



# **DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

  

# **MANAGING ATTENDANCE**

# **POLICY**

# POLICY

## 1.0) INTRODUCTION

The Council as an employer is concerned about the health, safety and well-being of all of its employees and is committed to promoting good health and best practice throughout the organisation. The Council is committed to providing best value services for the local community, and within this context the Council recognises that high levels of attendance at work make a significant contribution to the planning and provision of effective Local Authority services.

## 2.0) UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

### 2.1) THE COUNCIL RECOGNISES:-

1. The need for a clear, fair and consistent policy and procedures for managing attendance.
2. The health and well-being of employees to be of paramount importance. The Council is committed to rehabilitation and aims to support those who are too unwell to attend work.
3. Sickness absence can be in the form of either short term absence or long term incapacity.
4. That, while the vast majority of employees are conscientious and give good attendance, any absence is likely to put additional pressure on other employees and this, in turn, can affect the level and quality of service provided to customers and other stakeholders.
5. Its obligations in terms of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and will comply with the relevant provisions when operating the Managing Attendance Policy and procedures. This will include making any reasonable adjustments to facilitate an employee's continued employment or return to work.
6. Absence represents significant financial cost in terms of sick pay, payments for deputising, the employment of temporary staff and lost productivity.
7. The need to provide a safe working environment

## 3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

To ensure that attendance is managed effectively. That the sickness absence scheme is used to support those who are too unwell to attend work whilst at the same time facilitate a speedy return to work. The Council expects all employees to act honestly and sensibly in accessing this scheme.

**BREACHES OF THIS POLICY BY MANAGERS OR EMPLOYEES MAY RESULT  
IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION BEING TAKEN AGAINST THEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
THE COUNCIL'S DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE.**

### **3.1) AIMS**

The Council will:-

1. Manage non attendance due to ill health.
2. Ensure as far as possible a consistent approach in dealing with absenteeism.
3. Ensure employees are treated fairly, sympathetically and with dignity.
4. Ensure all employees are aware of their contractual obligations to adhere to the Council's Managing Attendance policy and procedures.
5. Provide managers with a framework for managing attendance.
6. Provide managers with guidelines on how to manage the different types of absence.
7. Ensure managers take appropriate action in respect of unacceptable levels of absence.
8. Ensure sickness absence is monitored on an ongoing basis and where excessive absences are identified that this be brought to the employee's attention for improvement.
9. Deal effectively with those employees and managers not adhering to the policy and associated procedures.
10. Deal effectively with abuse of the sick pay scheme.
11. Ensure employees attend work whenever they are fit to do so and that they take a proactive approach to managing their health.
12. In delivering this policy comply with legislative requirements as set out in 2.1 (part 5.)

## **4.0) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1) MANAGER/SUPERVISOR**

Each manager is responsible for managing attendance and for the sensitive, fair and consistent treatment of employees. In managing attendance each manager has the general responsibility to:-

1. Ensure all employees are aware of the policy.
2. Ensure confidentiality of personal information at all times.
3. Ensure the Managing Attendance policy and procedures are implemented in full and applied consistently.
4. Notify payroll of all reported absences and provide them with completed return to work interviews and other absence documentation in a timely manner
5. Monitor the attendance of all employees for whom they have responsibility.
6. Maintain accurate records of absence by ensuring the Managing Attendance procedures are followed.
7. Involve Human Resources and Occupational Health in addressing sickness absence.
8. Ensure as part of induction to new employees that:
  - The importance of good attendance is explained,
  - All new appointees understand the policy and their obligations in relation to absence.
9. Ensure that the probationary period of each new employee is used appropriately, that attendance records are monitored and that appropriate action is taken if any problems emerge.
10. Ensure that absence is never ignored.
11. Ensure that return to work interviews are carried out ideally on the employee's first day of return to work following sickness absence and in any case no longer than 5 working days from their return.
12. Maintain reasonable and appropriate contact with employees who are absent.

## **4.2) DIRECTORATE**

The Senior Management Team is required to take an active role in ensuring that:-

1. Attendance is managed effectively and consistently.
2. All employees adhere to the policy and procedures at all times.
3. Statistics on attendance are a regular agenda item at team meetings.
4. Reports on attendance are monitored, reviewed and appropriate action taken.

## **4.3) EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

Employees are required to discharge the obligations of their contract of employment by regular attendance at work. Employees have a responsibility not to abuse any procedures covering attendance at work. Employees are expected to:-

1. Report absence to line managers in accordance with the procedure and notification requirements as outlined in Absence Reporting Procedures (4.0)
2. Participate in 'contact meetings' when absent long term as outlined in [14.0\) Contact Meetings](#) of the Managing Attendance procedure
3. Attend Occupational Health meetings as requested.
4. Comply with all advice from Occupational Health which will facilitate a return to work.
5. Refrain from any activity, domestic, social or sporting, which may be prejudicial to recovery or likely to bring into question the reason for the continued absence.
6. On return to work, attend and participate in a return to work interview with their line manager.
7. Co-operate with all reasonable attempts to facilitate a safe and full return to work including undertaking alternative duties.
8. Advise their line manager if they intend to go on holiday while they are away from work due to sickness absence. Medical evidence would be required to support such this.
9. Ensure they have read and fully understand the Managing Attendance policy and procedures.
10. Ensure compliance with the requirement to provide the relevant paperwork in connection with any period of absence, for example self certification or medical certificates.

## **4.4) HUMAN RESOURCES RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. To provide appropriate training and support to the Council in managing attendance in line with the Managing Attendance policy and procedure.
2. To provide expert advice on legislative requirements in relation to this policy and procedure.
3. To provide and review appropriate policies and procedures, ensuring they are available for use by all employees and managers.
4. To co-ordinate the provision of Occupational Health services

## **4.5) PAYROLL RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. To maintain comprehensive attendance records.
2. To complete the annual Absence Return to the Northern Ireland Audit Office.
3. To provide accurate and timely management information on absence.
4. Inform line managers when medical certificates have been received stating the reason(s) stated and the duration.

## 5.0) SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Through the Council's aim to encourage full attendance it provides facilities to support this:-

1. An 'in house' occupational health service provided through an external provider.
2. Confidential counselling service provided through an external provider:-



- Telephone 0800 169 4398
- Free service available, to all employees, 24 hours a day 7 days per week

[www.carecallsolutions.com](http://www.carecallsolutions.com)

3. Subsidised access/use of leisure facilities operated by the Council.
4. Family Friendly policies to help employees manage their work life balance, and to help fulfil domestic responsibilities.
5. Appropriate training to ensure managers have the skills and knowledge to support employees when they are absent from work.
6. Training for all employees to advise them of their responsibilities.
7. Initiatives through external organisations for example health promotion aimed at improving employee's awareness towards their own health.

**THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MANAGING ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE WHICH IS AVAILABLE ON THE COUNCIL'S INTRANET AND IN PAPER FORMAT FROM THE HUMAN RESOURCES TEAM.**

### Document Control

Issued by Human Resources  
January 2009