

Billericay Town Council  
Absence Policy

The Town Council's absence policy is based on the following principles:

1. As a responsible employer we undertake to provide payments to employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness. You will be paid your agreed basic remuneration in line with the scale of payment for any one year that runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. The Council will be responsible for reclaiming the Statutory Sick Pay element from the HM Revenue & Customs.

Scale of Payment:

When absence from duty owing to illness (which term is deemed to include injury or other disability) you will be entitled to receive an allowance in accordance with the following scale:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| during 1 <sup>st</sup> year of service                   | one months full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay |
| during 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of service                   | two months full pay and two months half pay                                   |
| during 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of service                   | four months full pay and four months half pay                                 |
| during 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> year of service | five months full pay and five months half pay                                 |
| after 5 years service                                    | six months full pay and six months half pay                                   |

N.B. for the purposes of calculating "half" pay, the rate of pay for the agreed salary month will be used.

2. Regular, punctual attendance is an implied term of every employee's contract of employment – we ask each employee to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance.
3. We will support employees who have genuine grounds for absence for whatever reason. This support includes:
  - a. 'special leave' for necessary absences not caused by sickness
  - b. a flexible approach to the taking of annual leave
  - c. access to counsellors where necessary
  - d. Rehabilitation programmes in cases of long-term sickness absence.
4. We will consider any advice given by the employee's GP on the 'Statement of Fitness for Work'. If the GP advises that an employee 'may be fit for work' we

will discuss with the employee how we can help them get back to work – for example, on flexible hours, or altered duties.

5. We will use an occupational health adviser, where appropriate, to:
  - a. help identify the nature of an employee's illness
  - b. advise the employee and their manager on the best way to improve the employees' health and wellbeing.
6. The Town Council's disciplinary procedures will be used if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or is not thought to be satisfactory.
7. We respect the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness. This policy will be implemented in line with all data protection legislation and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

### **Notification of absence**

If an employee is going to be absent from work they should speak to the Town Clerk, in the case of the Administrative Assistant, or the Chairman in the case to the Town Clerk, within an hour of their normal start time.

They should also:

- give a clear indication of the nature of the illness and
- a likely return date.

The Town Clerk/Chairman will check with employees if there is any information they need about their current work. If the employee does not contact the Town Clerk/Chairman by the required time the Town Clerk/Chairman will attempt to contact the employee at home.

An employee may not always feel able to discuss their medical problems with the Town Clerk/Chairman. Town Clerk/Chairman will be sensitive to individual concerns and make alternative arrangements, where appropriate. For example, an employee may prefer to discuss health problems with a person of the same sex.

### **Evidence of incapacity**

Employees can use the company self-certification arrangements for the first seven days absence. Thereafter a 'Statement of Fitness for Work' is required to cover every subsequent day.

If absence is likely to be protracted, i.e. more than four weeks continuously, there is a shared responsibility for the Town Council and the employee to maintain contact at agreed intervals.

### **'May be fit for some work'**

If the GP advises on the Statement of Fitness for Work that an employee 'may be fit for work' we will discuss with the employee ways of helping them get back to work. This might mean talking about a phased return to work or amended duties.

If it is not possible to provide the support an employee needs to return to work – for example, by making the necessary workplace adjustments – or an employee feels unable to return then the Statement will be used in the same way as if the GP advised that the employee with 'not fit for work'.

### **Return to work discussions**

The Town Clerk or Chairman (in the case of the Town Clerk) will discuss absences with employees when they return to work to establish:

- the reason for, and cause of absence
- anything the Town Clerk or Town Council can do to help
- that the employee is fit to return to work

If an employee's GP has advised that they 'may be fit for work' the return to work discussion can also be used to agree in detail how their return to work might work best in practice.

### **A more formal review will be triggered by:**

- frequent short-term absences
- long-term absence.

The review will look at any further action required to improve the employee's attendance and wellbeing.

### **Absence due to disability/maternity**

Absences relating to the disability of an employee or to pregnancy will be kept separate from sickness absence records.