



## **PENRYN TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Absence Policy**

#### **Policy statement**

Penryn Town Council is committed to improving the health, wellbeing and attendance of all employees. We value the contribution our employees make to our success. So, when any employee is unable to be at work for any reason, we miss that contribution. This absence policy explains:

- what we expect from the Town Clerk and employees when handling absence
- how we will work to reduce levels of absence.

#### **Key principles**

Penryn 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.
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; and
  - c. 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. The Council's disciplinary procedures will be used if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or is not thought to be satisfactory.
6. 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 or in their absence, a work colleague, by 9.30 a.m. They should also:

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

The Town Clerk will check with employees if there is any information they need about their current work. If the employee does not contact the Town Clerk by the required time the Town Clerk will attempt to contact the employee at home. An employee may not always feel able to discuss their medical problems with the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk 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 Council's 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 Clerk 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' the Town Clerk 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 was 'not fit for work'.

## **Return to work discussions**

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 the Town Council can do to help; and
- 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; or
- long-term absence.

This review will look at any further action required to improve the employee's attendance and wellbeing. These trigger points are set by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Town Mayor.

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

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

## **Town Clerk**

All the above policies, where relating to the Town Clerk, for 'Town Clerk' read 'Town Mayor' and for 'Town Mayor' read Chairman of the Staffing Committee.