



DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MANAGING ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

DECEMBER 2009

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THIS PROCEDURE SUPERSEDES ALL PREVIOUS ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES IN OPERATION WITHIN DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL WITH EFFECT FROM 1 JANUARY 2010 AND IS APPLICABLE TO ALL DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL EMPLOYEES.

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

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

DEFINITION OF ABSENCE

Any employee who is unable to attend their place of work is absent unless they have prior permission not to attend, for example pre-booked holidays, authorised, lieu or flexi leave. Employees who are fit to attend work are expected to do so.

1.1) TYPES OF ABSENCE

Employees may be absent from work due to a number of reasons, generally these absences can be grouped into the following categories:-

1.1.1 SICKNESS ABSENCE

See section [1.2\) Types of Sickness Absence](#)

1.1.2 Unauthorised Absence

An absence would be classed as unauthorised when an employee decides not to attend work or decides to leave their work place without authorisation. This will be regarded as absence without leave (AWOL) see section [3.0\) Absent Without Leave](#)

Unauthorised absences are treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action being taken. Following appropriate investigation, this type of absence could result in the loss of basic and/or Sick Pay, and/or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

1.1.3 Lateness for Work

Employees are required to attend for work punctually at the times defined in their appointment letter/statement of main terms and conditions or as instructed by the Council. In addition employees are required to comply with any time recording procedures.

While lateness is not an absence from work, employees who are late do impact on the ability of the department in which they work to deliver effective and efficient services to the ratepayer. Lateness may be an indication of other factors either within work or at home and all incidents of lateness will be discussed between the employee and their line manager. Repeated lateness may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee in line with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

1.1.4 SPECIAL LEAVE

Special leave is dealt with specifically within the [Special Leave Policy](#) and can take the form of:-

- Bereavement Leave
- Marriage Leave
- Service in the Security Forces, Non-Regular Forces and Voluntary Charity Services
- Domestic Distress Paid Leave
- Special Paid Leave
- Special Unpaid Leave

In all cases please refer to the above policy and or Human Resources (HR) for further advice and guidance on Special Leave.

1.1.5 TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS

This form of leave provides the right for employees to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with an emergency or unexpected situation and to make any necessary longer term arrangements. Please refer to the [Time off for Dependants Policy](#) and or HR for further advice and guidance on time off for dependants.

1.1.6 IVF TREATMENT

Absence due to IVF treatment is not classed as sickness absence and employees are not eligible to receive sick pay. However managers should be sensitive to the situation and act reasonably in authorising time off. Through discussions with the employee it can be agreed how to support time off for example, using holiday, toil, flexi (where appropriate) or unpaid leave.

1.1.7 OTHER TYPES OF LEAVE

- [Maternity Leave](#)
- Adoption Leave
- Maternity/Adoption Support Leave
- [Parental Leave](#)
- [Career Break](#)
- [Annual, Flexi or Lieu Leave](#)

Please refer to the relevant policy and or HR for further advice and guidance.

1.2) TYPES OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

Casual Absence	- Absence of short duration (½ - 3 calendar days.)
Short Term Absence	- Absences of short duration (4 - 9 calendar days.)
Long Term Absence	- Absences of 10, or more calendar days.
Critical Illness	- See Critical Illness Guide

All sickness absence will benefit greatly from efficient and early management of the underlying problem(s). Close co-operation between the employee, the line manager, Occupational Health and HR is essential to the resolution of all absences.

2.0) ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE

In the event an employee is unfit for work due to sickness absence they are expected where possible, prior to when their shift is due to start but in any case no later than one hour after their normal/scheduled start time, to personally notify the Council of their absence.

Employees should contact their immediate line manager by telephone to report their absence. 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 party¹ to report an employee's absence for example in the case of an employee being unexpectedly admitted to hospital.

Employees must make every effort to personally report their inability to attend work. When calling they must provide as much detail as possible, for example, nature of illness, their current medical condition and some indication of the expected duration of their illness. An employee's line manager needs to obtain this information so that arrangements may, if necessary, be made to cover workload during the absence. Timing and frequency of contact should also be agreed. Where this information is not provided during the initial call a line manager may make further contact, later that day, with the employee to gather these facts.

If contact is not made within 2 hours of the normal start time this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and payment for that day will not normally be made. Pay will only resume from the date of notification, the earliest this would be possible would be the next working day. Once an employee is deemed to be in an unauthorised absence situation, their line manager should contact Human Resources (see section [3.0 Absent Without Leave Process](#) for further advice and guidance).

Telephone numbers to report absence are available from line managers, and employees should ensure they are familiar with their responsibilities and have the necessary contact numbers to hand at all times.

Employees should contact their line manager as detailed above on the **first, third and fifth calendar day** of their absence from work. To help with managing attendance and in the event of an emergency employees are encouraged to provide a relevant contact number to their line manager.

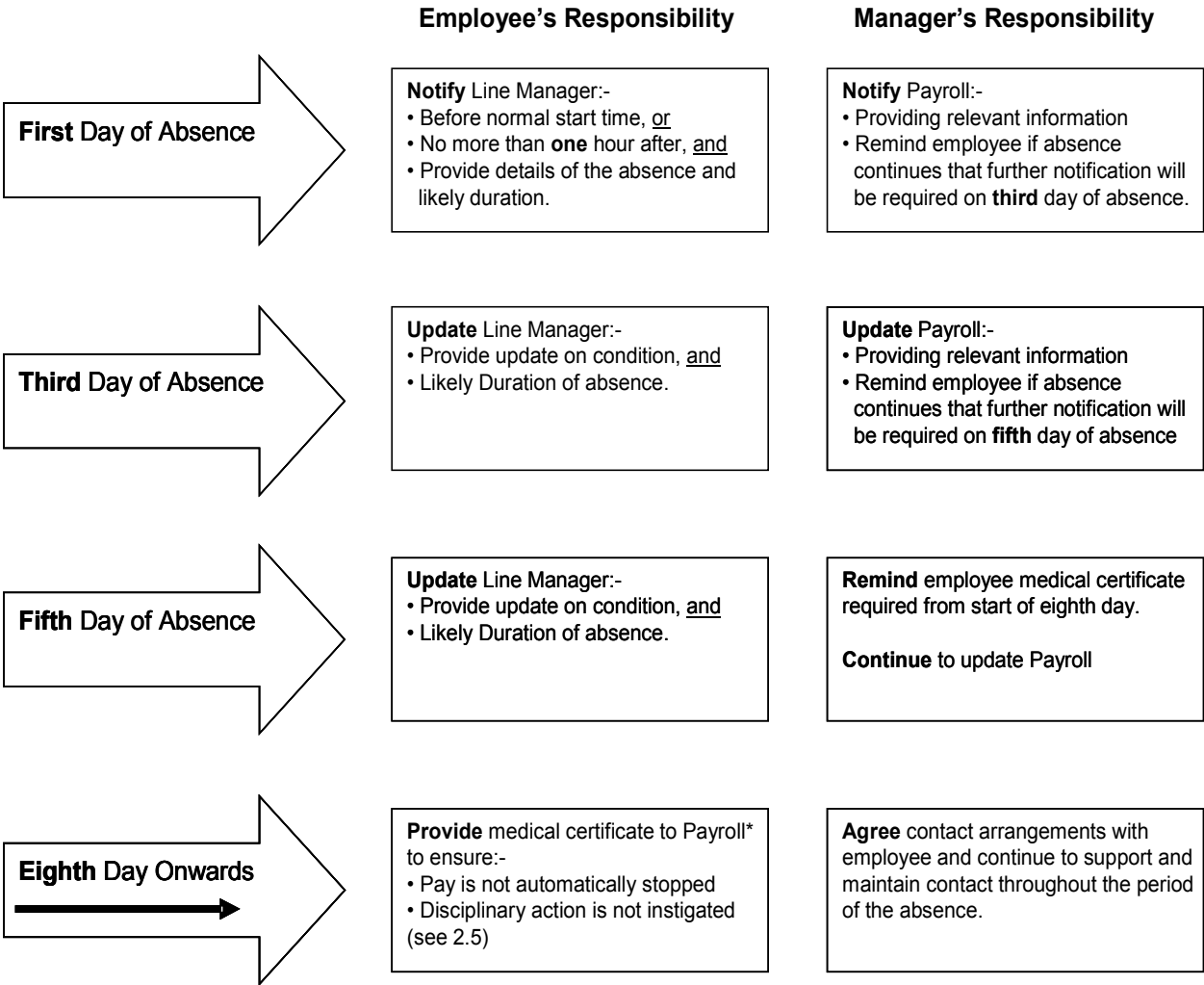
It is the responsibility of line managers to notify Payroll on the first day of absence and ensure that all information in their possession relating to the absence is provided to Payroll throughout the period of the absence.

Employees who fail to report sickness absence as detailed above may be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

! IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IN THE EVENT OF AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE, THE COUNCIL RETAINS THE RIGHT TO STOP PAY FROM THE DATE THAT THE ABSENCE BEGAN. THE COUNCIL IS LIKELY TO EXERCISE THIS RIGHT IN ALL BUT THE MOST EXCEPTIONAL OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

¹ For example – spouse, partner, close relative, family friend or work colleague

2.1) SUMMARY OF ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE



* Upon noting contents and duration of medical certificate Payroll will advise Line Manager. Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) will be withheld unless the procedures in 2.5 are followed.

It is the responsibility of the employee to maintain contact as illustrated above. Failure to do so will be regarded as a breach of the procedure and line managers will initiate contact with the absent employee.

Employees who submit a medical certificate on the first day of absence are not expected to make contact on the third and fifth days, however it is expected that contact arrangements and information regarding the absence and likely duration will be discussed and agreed with their line manager.

If an employee is admitted into hospital or a similar institution, a doctor's statement on entry or discharge shall, wherever practicable, should be submitted in the place of a medical certificate.

2.2) BECOMING ILL WHILE AT WORK

Employees who report for work as normal and become ill during working hours, must report to their line manager to advise them of the situation, and to enable the most appropriate course of action to be taken. Individuals must contact their manager, if available or nominated deputy (as advised by their manager), either in person, by telephone or using the Council Radio System. Communication via email, text message or a work colleague is not acceptable and will be

regarded as a breach of the procedure. Such absences will be recorded as a partial absence on the Council's HR and Payroll systems. Employees who fail to inform their manager appropriately, and simply leave their workplace, will be viewed as being absent without leave (AWOL) and as such may have their pay stopped and/or may be subject to disciplinary action.

2.3) PARTIAL ABSENCES

Where an employee is absent from work for part of a day this will be recorded as an absence on the Councils' HR and Payroll systems. Further information on the details of the partial absence should be given on the return to work documentation see appendix 1

2.4) ABSENCES UP TO SEVEN CALENDAR DAYS²

Employees who are absent for up to seven calendar days are required to notify their line manager on day one of their absence. Where contact is not made by the employee in line with the Absence Reporting Procedure, this will be viewed as a breach of the procedure and the line manager will instigate contact with the employee. Where contact is not made by the employee on days three and five of absence this will be regarded as a breach of the procedure and line managers reserve the right to make contact with the employee ([see 2.1 Summary of Absence Reporting Procedure](#)). Upon returning to work a [Return to Work Meeting](#) should be carried out be completed and the return to work form completed (appendix 1). This form should be forwarded to Payroll within 5 working days after completion of the return to work interview.

2.5) ABSENCES FOR LONGER THAN 7 CALENDAR DAYS

Absences for eight calendar days or more will require a Medical Certificate (sick line). Failure to submit a sick line will result in pay being automatically stopped. Where a number of consecutive sick lines are required to support an extended period of absence, employees are expected to notify their line manager and submit their new sick line within three working days from the expiry date of the previous line. In cases where this does not happen, or there is a 'gap' which is not supported by a sick line, pay will be stopped for that period, the absence will be recorded as AWOL and disciplinary action may be taken against the employee. Occupational sick pay will not be paid for any such period and will only resume on upon the date on which the 'new' sick line is received.

2.6) ABSENCES DURING INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Strike action constitutes a breach of contract. As such, employees participating in strike action are not entitled to receive payment for days on which they do not attend work therefore, an amount equivalent to one day's pay will be deducted for each day they do not attend work. Participation in strike action will also result in a break in service in pension contributions for NILGOSC members.

Employees who are absent from work due to sickness on the date strike action is planned **must submit a GP sick line for that day of absence**. Payment in these circumstances will only be made upon receipt of a fully completed medical certificate together with the completion of a satisfactory Return to Work Interview being returned to Payroll.

Where an employee is absent for a continuous period that commenced before and continued after the strike action the normal absence reporting procedures as set out in [2.0 Absence Reporting Procedure](#) should be followed.

Where a sick line has not been submitted Occupational Sick Pay will be withheld and no payment will be made to the employee.

² Where a medical certificate is submitted during the first 7 calendar days alternative contact arrangements should be discussed and agreed between the employee and their line manager.

2.7) SICK PAY ENTITLEMENTS

Sick pay is made up of 2 separate parts:-

- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)and;
- Occupational Sick Pay (OSP)

2.8) STATUTORY SICK PAY

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is a flat rate state benefit payable by the Council from the fourth day of sickness. Entitlement to SSP depends on whether sufficient national insurance contributions have been paid. The weekly rate of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) can be found on the HM Revenue and Customs webs site at www.hmrc.gov.uk The Council combines both OSP and SSP to make up an employee's pay when they are absent.

SSP can be paid for a maximum period of up to 28 weeks, after this period Payroll will provide employees with a SSP1 pack, to enable them to claim Incapacity Benefit. For more information about Incapacity Benefit employees should contact their local Job Centre, the number can be found in the local telephone book under Jobcentre Plus.

2.9) OCCUPATIONAL SICK PAY (OSP)

Employees are entitled to receive OSP from their 1st day of service; the length of their entitlement is determined by their length of service with the Council. The current entitlement is as follows:-

Length of Service	Entitlement*	
	Full Pay	Half Pay
During 1 st year of service	1 months full pay	2 months**
During 2 nd year of service	2 months	2 months
During 3 rd year of service	4 months	4 months
During 4 th and 5 th year of service	5 months	5 months
After 5 years service	6 months	6 months

NOTE:

*As set out in Part 2 section 10 of National Agreement on pay and conditions of service (June 2005)

**After completing 4 months service

The payment of OSP may be influenced by several factors. One is where the nature of an employee's absence does not prevent them from carrying out work related tasks at home or at another work location, for example where the reason for absence is an injury that affects mobility, rather than an illness. Any refusal to comply with a reasonable request may result in the withholding of OSP.

Other factors that may influence the payment of OSP are where the Council have doubts as to whether the absence, or its seriousness is genuine or self inflicted, for example as a result of a hangover, or where an employee has become injured as a result of pursuing a dangerous sport for further information refer to [4.0 Conduct During Sickness Absence](#).

NOTE:

1. The entitlements to receive OSP, as defined above, apply to all employees, including those protected by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.
2. Entitlements are calculated on a rolling 12 month basis.
3. There is no entitlement for employees to exhaust their OSP before dismissal on the grounds of capability/incapacity.

2.10) ILLNESS ON A DAY RELEASE OR TRAINING DAY

Where an employee cannot attend training or day release due to illness they should follow the procedure as set out in [2.0 Absence Reporting Procedure](#).

2.10) REMOVAL OF SELF CERTIFICATION FACILITY

As an outcome of a formal attendance management meeting ([12.0 Formal Attendance Management Process](#)) where an employee's pattern/level of attendance causes serious concern the facility for an employee to 'self certify' their absence as may be removed. If this has been invoked employees would be expected to produce a medical certificate (sick line) for every period of absence, regardless of duration.

2.12) CONTACT WITH A NOTIFIABLE DISEASE

If an employee knows that they have been in contact with any notifiable³ disease, they should ask their local GP/Doctor whether they should stay away from work or not. If an employee, on doctor's orders or those of the local medical officer or Environmental Health Officer during the investigation of an outbreak of notifiable disease, has been advised not to attend work, the employee will be allowed leave with pay and the period of absence will not counted as sickness absence subject to written confirmation the employee's doctor that they have an notifiable disease. Doctors may advise their local Environmental Health department who by law must record all instances of notifiable disease occurring.

If an employee feels unwell after they have been in contact with a notifiable disease, they should stay away from their place of work and consult their doctor immediately.

Employees need not stay away from work if they have been in contact with a case of scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, chicken pox or mumps, but they should report the facts to their line manager or Human Resources as soon as possible.

Where employees have been in close contact with a case of german measles (rubella) or slapped cheek (parvovirus or B19), they should report the fact to their line manager or Human Resources in case there is any likelihood of any close contact with someone in the first 16 weeks of pregnancy.

³ An employee's GP will have information on the types of diseases that are classified as being 'notifiable diseases.'

3.0) ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE PROCESS

Where an employee is absent without leave, the main objective of their line manager is to re-establish contact with the individual to determine whether they intend to return to work and to discuss any problems they may be experiencing. However the problem may ultimately lead to the terminating of the individual's employment contract where all attempts to establish contact/resolve problems have been unsuccessful.

3.1) FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

Managers should treat each case individually and be mindful of the need for consistency of treatment. Following discussion with HR the following factors may be taken into consideration:-

- Does the employee know the absence reporting procedure?
- Past History - has the employee had previous instances of unauthorised absence, or is this out of character?
- Any personal circumstances that may have affected their ability to attend work.

3.2) TELEPHONE CONTACT

All reasonable attempts, by the line manager, should be made to contact the employee using the employee's home or mobile number to ensure they are safe. If it is believed there is a grave cause for concern it may be appropriate to contact the employee's emergency contact/next of kin to enquire after their welfare or for their line manager or other nominated officer to visit them at home.

3.3) CONTACT LETTERS⁴

Where attempts to contact an employee via telephone have not been successful and the whereabouts of the employee cannot be established the employee should be written to as follows:-

- **Initial Letter** - This should normally be sent within the first 2 working days of the individual being absent. The letter requires the absent employee to contact their line manager immediately and also reminds them of the correct absence reporting procedure and advises that their pay has been stopped see [2.0\) Absence Reporting Procedure](#).
- **Second Contact Letter** - If no response to the initial contact letter has been made within 3 working days a second contact letter should be sent. This letter advises the employee they are in breach of contract and informs them that they may be subject to disciplinary action if they do not make contact within 7 calendar days from the date of the letter.
- **Third Contact Letter** - This letter advises employees that they are being invited to attend a disciplinary hearing in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure. This letter should be sent no sooner than 7 calendar days after the second letter.

NOTE:

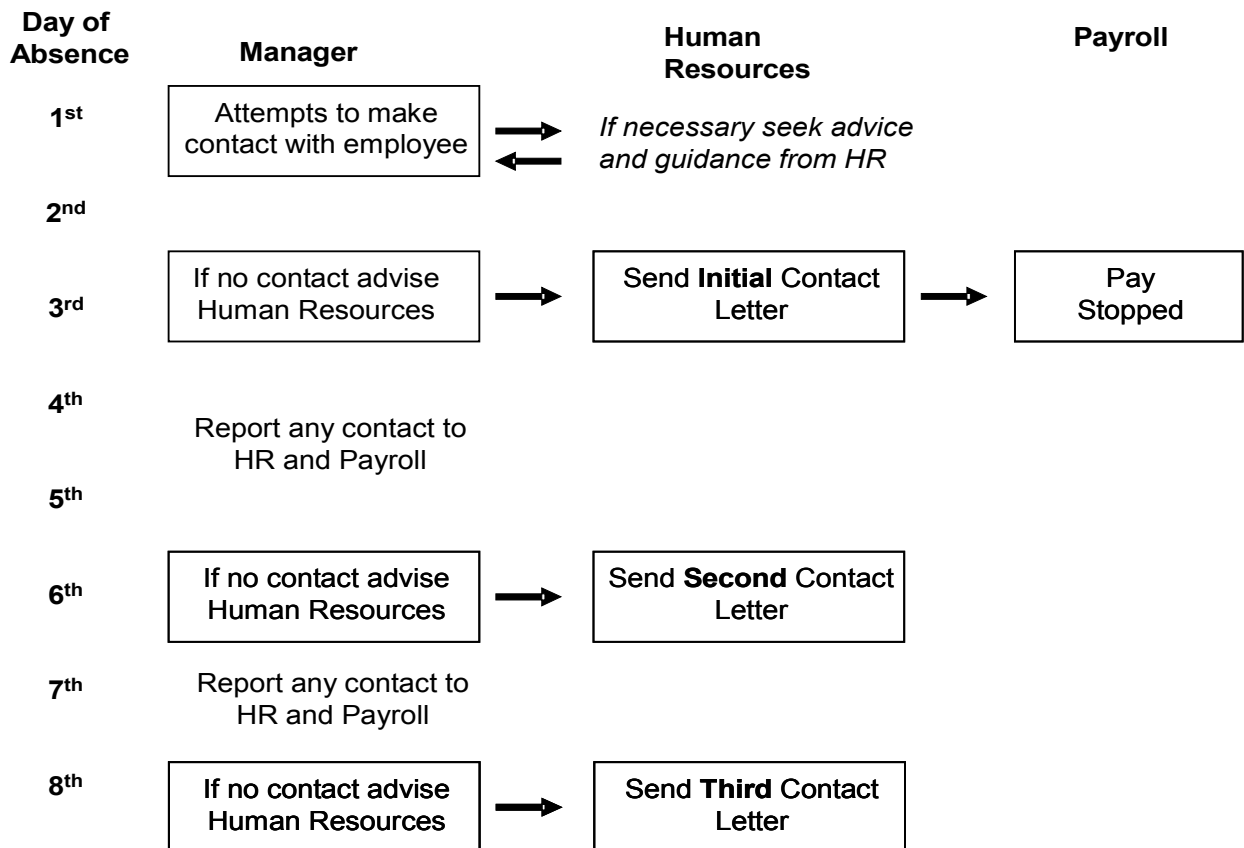
Contact letters (appendices 2, 3 & 4) will be sent to the employee's last known address as held on the HR personnel database (PAMS). Employees should ensure HR and Payroll are advised of any change of address or contact details as they arise. Letters are sent by both recorded delivery and first class post; it will be deemed that letters will have been delivered by the next working day after posting.

⁴ Contact letters are produced and sent by HR in conjunction with the employee's line manager.

3.4) SUSPENDING PAY

In all AWOL cases pay will be stopped and a decision of when to reinstate an employee's pay due to unauthorised absence would be dependent upon individual circumstances and the factors outlined above see (3.1).

3.5) AWOL PROCEDURE



4.0) CONDUCT DURING SICKNESS ABSENCE

The purpose of the sickness absence scheme is to facilitate an employee's full and proper recovery from illness or injury. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, activities which would normally be considered by the Council to be inconsistent with genuine sickness/injury or which contravene this policy may include:-

- Participation in any sport, hobby, social or other activity which could aggravate the illness or injury or which could delay recovery.
- Undertaking any other employment during the sickness absence, whether paid or unpaid, which is in any way inconsistent with the nature of the illness or injury.
- Engaging in any other activity which is inconsistent with the nature of the illness or injury.
- Altering or causing to have altered any of the details of a medical certificate, for example, date, reason for absence, signature etc.
- Giving the Council inaccurate or misleading information about any period of absence.
- Failure to follow, without good reason, medical advice for example counselling, medication and recommendations made by Occupational Health, their GP and so on.

If employees are found to be using the scheme for purposes other than recovery, the Council will regard this as misconduct and OSP may be withheld and/or disciplinary action may be invoked at any stage up to and including dismissal. The Council reserves the right to pursue for the recovery of monies paid via OSP and may also report false claims for SSP to the relevant Government Body. Due account will be taken of all available information if considering such matters.

4.1) INJURY CLAIMS AGAINST THIRD PARTIES

If an employee is injured in an accident outside work for which they can get compensation for lost earnings from a third party, they are not normally entitled to payment from the Council. However, they may receive a payment, which the employee must repay to the Council from any compensation they receive from the third party for lost earnings.

5.0) ABSENCE TRIGGERS

The Council will use trigger points in relation to an employee's pattern of attendance to identify where there **may** be a cause for concern and where further investigation is required. The use of triggers is necessary to ensure consistency. Following consultation the triggers may be reviewed and amended by the Council if considered appropriate. The current triggers are as follows:-

Where, in any rolling 12 month period, **any** of the following criteria are met:-

1. 4 or more separate periods of absence, for example 4 absences of 1 day each.
2. Where it is apparent that the employee will be absent from work for 2 calendar weeks or more, regardless of the nature of the absence.
3. An unacceptable pattern of absence, for example regular Mondays and Fridays or absence immediately before and/or after annual leave, public holidays etc.

Employees during their probationary period and with less than one year's service will be assessed on a part year with trigger levels pro-rated see [12.7 Probationary Periods and Absence](#).

Where an employee has met any of the triggers the Formal Absence Management Procedures should be followed see [12.0 Formal Attendance Management](#).

6.0) OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Occupational Health (OH) plays a critical role in managing attendance and can support the health and wellbeing of employees. A referral to the Occupational Health Service is beneficial for both the manager and employee. It should be regarded positively and not as a punitive measure.

Referrals to OH should always be made where an absence (regardless of duration) from work, is due to any of the following reasons:-

1. Any work related reason for being absent.
2. Where the absence is due to an accident at work
3. Where stress is the reason for absence
4. Where managers have genuine cause for concern regarding the employee's health and wellbeing.

Referrals to OH should be made in conjunction with the employee and benefit both the employee in helping them to manage their attendance and, the line manager, in providing them with advice that allows them to more effectively manage the situation. In making a referral the employee should be made aware of the reason(s) for the referral.

[Referral Forms](#) and further information on the service are available on the W Drive.

The outcome from an occupational health appointment will be shared with the employee and their line manager and should form the basis of a discussion regarding the employee's attendance.

An employee should always be referred to OH before considering dismissal on the grounds of capability/incapacity.

The Council reserves the right to make referrals to OH at any stage in the managing attendance procedures and may also refer employees at other times when this is deemed appropriate.

6.1) CONFLICTING INFORMATION

Where there is a difference of opinion between advice given by an employee's GP and the Council's Occupational Health provider the following will apply:

1. The Council will seek further advice from the occupational health provider.

If the difference of opinion still exists:-

2. The Council's occupational health provider will, with the employee's consent⁵, contact the employee's GP.

If the difference of opinion still exists:-

3. The Council reserves the right to rely on the advice provided by its occupational health provider.

6.2) REFUSAL TO ATTEND⁶

An employee is in breach of the Managing Attendance Policy and Procedures if they refuse to attend an occupational health appointment. Where this is the case all attempts should be made by the Council to facilitate a meeting between the employee and the occupational health provider, for example offering an alternative date, meeting location and meeting format.

If after reasonable attempts to facilitate a meeting, an employee still refuses to attend, the Council reserves the right to suspend the employee's Occupational Sick Pay. Occupational Sick Pay would remain suspended until the employee complied with their responsibilities as set out in the Managing Attendance Policy and Procedures.

6.3) FAILURE TO ATTEND AN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH APPOINTMENT

If an employee is unable to attend an appointment they should contact a member of the HR team as soon as possible to enable their appointment to be allocated to another employee. Please note, that, if an employee fails to notify HR that they are unable to attend they will incur the cost of the appointment which is currently £50. This will be recouped from the employee's next salary/wages payment. An employee's non-attendance may also result in suspension from the Council's sick pay scheme.

⁵ Where an employee does not give their consent the Council will rely solely on the advice provided by its Occupational Health provider.

⁶ If an employee provides medical evidence from their GP as to why they cannot attend, Occupational Health will, with the consent of the employee, contact their GP for further information. Where consent is not given Occupational Sick Pay will be suspended.

7.0) ABSENCE DUE TO 'ELECTIVE SURGERY'

Where elective surgery is essential to an employee's health or wellbeing then this would be a valid reason for an employee to receive Council and statutory sick pay. The Council retains the right to ask for written confirmation from a medically qualified consultant that this is the case, this information should be provided before time is taken off for surgery/treatment.

For non-essential surgery/treatment where an employee will be absent from work, as a result of choosing to receive surgery/treatment, arrangements for Annual Leave or Unpaid Leave (where approved) must be made in advance.

7.1) POST OPERATIVE RECOVERY FOLLOWING ELECTIVE SURGERY

In cases of non essential/elective surgery employees would be expected to provide information to their line manager about average recovery times for the procedure(s) they are undergoing. This is essential to allow them to book sufficient time away from the business and for their manager to plan around the employee's absence.

In exceptional cases the estimated recovery times stated by an employee may be exceeded due to post operative complications. Where this is the case employee's will be expected to comply with the absence procedure for 7 calendar days or more with effect from the 1st day of sickness absence, therefore a medical certificate would be required to support any post-operative sickness absence for non essential elective surgery.

8.0) SICKNESS ABSENCE AND ANNUAL LEAVE

Employees who fall sick when on annual leave will need to follow the sickness absence reporting procedures as explained at [2.0 Absence Reporting Procedures](#). Where the correct absence reporting procedures have been followed an employee's absence will be recorded as sickness absence rather than annual leave. However annual leave can only be changed to sickness absence on the production of a medical certificate. Employees cannot use self certification to 'convert' one form of leave to another, nor can an employee report their sickness following their return from annual leave.

Employees who are unable to return to work due to sickness absence immediately after a period of pre-booked leave may be required to provide medical evidence to support this period of absence. Failure to supply supporting medical evidence when requested do so may result in OSP being forfeited.

Where a period of sickness absence occurring overlaps with a period of pre-booked annual leave (whether in whole or in part), the Council may in its absolute discretion reimburse the period of annual leave entitlement lost due to incapacity if a request is received from an employee to reschedule the period of annual leave to another time once they have recovered. There is no contractual right to reimbursement and, before considering whether reimbursement is appropriate in the circumstances, employees must provide a relevant medical certificate covering the period of incapacity.

Only statutory annual leave entitlement provided for in the Working Time Regulations 1998 will accrue during a period of long-term sickness absence. Any additional contractual annual leave provided for in an employee's Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment that is over and above the statutory minimum annual leave entitlement will not accrue during a period of long-term sickness absence, except at the absolute discretion of the Council.

Where an employee is absent due to long-term incapacity, they will be encouraged to apply to take accrued holiday entitlement before the end of the holiday year. However, in exceptional cases of long-term incapacity and if approved in writing by an employee's line manager, the employee may be permitted to carry forward some or all of the accrued holiday entitlement into the next holiday year if either they are still off sick at the end of the holiday year or there is insufficient time remaining on return to work in the holiday year to take their full accrued entitlement.

8.1) REQUESTS FOR SHORT NOTICE HOLIDAYS

When an employee is unable to attend their place of work due to sickness absence they **cannot** request a short notice holiday from their line manager and their absence must be recorded correctly. Requests for annual leave should be approved in advance of the leave being taken and must take account of service requirements.

Where an employee is unable to attend work at short notice, and sickness absence is not the underlying reason for the request not to attend work, the line manager and the employee should discuss the other types of leave provided for under the [Special Leave](#) and [Time off for Dependants](#) policies and procedures.

9.0) ABSENCE AND OVERTIME

When absent from work due to sickness absence, employees cannot attend their place of work and carry out either pre-arranged or unscheduled overtime. Employees who are absent from work due to sickness absence and report for pre-arranged or unscheduled overtime will not be paid and will be asked to leave.

An employee can only return to their contracted working pattern/hours following a period of sickness absence and are not permitted to return to work and immediately undertake overtime duties.

Furthermore where an employee has been absent from work due to long term absence they cannot volunteer, or be scheduled, to work overtime until a minimum of 7 calendar days **after** their return to work and a Return to Work Interview has been completed. Where an employee's return to work is supported by medical advice concerning [Light Duties](#) they will be unable to work overtime while under this arrangement.

10.0) MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Employees attending routine medical appointments (doctor, dentist, optician etc) should do so in their own time, avoiding core working hours where possible (10:00am–12noon & 2:00pm–4:00pm).

Where possible, employees should make appointments at times that minimise disruption to service delivery e.g. taking time off at either end of the working day or during lunch periods, using flexi-leave, TOIL or annual leave.

In some cases, it may be difficult to arrange appointments outside normal working hours and it is therefore reasonable in such cases to allow paid time off work, subject to service considerations. In exceptional circumstances where an employee has no choice about when an appointment can be made paid time off may be given at the discretion of the Council.

Employees requesting paid time off should discuss this with their line manager well in advance of the appointment and employees may be required to produce an appointment card or other document confirming details of the appointment.

10.1) TREATMENT FOR UNDERLYING MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Employees who need to receive regular treatment for an underlying medical condition, during working hours should be accounted for as above. In some cases, a mutually agreed, temporary adjustment of the employee's contractual hours may be appropriate. Each case will be treated on its merits and much will depend on the individual circumstances and the nature of the treatment. Arrangements should be discussed and preferably agreed, in advance between the employee and his/her line manager. Employees not wishing to discuss such matters with their manager may seek confidential advice from Occupational Health and or HR.

In exceptional circumstances and where Occupational Health has endorsed the treatment, a limited amount of paid release may be granted following discussion with HR.

10.2) PREGNANT WORKERS

Pregnant employees are legally entitled to paid time-off during working hours to receive antenatal care as advised by a doctor, a registered midwife or a registered health visitor. Employees are required to ask their line manager for time off for the appointments and requests should not be unreasonably refused. If asked to do so by their manager, employees must produce a certificate (from a doctor, a registered midwife or a registered health visitor) stating that she is pregnant and an appointment card or some other document confirming that the appointment has been made. For Further information see the [Maternity Leave](#) policy.

10.3) EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

For the avoidance of doubt, this advice relates only to employees who are disabled as defined by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (DDO). Advice can be sought from Occupational Health regarding whether or not an employee would be protected by the Order.

Under the DDO, it is unlawful to treat disabled employees unjustifiably, less favorably, than other employees for a reason related to their disability. The Council also has a specific duty to consider and make reasonable adjustments, where appropriate, to cater for employees with disabilities. Reasonable adjustments must be considered on a case-by-case basis with each determined on its own particular circumstances and merits.

Employees with disabilities who need to attend medical appointments for a reason related to their disability, should be given unpaid time off work, where it is unreasonable for them to attend outside their normal working hours. In the majority of cases, this is likely to be a reasonable adjustment as required by the DDO.

In cases where medical treatment/appointments require regular and long term requests for time off, flexible working arrangements should be considered. Options should be discussed and fully explored with the employee concerned and may be adopted on a temporary or permanent basis, depending on the characteristics of the disability, nature of the medical appointment as well as service delivery needs. Examples of the type of measures that may be helpful include: adjusting working hours to allow the employee to make up lost time; allowing the employee to work from a different location; reducing contractual working hours; changing starting and finishing times and so on. It may also be appropriate for more than one measure to be used at the same time. Any changes to an employee's contractual terms and conditions will require mutual agreement.

Before granting time off, confirmation should be obtained from Occupational Health and HR that the employee is covered by the DDO and the proposed arrangement is both reasonable and linked to their disability.

10.4) RECORDING INFORMATION

Accurate recording and monitoring is essential not only in terms of good management practice but also in demonstrating the "reasonable adjustments" taken in respect of disabled employees. For employees with disabilities, distinction needs to be drawn between sickness absence and absence as a reasonable adjustment. Classifying the latter as sickness absence is potentially discriminatory i.e. there is a possibility that the employee could suffer a detriment through, for example, adverse references or early reduction in sick pay.

11.0) ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

11.1) RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEWS (RTWI)

Following each absence from work, due to sickness, the absent employee must be interviewed by their line manager. This is an essential part of the procedure; these interviews should be conducted fairly and consistently. Interviews should be held, ideally, on the day an employee returns to work and no later than 3 days after they return. The return to work form (appendix 1) should be completed in conjunction with the employee's line manager and should be forwarded to Payroll within 5 working days after completion of the return to work interview.

Before closing the interview, it should be explained to the employee that the Council expects full attendance. The consequences of continued poor attendance should also be highlighted. It should also be confirmed that the employee understands what has been said, what is required of them in the future and what action the Council may take next time they are absent from work due to illness. Employees and managers are expected to treat return to work meetings positively.

12.0) FORMAL ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Employees who meet a trigger point as identified at 5.0 should be advised their attendance will now be managed under the formal process. At each stage of the process a formal meeting should be arranged. At least 7 calendar days notice should be given to an employee and the details of the meeting must be issued to the employee in writing.

The following people would be present at the meeting:-

- The employee,
- The employee's immediate line manager,
- A representative from HR,

The employee has the right to be accompanied at a formal attendance meeting by either:-

- A recognised Trade Union representative or
- A Down District Council work colleague

A record of the meeting will be taken by the representative from Human Resources to confirm the main points covered and any actions as a result of the meeting.

The circumstances surrounding the employee's pattern of attendance should be discussed with the employee along with information relating to each period of absence. Following discussion, the employee should be informed, in writing, of the following:-

- That his or her level of attendance provides cause for concern and will be closely monitored and reviewed at regular intervals over a fixed period.
- The improvement required in the level of attendance.
- The likely next step if there is no improvement, for example progression to the next stage of the process, removal of self certification facility etc.
- That if the necessary level of attendance is achieved over the fixed period, there will be no further action and normal management monitoring of attendance will resume.

The review/monitoring period for each stage is set out below:-

- 1) The Stage 1 Attendance Meeting should set a monitoring period of 6 months.
- 2) The Stage 2 Attendance Meeting should set a monitoring period of 9 months.
- 3) The Stage 3 Attendance Meeting should set a monitoring period of 12 months.

12.1) INTERIM REVIEW MEETINGS

Within each of the 3 stages informal⁷ review meetings should be carried out at 3 monthly intervals to monitor and track progress against the attendance objectives set at the start of the monitoring period. Due to the fact an employee's attendance is being closely monitored these review meetings provide the manager and the employee, with an opportunity to discuss recent events and to highlight any areas for concern. A review meeting should be carried out before the next stage of the process can be instigated.

In cases where levels of attendance have improved the opportunity is also presented at the review meetings to praise and reinforce the positive contribution the employee is making to improve their attendance.

If it becomes clear during the monitoring period, at any stage of the process, that attendance remains unacceptable a move to the next stage of the process can be instigated. It is not necessary to wait for the full time periods as set out in [12.0 Formal Attendance Management Process](#) to have expired before moving onto the next stage of the process.

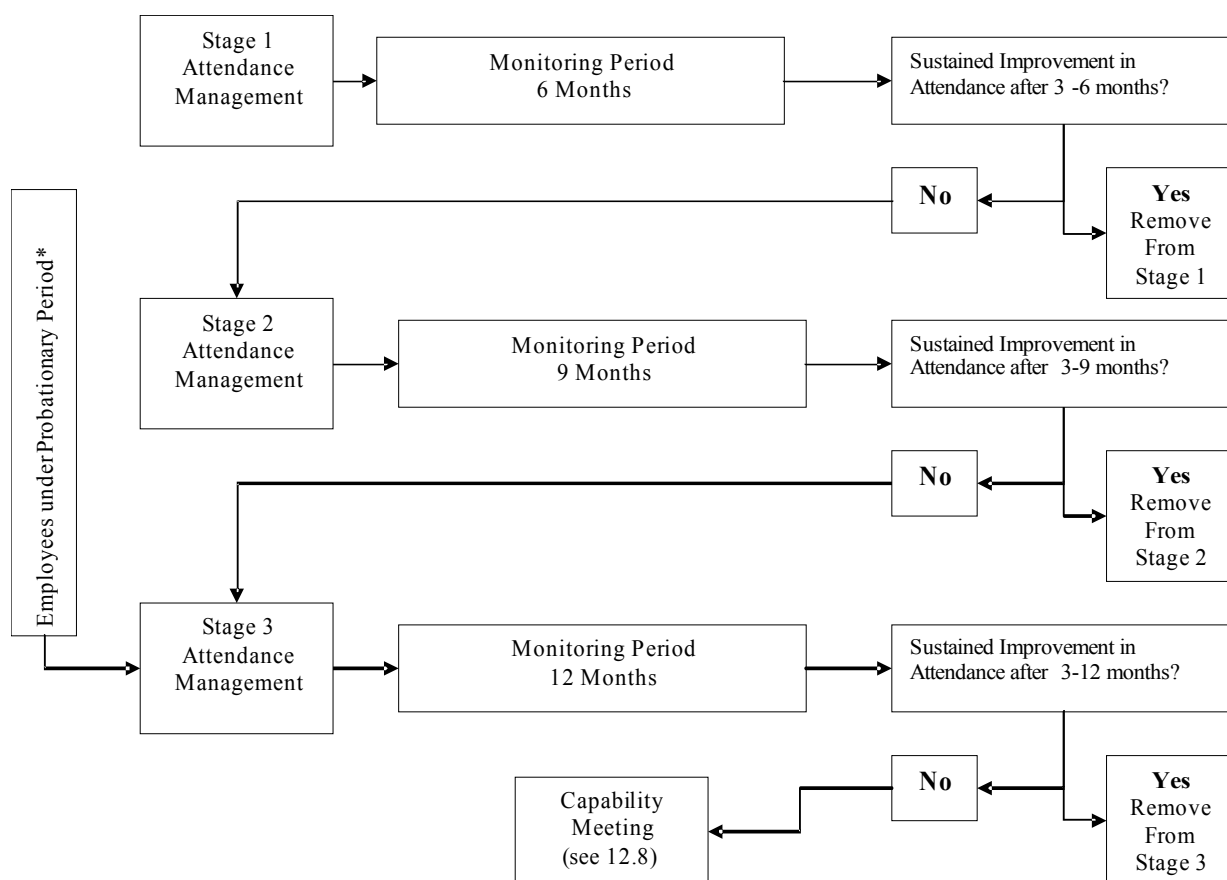
At least 3 months at each stage of the process must be completed before progressing onto the next stage except where a employee is still in their probationary period see [12.7 Probationary Periods and Absence](#).

At stage 3 if there is no improvement in attendance, the next, and final stage, of the process should be instigated which would be a Capability Meeting; the earliest that this could be carried out is after the first review meeting.

Review Meetings should be recorded on a Review Meeting Form (appendix 5) and the line manager and the employee are both expected to sign and date the form at the end of the meeting.

⁷ Review meetings are informal and therefore a representative from HR and a Trade Union or employee representative would not normally need to be present.

12.2) ILLUSTRATION OF ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS



*With less than 12 months service with the Council

12.3) REMOVAL OF SELF CERTIFICATION FACILITY

Where an employee's pattern/level of attendance causes serious concern the facility for an employee to 'self certify' their absence to their line manager as defined in [2.4 Absences up to Seven Calendar Days](#) may be removed. This facility could be removed at any of the formal stages. Where this facility is removed an employee must be advised this is the case and the decision must be confirmed in writing. Once withdrawn, employees would be expected to produce a medical certificate (sick line) for every period of absence; regardless of duration. Once invoked this would remain in force until either:-

- The employee has been removed from the formal Attendance Management Process, or
- Their pattern/level of attendance has improved so as not to cause serious concern.

12.4) REMOVAL FROM FORMAL STAGES

An employee would be removed from the formal stages of the policy if after the full monitoring period attendance levels have improved and are acceptable and this, acceptable level of attendance, has been sustained for the duration of the monitoring period.

12.5) CONTINUED POOR ATTENDANCE

Where an employee has been removed from the formal process but within a short period of time is absent again the Council reserves the right to re-enter the Attendance Management Process at the same stage. Where the period of time between leaving a particular stage and a deterioration in attendance exceeds six months it would be usual to re-enter the process at stage 1. However where there is evidence of pattern of unacceptable attendance progression to the next stage may also be considered.

12.6) APPEAL TO FORMAL STAGES

The right of appeal exists at the following stages:-

- Progression to Stage 1 Attendance Management
- Progression to Stage 2 Attendance Management
- Progression to Stage 3 Attendance Management
- Dismissal from the Council due to incapacity/capability

In all cases employees wishing to appeal must do so, in writing, within 5 working days of notification of the decision. Appeals should be addressed to Human Resources, and the grounds for appeal should be clearly and fully stated.

Timescales for appeal meetings are as per those identified in the Council's Disciplinary procedure (see [Disciplinary Procedure](#))

Appeal meetings are heard within the line management structure by employee's line manager's manager. Appeals against dismissal are heard by a Director.

Where possible, another member of the Human Resources team not involved in the original decision will support the manager hearing the appeal. Employees may choose to be accompanied either by an accredited Trade Union Representative or a Down District Council work employee.

Where an appeal is upheld (the decision made has been overturned) the employee would move back to the previous stage in the process. For example a successful appeal is lodged after a stage 3 meeting the employee would revert back to stage 2 of the process. The appeals officer cannot remove an employee from the process unless the appeal was lodged at stage 1.

12.7) PROBATIONARY PERIODS AND ABSENCE

Where an employee is absent during their probationary period and where they have less than 12 months service with the Council, timescales before entering the formal stage of the process will be shorter. Trigger points as set out in 5.0 Absence Triggers (points 1 & 2) will be reduced by half for employees with less than 6 months service and if any of the these triggers are met a formal meeting will be held at Stage 3 of the process.

Advice should be sought from HR in all instances.

12.8) CAPABILITY MEETING

Before considering dismissal at a Capability meeting, the following steps must have been taken:

1. An up to date occupational health report obtained (dated within the last 3 months) (see use of [Occupational Health](#)).
2. A meeting with the employee, and his or her representative, to:
 - Advise the employee of the Medical Adviser's opinion;

- Consider seriously any issues raised or comments expressed by the employee or his or her representative,
 - Explore any appropriate alternatives to dismissal, which would lead to acceptable attendance levels e.g. redeployment.
3. If other options are impractical, the employee should be informed that
- His or her absences can no longer be accommodated and the reason(s) why this is the case;
 - He/she is required to attend a formal capability meeting where he or she may be dismissed on the grounds of capability due to sustained poor attendance. A manager with delegated authority to dismiss must conduct this meeting.

Appendix 6 Absence Flow Chart illustrates the attendance management process.

12.9) LIGHT DUTIES

Where an employee is unable to carry out their substantive post due to their illness they may be able to carry out light duties for a limited period of time. Any such request for 'light duties' must be supported by medical evidence from the employee's GP and/or Occupational Health. The supporting evidence should clearly explain the reason and the likely duration for the request. 'Light duties' can apply to both administrative posts, for example a reduction in the number duties carried out or in other posts by reducing the amount of physical effort required to fulfil the duties of the post. While undertaking light duties an employee would continue to receive their normal rate of pay; any such arrangement is at the discretion of the Council.

While on light duties an employee cannot volunteer, or be scheduled, to work overtime. The duration of light duties would be determined by advice and guidance from Occupational Health, however any arrangement should not exceed 30 calendar days.

12.10) ALTERNATIVE DUTIES

Where an employee is unable to carry out their substantive post due to their illness⁸ they may be able to carry out alternative duties for a limited period of time. Any such request for alternative duties must be supported by medical evidence from the employee's GP and/or Occupational Health. The supporting evidence should clearly explain the reason and the likely duration for the request. Any such arrangement would be paid at the appropriate rate for the role/hours worked, and is at the discretion of the Council. An employee cannot transfer to alternative duties at a higher grade or rate of pay than that of their substantive post. Alternative duties should not present an opportunity for an employee to benefit financially as a result of sickness absence. The duration of alternative duties would be determined by advice and guidance from Occupational Health.

13.0) LONG TERM ABSENCE

Long term absence is a continuous absence for health reasons, which lasts, or is likely to last, more than 10 calendar days. This procedure should also be used for related absences caused by an identified long term health problem which has a significant impact on an employee's ability to attend work on a regular basis.

13.1) GENERAL

At each formal stage in the procedure outlined below the employee may be accompanied if they wish by either a recognised Trade Union representative or a Down District Council work

⁸ It should be noted requests for alternative duties should be referred to HR for further advice and guidance before agreeing to any request.

colleague Employees should be given access to relevant documents which are going to be used in any meetings for example copies of medical reports.

13.2) INITIAL ATTENDANCE MEETING

In each case of long-term absence there should be a review of the circumstances surrounding the absence carried out by the line manager. Unless the circumstances are exceptional, the review will involve an initial attendance meeting with the employee. This meeting should take place within 2 to 3 weeks of the start of the sickness absence. The meeting would be conducted by the employee's immediate line manager (or other nominated officer as deemed appropriate). For some illnesses it may be appropriate to start this procedure as soon as the first medical certificate is received; in particular for stress-related, back, or muscular-skeletal illnesses. The purpose of the review and the meeting will be to consider:

- The employee's current state of health
- The likely duration of the sickness absence
- The employee's expectations about his or her future fitness to return to work.
- If the employee should be referred to [Occupational Health](#)

The employee should be made aware during the attendance meeting of the reason(s) for any referral to Occupational Health.

The outcome of the Occupational Health referral may be either that the employee is permanently unfit, or is not permanently unfit to attend work. A meeting should be arranged to advise the employee of the outcome of the Occupational Health referral; this could be combined with a [Contact Meeting](#).

13.3) NOT PERMANENTLY UNFIT FOR WORK

Where an employee is not permanently unfit then their absence should be reviewed on a regular basis using the process identified in section [12.0 Formal Attendance Management Process](#). This process must continue, with regular advice from Occupational Health until there is a return to work or it becomes clear that a return to work within a reasonable time-scale acceptable to the Council is not possible. It is suggested that each stage should last for no longer than 6 months before progressing to the next stage.

13.4) PERMANENTLY UNFIT FOR WORK

Where an employee is considered by Occupational Health to be permanently unfit for work the following would apply:-

- Ill Health Retirement - applies for NILGOSC members only
- Termination of contract the grounds of capability (see [Capability Meeting](#))

14.0) CONTACT MEETINGS

14.1) OVERVIEW

In order to support employees who are absent long term the Council reserves the right to meet with the employee in order to discuss their condition and what adjustments may be necessary to facilitate a return to work. Meetings will take place no earlier than 3 weeks after the initial attendance meeting. Such meetings will normally be held at Council premises however, by exception a home visit could be arranged or a meeting take place at a mutually convenient location suggested by either the employee or the Council for example, a Council run facility or other public place.

14.2) FORMAT

The employee's immediate line manager and Human Resource representative would, normally, be present at the meeting. While a contact meeting is not a formal meeting if wished an employee could be accompanied by a DDC employee or union representative.

A record of the meeting will be taken by the representative from Human Resources to confirm the main points covered and any actions as a result of the meeting.

Aims of Meeting

The aims of the meeting are:-

- To discuss the cause of the employee's absence and to enquire as to how they are feeling.
- To identify what action(s) the employee is taking to get better for example receiving treatment.
- To suggest and discuss any adjustments necessary within the workplace to accommodate a return to work (for full details of rehabilitative care see [15.1 Rehabilitative Care](#))
- To discuss the likely duration of the illness and suggest a possible return to work date.
- To discuss the results of any Occupational Health information available and/or to consider a further referral if necessary.

14.3) FOLLOW UP

In cases where it is too early to agree a return to work date it may be appropriate to hold further contact meetings, for example fortnightly or whatever is considered appropriate in the circumstances, in order to enable the employee's line manager to remain up to date and to maintain contact with the employee.

Refusal to Participate in a Contact Meeting

In the unlikely event an employee is obstructive and refuses to participate in a contact meeting without good reason the Council reserves the right to:-

1. Withhold occupational sick pay and/or;
2. Instigate disciplinary action against the employee.

15.0) RETURN TO WORK AFTER LONG TERM ABSENCE

Often, following advice from Occupational Health, reasonable adjustments will be made where possible, to facilitate the return to work of an individual member of staff. These adjustments can range from:-

- Reduced Hours
- Temporary redeployment to another Council department
- Phased return to work
- Light duties
- Rehabilitative Care

This list is not exhaustive and the Council in conjunction with Occupational Health and Human Resources will discuss adjustments on an individual basis.

15.1) REHABILITATIVE CARE

A number of approaches to rehabilitative care are possible and their use reflects the Council's commitment to supporting employees who have been absent long term and may include:-

- a) **Phased Return to Work** - Easing back into work, following medical advice, with reduced hours. This can be facilitated by the Council and allows an employee to gradually increase their hours over a period of time.

The maximum duration of a phased return to work would depend on the length of a employees 'normal' working week (their contracted hours) and would require a week on week increase on working hours up to an employee's contracted hours. During a phased return to work an employee would receive their normal salary/wages throughout the period.

In the majority of cases 3-4 weeks would be considered the maximum duration for a phased return to work. Further advice and guidance should be obtained from Human Resources if this period is not sufficient, before the phased return commences.

If at the end of a phased return to work an employee is not able to return to their contracted hours the phased return could be extended by the use of an employee's accrued annual leave, if this leave provides insufficient time, the line manager and employee can discuss alternatives with Human Resources, for example authorised unpaid leave.

Only one phased return to work supported by the Council can be taken in any rolling 12 month period. Should there be a requirement for a 2nd phased return to work this can be facilitated in most cases by the use of an employee's accrued annual leave, if this leave provides insufficient time, the line manager and employee can discuss alternatives with Human Resources, for example authorised unpaid leave.

- b) **Work Life Balance** – The Council is committed to getting the balance right between work and life outside work and can discuss, on an individual basis, alternatives to the standard working week including the following, with adjustment to pay where required:
- Adjusting existing working patterns
 - Part-time working
 - Reduced Hours
- c) **Change of Duties/transfer** - It may be possible to offer employees a temporary change of their duties either within their existing department or by transfer to another department. This will be considered when, following medical advice, the employee whilst able to return to work, is not yet ready to carry out the full range of duties associated with their substantive job. Any such arrangements will be paid at the appropriate rate for the role/hours worked see [12.10 Alternative Duties](#) and [12.9 Light Duties](#).
- d) **Flexible Working (Flexi)** – Some areas of the Council operate a 'Flexi' time system. Subject to business demands individuals are be able to adjust their start/finish times, in line with the principles of the Flexi scheme, and are also able to exercise choice in when and how long to take for lunch. For further information on Flexi please see [Guide to Leave Provisions November 2005](#).

15.2 CASUAL/SHORT TERM ABSENCE FOLLOWING LONG TERM ABSENCE

There may be instances where an employee has returned to work following a long-term absence and then demonstrates a pattern of recurring casual or short-term absence. In these circumstances the following guidelines should be followed:

Consideration should be given to arranging a review meeting rather than a formal attendance meeting see [12.1 Interim Review Meetings](#)

The purpose of the meeting should be to review the attendance record of the employee, to obtain an update on the employee's health and identify if the manager needs to take any actions to assist the employee in improving their attendance. The opportunity should be taken to review the rehabilitative plan in place to determine if it is supporting the employee in their return to work. If sickness absence levels continue at a level considered too high, in most instances the employee would be referred back to Occupational Health for a new assessment of fitness to undertake the duties of their post and a prognosis regarding their ability to maintain regular attendance.

The employee should be advised that the minimum timescales set out in section [12.0 Formal Attendance Management Process](#) may be used for the formal monitoring of their attendance. Progress would continue through the managing attendance procedure as identified at in [12.3 Illustration of Attendance Management Process](#).

15.3) ILL HEALTH RETIREMENT

Where, following advice from the Council's Occupational Health service it is identified that an employee suffers from a chronic illness and will be unable to return to work, under any circumstances, they may have the option to apply for ill-health retirement. This option is only open to NILGOSC members and application for ill-health retirement should be made via NILGOSC (see note 1 below).

Where an application for ill-health retirement is declined by NILGOSC employees will be advised, by NILGOSC of the appeals process. The Council is not involved in any part of the appeals process.

In the event the appeals process is unsuccessful the Council will consider the option of dismissal due to capability (see).

NOTE:

1. Applications for ill-health retirement are made direct to the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC). The decision to grant ill-health retirement in the case of a chronic or terminal illness is determined by the NILGOSC board and not by Down District Council.

16.0) CAPABILITY DISMISSAL DUE TO LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

The following applies to employees who are unable to return to work due to their illness.

The employee's line manager should arrange to meet the employee and his or her representative (recognised Trade Union official or DDC work employee) to advise the employee of the outcome of the OH referral. If a return to work within a reasonable time-scale acceptable to the Council is not possible, this will normally result in dismissal on the grounds of capability. The employee must be made aware that this is a possible outcome. Before a decision to dismiss on medical grounds is made the following steps must have been taken:-

1. A recent Occupational Health report should be obtained (dated within the last 3 months)

2. There has been discussion with the employee and their representative, where appropriate.
3. Where appropriate alternative employment has been explored.
4. Where reasonable adjustments to the workplace and, or, job have been considered.
5. The possibility of dismissal has been raised in at least one of the formal attendance meetings above.

All appropriate steps should have been taken to comply with the Disability Discrimination legislation.

If alternatives to dismissal are impractical, the employee will be offered the opportunity to attend a formal capability hearing where he or she may be dismissed on the grounds of capability due to ill health. Even if the employee indicates that he or she does not want to attend such a hearing, every effort should be made to ensure that the employee is aware that dismissal is the likely next step and to investigate with the employee how this might be avoided by a return to work. A manager with delegated authority to dismiss must conduct the capability hearing. The decision to dismiss will be confirmed, in writing by HR, and the employee advised of the right of appeal.

NOTE:

There is no contractual right for an employee to have exhausted their OSP or SSP before a capability meeting is held,

16.1) CRITICAL ILLNESS

Where an employee is suffering from a terminal illness there are a variety of options open; options would include:-

- That the employee continues on their existing hours or in a reduced capacity;
- That if the employee was eligible they could make an application for ill-health retirement or where life expectancy is 12 months or less, their incapacity pension could be commuted so that the value of their benefit is paid as a single lump sum see (14.2 Ill Health Retirement.)

In dealing with cases of terminal illness appropriate advice and guidance should be taken from both Human Resources and Occupational Health and the needs and wishes of the employee should be paramount. For further information and guidance refer to the Council's Critical Illness guide see.

17.0) MANAGING ATTENDANCE FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT) MEMBERS

The procedures as laid out in this document apply equally to members of the SMT with the following exceptions.

17.1) APPEAL AGAINST FORMAL STAGES

Where an SMT member wishes to appeal against progression through any of the formal stages (with the exception of dismissal) their appeal would be heard by a Clerk and Chief Executive from another Council. Appeals against dismissal would be heard by a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council nominated for this purpose.

18.0) MANAGING ATTENDANCE FOR THE CLERK AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The procedures as set out in this procedure apply to the Clerk and Chief Executive of Down District Council except for the following:-

- Absence Reporting – In the case of absence from work the Clerk would be expected to report their absence to the Chairman of the Council in the first instance
- Return to Work Interviews – These would be carried out by the Chairman of the Council supported by a member of the HR team.

18.1) PROGRESSION THROUGH FORMAL STAGES

Should the attendance of the Clerk and Chief Executive require formal redress then the procedures as set out in the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) on Discipline, Capability and Redundancy will apply.

19.0) FURTHER SUPPORT

The Council also provides a number of initiatives to support it's aim of full attendance:-

1. 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

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

FURTHER ADVICE AND SUPPORT IN RELATION TO ANYTHING CONTAINED WITHIN THIS PROCEDURE
CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE HR TEAM.

HUMAN RESOURCES
DATE OF ISSUE DECEMBER 2009