of this procedure or they have slowed their recovery by their behaviour, they may no longer be entitled to sick pay.

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Can someone be issued with a warning or be dismissed for being absent?

Yes. Being absent leaves work for colleagues to pick-up and frequent or extended absence affects the service to customers and places a burden on the organisation that cannot be sustained indefinitely.

An employee may be issued with a first or final written warning and may also be dismissed under this procedure. If a decision is made to issue a first or final written warning or to dismiss, the employee will have the chance to request an appeal against the decision, which will be heard by a manager not involved in the original decision.

In cases of short-term absence, what if absence continues to cause management concern?

The manager should assess the absence pattern, the reasons for absence and have due regard to any other known factors influencing the employee's absence. A sickness absence management hearing may be convened to examine the issue (note that this is a different and more formal step than a return to work interview).

What is the short-term sickness absence management hearing for?

The sickness absence management hearing is an opportunity for the organisation to formally note the employee's frequent short-term absences and to refer to the impact their absences are having. The employee will have the opportunity to make the manager aware of any underlying condition(s), personal circumstances or working conditions that are contributing to the employee's absence from work.

The manager may, having given appropriate consideration to the facts and circumstances give the employee a first or final warning under this procedure at the hearing.

The warning cautions the employee that if their absence record does not improve, it may be necessary to consider further formal warnings, up to and including dismissal.

How is long-term absence managed?

If a period of sickness absence reaches or is thought likely to reach four calendar weeks a referral should be made to OH. If a long-term sickness absence reaches or is thought likely to reach eight calendar weeks, an assessment of the case, its impact and implications for the council and the employee should be made, and a management hearing convened to examine the issue. The case assessment will include the employee's absence record, OH advice, and any correspondence with the employee or the employee's GP or specialist consultant.

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What is the long-term sickness absence management hearing for?

The sickness absence management hearing is an opportunity for the manager to note the employee's long-term absence and to explain the impact their absence is having on the service. The employee should make their manager aware of their prognosis, any workplace factors that should be taken into account, any reasonable adjustments to their employment that may be desirable or necessary to assist their return to work, taking into account the case assessment.

At a first sickness absence management hearing written notice will normally also be given of the date by which the manager will review the findings of the first hearing. This review will normally take place four calendar weeks after the first hearing.

A sickness absence management hearing has the option of issuing a first or final written warning. A Final Written Warning will usually only be considered when a First Written Warning has been given under this procedure. This will usually be accompanied by the employee either failing to qualify for their next salary progression scheme increment or reduction to a lower point on the scale if they are at the top of the band.

Further management hearings should be convened every four weeks up to a total of four management hearings, or a total absence of 20 calendar weeks.

If a decision is made to issue the employee with a first or final written warning they will have the chance to appeal against the decision, which will be heard by a manager uninvolved in the original decision.

How should long-term sickness absence management hearings be arranged?

Sickness absence management hearings for long-term sickness absence should be convened bearing in mind the needs of the employee, including the possible desirability of alternative venues, allowing the employee to be represented by a trade union representative or a workplace colleague, or allowing the employee to attend remotely. Exceptionally, where the employee cannot participate, or does not wish to be represented by a third party, the meeting can be convened without their direct input. In such a case the employee can send something in writing to be considered at the hearing.

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What will happen at the final long term sickness absence management hearing?

When the final sickness absence management hearing is convened, no other acceptable way ahead has been discovered and there is no realistic prospect of the employee returning to work in the very near future, the employee will be dismissed with notice on the grounds of incapability due to sickness and absence under this procedure.

The employee has the right to appeal against a decision to dismiss, to a manager not involved in the original dismissal decision.

For other options and alternatives to dismissal, the manager can seek advice from ContactUs on 42(5888).

What's Ill Health Retirement?

Ill Health Retirement (IHR) allows a person suffering from a long-term or terminal medical condition or disability that prevents them from continuing in their role to retire early with enhanced benefits. An employee must be a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to be considered for IHR, and there are regulations within the LGPS that must be complied with in respect of decisions concerning ill-health retirement.

The potential for IHR must be explored with medical advice from OH, as there are very specific criteria around IHR which only the OH doctor can adjudicate.

How should sickness absence meetings be recorded?

Meetings will only be fully minuted or audio recorded in exceptional or complex cases. In all cases a note will be produced detailing key points in the decision making process. In cases where a formal sanction may be issued the employee must be notified in writing of the outcome of the hearing. Similarly, in formal cases, a note of the hearing should be kept and where dismissal could be involved, consideration should be given to having a note-taker present or using recording equipment. Employees are not permitted to make their own audio recording of a sickness absence meeting without the knowledge of those present.

How much notice does an employee need to be given to be called to a formal absence hearing?

The employee should be given at least seven calendar days notice of the hearing.

Can the employee be represented during the absence process?

Yes, employees are free to seek advice at any time and can be represented / accompanied by a trade union representative or work place colleague at any formal absence management hearings under this procedure.

Absence Procedure

Can the employee have an appeal against the outcome of a formal warning?

An employee may appeal against the reasonableness of a formal absence management warning imposed on them as the result of a formal hearing. There is no right to appeal against any informal action that may be taken.

An appeal will be heard by another senior manager not previously involved with the case, and the employee can be represented by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative.

Any appeal must be made in writing within 14 calendar days of receiving the warning letter stating the reason(s) for the appeal. The warning or dismissal will remain in force pending the outcome of the appeal.