

Dunstable Town Council
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Paul Hodson, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: **Friday, 22 May 2026**

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **Personnel Committee** will be held on **Tuesday 2 June 2026**, at Grove House in the Council Chamber at **7 pm**. Members of the public and press are also welcome to attend in person.

Please see the below QR code to access the full agenda:



Yours faithfully

Paul Hodson
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.

To: All Members of the **Personnel Committee**:
Cllrs, Richard Attwell (Town Mayor), Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick, Nicholas Kotarski, Sally Kimondo, Matthew Neall, Johnson Tamara and other Members of the Council for information.

AGENDA

163/26 To Appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for the Ensuing Municipal Year

164/26 Apologies for Absence

165/26 Declarations of Interest

166/26 To approve as an accurate record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 5 March 2026

167/26 HR Summary

168/26 Policy Update

169/26 Staff Sickness Records and Policy

170/26 Exclusion of the press and public

RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

171/26 Personnel Matters

Verbal update from the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

172/26 Date of the Next Meeting

Thursday 10 September 2026

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,
DUNSTABLE**

ON THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2026 FROM 7 PM

Present: Councillors Richard Attwell (in the chair) (Deputy Town Mayor), Peter Holick and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: Paul Hodson – Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Public: Nil

83/26 TO APPOINT A VICE-CHAIR FOR THE REMAINING PERIOD OF THIS MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Attwell as Vice Chair for the remaining period of the financial year. Councillor Attwell took the chair.

84/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Nicholas Kotarski (Chair)

85/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

86/26 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 15 JANUARY 2026

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 15 January 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

87/26 HR SUMMARY

Members received an update on HR matters including staffing, sickness, people management, enhanced benefits and improvement projects.

88/26 POLICY UPDATES

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the Council adopts the amended Grievance and Disciplinary policies.

- 1.2 To recommend to Full Council that, where possible, membership of the Personnel Sub-Committee remains constant for the whole of the elected term.
- 1.3 To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that members of the Personnel Committee be asked to attend HR training within three months of taking up the role.
- 1.4 To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the Council's staff awards scheme be extended to volunteers.

89/26 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following item will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it was, therefore, AGREED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

90/26 PERSONNEL MATTERS

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive gave a verbal update on recent staffing matters.

91/26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 4 June 2026.

Meeting closed at 19.38

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 2 JUNE 2026

HR SUMMARY

Purpose of report: For information

1. STAFFING

- 1.1. Dunstable Town Council currently employs 72 staff.
- 1.2. Of these staff, 51 have permanent contracts, 2 have fixed-term contracts, and 19 are casual workers.
- 1.3. 37 employees are full-time; 16 employees are part-time.
- 1.4. Two part-time sessional youth workers have been recruited. One has started their role; the other will start once all documentation has been received as per our safer recruitment procedure.
- 1.5. The Council successfully recruited internally for a Priory House Senior Assistant (Shop). The employee started their new full-time position at the beginning of May.
- 1.6. A student from Shuttleworth College has started a 150-hour work placement with the Parks and Open Spaces Development Officer.

2. SICKNESS

- 2.1 Two employees are currently on long-term sick leave: one in Grounds and Environmental Services and one in Community Services. To cover these roles, a member of the Grounds team is acting up, and agency staff have been brought in. The Community Services team are using existing staff to cover.

3. PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Engagement

- 3.1. Quarterly All-Staff meeting dates have been set for the year. These are held on 2 different days, at 2 different times and 2 different venues to enable as many staff to attend as possible. We also record one of the sessions and share this on MS Teams to allow anyone who was unable to attend in person to view it.
- 3.2. The next set of meetings will be held in June.

- 3.3. The HR & Payroll Manager held an HR Drop-In Session on 5 March. The session was to encourage staff to come and discuss any queries relating to HR or personnel matters informally. Three staff members attended and six queries were resolved. This will be repeated quarterly at various different Council sites.
- 3.4. The HR & Payroll Manager is proactively trying to improve engagement using MS Teams, celebrating staff wins, sharing news and sending reminders.

Training

- 3.5 Requests for non-mandatory training have been received, mainly through the CPR process. The Senior Management Team reviewed and prioritised the requests that could be supported within this year's training budget. Approved training will now be scheduled, while any requests not approved this year will be prioritised next year.
- 3.6 Mandatory training for this year has been programmed in. Fire Safety has been completed by all staff, COSHH has been allocated via Virtual College and Emergency First Aid at Work training has been booked for September. DSE training will be allocated later in the year.

Health and Wellbeing

- 3.7 A member of staff has organised a lunchtime stretch session and other wellbeing activities are being explored.

4. ENHANCED STAFF BENEFITS

Stream (Formerly Wagestream)

- 4.1. 25 eligible staff are currently enrolled to use Stream to enable them to access their wages early. A breakdown of how they are using the app can be found below:

	Budgeting	Saving	Flexible Pay	Education
Oct	13	10	6	0
Nov	11	10	7	0
Dec	12	11	6	0
Jan	15	13	8	0
Feb	13	13	8	0
Mar	14	13	6	0

Vivup

- 4.2. 27 eligible staff are currently registered to use the Vivup app. There are currently 18 active orders from the Home & Electronics option, where household items are purchased, and repaid monthly, interest free, directly from their wages.
- 4.3. The Home & Electronics scheme changed to a salary sacrifice scheme from 1 April 2026. This now means staff will make savings on tax, national insurance and

pension payments on repayments for any purchases they make. It also means that the Council now makes savings on those staffing oncosts as well.

Octopus Electric Vehicles

- 4.4. Two electric vehicles have now been leased via the scheme.

5. IMPROVEMENTS AND PROJECTS

- 5.1 The HR & Payroll Manager is currently updating the exit procedure to ensure that it is robust and provides useful information rather than a tick-box exercise.
- 5.2 The Employment Rights Bill has now become law. Amendments to Council policies will need to be made for changes being introduced in 2026. The uniform policy has been completed and is reported on later on this agenda. A Tipping policy is currently being researched and drafted. Other amendments will be recommended to Members once full guidance is provided by the government.
- 5.3 Work on introducing a Violence at Work policy has been started. This will be brought to the next Committee meeting for approval.
- 5.4 The HR & Payroll Manager is currently reviewing how we reimburse staff for mileage claims and investigating whether we need to assess all roles as essential and casual car users.
- 5.5 All staff received their Complete Benefits Package letter in April and was well received.

6. APPENDICES

- 6.1 None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 <https://www.acas.org.uk/employment-rights-bill>
- 7.2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employment-rights-bill-factsheets>

8. AUTHOR

Kelley Hallam – HR & Payroll Manager
Kelley.hallam@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 2 JUNE 2026

POLICY UPDATE

Purpose of report: For Members to recommend the adoption of the Uniform policy to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. That Members recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the adoption of the Uniform policy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Dunstable Town Council regularly reviews all of its policies and procedures, including annual audits from Worknest, the Council's HR and H&S Consultants, making amendments or introducing new policies as required or deemed necessary.

3. UNIFORM POLICY

- 3.1 The introduction of a Uniform Policy is necessary to ensure that Dunstable Town Council presents a professional, consistent and recognisable image across its services. A clear policy will assist in identifying staff in public-facing roles, support the Council's reputation, and provide employees with clear guidance on standards of dress and appearance appropriate to their duties.
- 3.2 The policy will also help to promote fairness and consistency by setting out clear expectations for all relevant employees, thereby reducing ambiguity and ensuring a consistent approach is applied across the organisation. In addition, where uniforms or specific clothing are required for operational or health and safety reasons, the policy will support staff in carrying out their roles safely and effectively.
- 3.3 Establishing a clear Uniform Policy will help ensure that clothing standards are applied consistently and reasonably, while taking account of operational requirements, health and safety considerations, and the need to maintain a professional image. This will support both employees and managers in understanding their responsibilities and in promoting a positive and practical working environment.

4. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Uniform Policy should be applied fairly and consistently, with appropriate regard to equality, diversity, religious beliefs, disability, and any other individual circumstances that may require reasonable adjustment.

5. FINANCIAL IMPACT

5.1. NONE

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. NONE

7. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1. The recommendation accords with the Council's objective of 'continuing to improve the organisational management and efficiency of the Council'.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Uniform Policy supports health and safety by ensuring that staff wear clothing and footwear appropriate to their role and working environment, including any items required for operational or protective purposes.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The policy provides managers and employees with a clear framework for standards of dress and appearance and supports the consistent management of uniform requirements across the organisation.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 NONE

11. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Uniform Policy

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 NONE

13. AUTHOR

Kelley Hallam – HR & Payroll Manager
kelley.hallam@dunstable.gov.uk



DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

UNIFORM, DRESS AND APPEARANCE, PPE

Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all employees, casual workers and temporary staff.

Dunstable Town Council is committed to maintaining a professional, safe and positive public image. The professional image presented by our staff is integral to how Dunstable Town Council is regarded by internal and external stakeholders and the public. Where uniforms or PPE are provided, they are an essential part of how we deliver safe, high-quality services and must be worn and managed appropriately. This policy sets out expectations for dress code, appearance and the issue, wearing, care, replacement and return of council-issued uniform and PPE.

Definitions

Uniform refers to Dunstable Town Council issued PPE and branded clothing, provided for professional appearance, safety and identification.

Wearing Requirements

- All staff should present themselves for work in a neat, clean, tidy and well-groomed manner.
- Jewellery and visible piercings must be kept to a minimum, with only small, discreet items permitted to ensure safety, professionalism, and compliance with the uniform standard.
- No items should be worn of a political nature or offensive to others, be it directly or indirectly.
- Employees must wear Council issued uniform when undertaking duties where a uniform is required. PPE must be worn, used and maintained as instructed.
- Employees must not modify, remove or misuse PPE.

Regardless of work location, it is unacceptable to wear the following:

- Any item of clothing that could present a Health and Safety risk. Consideration must be given to ensuring that an employee is in keeping with a professional appearance.
- Any item of clothing that could cause offence. For example, inappropriate words or images, see-through material, crop tops, cut-off shorts.
- Ripped, frayed or dirty clothing.

Support

Staff who are unable to clean their uniform will be offered practical support to ensure they can maintain the expected standards of hygiene and presentation. This may include access to onsite or contracted laundry services, provision of spare or emergency uniform items. Employees are encouraged to speak confidentially with their line manager as soon as they experience difficulties, so that suitable assistance can be arranged promptly. The aim is to ensure staff feel supported, valued, and able to meet their role requirements without additional stress or disadvantage.

Dunstable Town Council recognises its duties under the Equality Act, should any individual feel they need to discuss their uniform requirements they should do so with their line manager.

Related Standards

Staff must be identifiable when dealing with the public; where issued, ID badges must be worn appropriately.

Use Outside of Working Hours

Employees should avoid wearing uniform outside working hours. Where travelling directly to/from work in uniform is necessary, employees must conduct themselves so as not to bring the council into disrepute and must follow the social media policy (e.g. avoid posting content in uniform that could imply Council endorsement or harm reputation)

Issue, Records and Replacements

Heads of Service or line managers will authorise issue and replacement of PPE and uniform. HR & Payroll Manager maintains the asset record for uniform and PPE. Uniforms and PPE will be recorded at item level and acknowledged by the employee.

Employees must promptly report items that are worn, damaged, ill-fitting or unsuitable: replacements will be arranged where appropriate.

Casual Workers – Issue and Return

Casual staff will normally return items at the end of each shift unless their line manager authorises retention between shifts (e.g. for continuous assignments). In all cases, all items must be returned at the end of engagement.

End of Employment or Role Change

All uniform and PPE must be returned promptly, clean and complete on termination or where the role no longer requires use.

Non-Compliance

Failure to follow this policy, including refusal to wear required PPE, may be addressed under the Council's disciplinary procedure.

Values

Dunstable Town Council values its staff and their individual dress sense, style and recognises that officers should be allowed to demonstrate their religious faith through their dress. Dunstable Town Council will work with employees to allow them to manifest their faith in a way that does not conflict with the image the Council wishes to convey or health and safety requirements.

Relevant Legislation

An employer's dress code must not be discriminatory in respect of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 for age, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Claiming Tax Relief

You may be able to claim tax relief for the costs of cleaning your uniform. Please see the Gov.uk website for more details:

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/uniforms-work-clothing-and-tools>

Policy Ownership, Training and Review

Owner: Head of Corporate Services. (HR and Payroll Manager operational lead)

Training: Uniform and PPE expectations are covered at induction and during probation reviews. This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation, risk assessments or best practice change, aligned to the policy review schedule.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE****TUESDAY 2 JUNE 2026****STAFF SICKNESS RECORDS AND POLICY**

Purpose of Report: The purpose of this report is to provide members with a summary of staff sickness records and to review the Council's sickness policy.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 This report is to give Members an overview on staff sickness and to review the Sickness Policy, with any proposals for amendment to be made to the Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee.

2. SICKNESS RECORDS

- 2.1 A summary of staff sickness for the years 2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 is shown in the table below. Long-term sickness is classed as an absence that lasts for 4-weeks or more.

		2025/2026	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
	Percentage of Staff who have taken at least 1 day	66.67%	76.27%	79.31%	70.97%
Including Long Term Sick	Total Sick Days Taken	384	1283	1494	1184
	Total Working Days	264.5	880	936.5	647
	Average No. of Days per employee	7.53	21.75	25.76	19.10
	Average working days per employee	5.19	14.92	16.15	10.44
Excluding Long Term Sick	Total Sick Days Taken	281	397	760	482
	Total Working Days	192	269	358	313
	Average days per employee	5.51	6.73	13.10	7.77
	Average working days per employee	3.75	4.56	6.16	4.16

- 2.2 Members will note that sickness has greatly dropped in the past year. This is mainly due to there being very little long-term sickness but also the introduction of the new return-to-work interview has had some positive results.

3. SICKNESS POLICY

- 3.1 The Council's current sickness policy and related documentation can be found within the appendices for Members of this Sub-Committee to review. Any proposed amendments will be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 3.2 Members are reminded that the Town Council Terms and Conditions must be in-line with the National Joint Council agreed terms and conditions as set out in the 'Green Book'. Details of the NJC sickness scheme are included at Appendix 3 for information.

4. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – DTC Sickness Policy

Appendix 2 – DTC Self Certificate and Return to Work forms

Appendix 3 – NJC Sickness Scheme Guidelines

5. AUTHOR

- 5.1 Kelley Hallam – HR & Payroll Manager
Kelley.hallam@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

SICK LEAVE

Absence Reporting

As soon as you are absent from work you are required to contact your immediate Line Manager or Head of Service, or if not possible another Head of Service, either personally or, if necessary, through a relative or friend. Contact must be made by way of a telephone conversation. A text message may be sent for the purposes of alerting your Line Manager to your absence prior to your normal start time. This must be followed up by a telephone conversation with your Line Manager within a reasonable time period, as determined by your Head of Service, giving reasons for your absence and stating how long the absence is likely to last.

If absence continues beyond three days you should again contact your immediate Line Manager or Head of Service to inform him/her about your situation. If absence continues for more than 7 days (including Sunday) you must obtain a Statement of Fitness for Work and send it to your Head of Service.

You may also be required to provide a Statement of Fitness for Work for shorter periods of absence immediately before or after an annual or bank/public holiday, or where repeated absence is a cause for concern.

On your return to work you must complete a Self-Certification Form for the whole period of absence. Forms are available from your Line Manager.

The Line Manager must notify the Head of Service as soon as they are notified of absence due to sick leave. They must also ensure the Self-Certification Form is completed on the day of return to work. At that time the immediate Line Manager must also conduct a Return to Work interview and complete the required form in the presence of the employee. The Line Manager must record all sickness on the relevant month's Staff Sickness Monthly Return and submit this to the Head of Service, together with the completed Self-Certification and Return to Work forms. All documents should be submitted by the 1st of the following month to the Head of Service, who will then forward them to the Head of Finance and Support Services by the 4th of the month.

If a MED3 (Statement of Fitness for Work) is submitted this should be sent to the Head of Finance and Support Services immediately on receipt (having first been recorded on the monthly return).

In cases where a Statement of Fitness for Work has covered a period of more than 14 days or where more than one Statement has been necessary, the Council reserves the right to request a letter from the doctor confirming fitness to resume duties or to refer you to an Occupational Health consultant, the cost of which would be met by the Council.

In the event that you fall sick during the period of annual leave, you will be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of a Statement of Fitness to Work and further annual leave will be suspended from that date. All normal reporting procedures apply.

Any delay in notification will affect payroll administration and sickness payments.

Sick Pay

Sick pay will be paid in accordance with the NJC National Agreement Sickness Scheme, as follows:

- 1) The scheme is intended to supplement Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance (previously Incapacity Benefit) so as to maintain normal pay during defined periods of absence on account of sickness, disease, accident or assault.
- 2) Absence in respect of normal sickness is entirely separate from absence through industrial disease, accident or assault arising out of or in the course of employment with a local authority. Periods of absence in respect of one shall not be set off against the other for the purpose of calculating entitlements under the scheme
- 3) Employees are entitled to receive sick pay for the following periods:

During 1st year of service:	1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay
During 2nd year of service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
During 3rd year of service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During 4th and 5th year of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 years of service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

Authorities shall have discretion to extend the period of sick pay in exceptional cases.

- 4) The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence shall be calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day the aggregate of periods of paid absence during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of absence.
- 5) In the case of full pay periods, sick pay will be an amount which when added to Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance receivable will secure the equivalent of normal pay.
- 6) In the case of half pay periods, sick pay will be an amount equal to half normal earnings plus an amount equivalent to Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance receivable, so long as the total does not exceed normal pay.
- 7) Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.
- 8) The Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefits to be taken into account for the calculation of sick pay are those to which an employee is entitled on the basis that the employee has satisfied so far as is possible:

- (i) the conditions for the reporting of sickness as required by the authority;
- (ii) the claiming of benefits
- (ii) the obligation to declare any entitlement to benefits and any subsequent changes in circumstances affecting such entitlement.

- 9) An employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with infectious disease shall be entitled to receive normal pay. The period of absence on this account shall not be reckoned against the employee's entitlements under this scheme.
10. If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery or the employee's own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional sport or injury while working in the employee's own time on their own account for private gain or for another employer sick pay may be suspended. The authority shall advise the employee of the grounds for suspension and the employee shall have a right of appeal to the appropriate committee of the authority. If the authority decide that the grounds were justified then the employee shall forfeit the right to any further payment in respect of that period of absence. Repeated abuse of the sickness scheme should be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure

If you are absent due to sickness during the course of disciplinary proceedings or during investigations into alleged breaches of rules, procedures or contractual obligations, you will not be entitled to sickness payment from the Council (other than SSP).

If you are absent from work due to injury or illness caused by a third party, any payments made by the Council as sickness payment will be classed as a loan; this will be repayable to the Council by you if compensation for loss of earnings is recovered from the third party.

If you are on paid suspension and become unfit for work or unable to attend any necessary meetings due to sickness your suspension may be lifted. If your suspension is lifted, you may no longer be entitled to full pay or sickness payment from the Council other than SSP.

At any time during employment, the Council reserves the right to require you to undertake a medical examination by a GP and/or Specialist appointed by the Council.

Return to Work Interviews

Having regard to its duty of care to its employees, the Council may complete a return-to-work interview after any sickness absence. This will ensure that you are fit for work and whether you anticipate any further absence relating to your illness. This will also give you an opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have regarding your illness with your Line Manager.

Disciplinary Action

Failure to follow the reporting procedure as set out above may result in sick pay being delayed or withheld and action under the Disciplinary Procedure being taken.

If you have been absent due to sickness and are found not to have been genuinely ill, you may be subject to action under the Disciplinary Procedure, which could include dismissal.

Appointments

You are normally expected to ensure that appointments to visit the doctor, dentist, hospital, etc. are made in your own time and outside normal working hours. In the event that this is not reasonably practicable, time off work will be permitted to attend such appointments, providing that the appointment is substantiated with an appointment card (if requested), and the timing of the appointment causes as little disruption as possible, i.e. at the beginning or end of the working day.

In the above cases, employees may take time off during core time and will be credited with a maximum of two hours. Any time taken in excess of this should be debited from their flexible time or normal working hours.

Medical treatment, which is required to last for a whole day, or renders the employee unfit to return to work, should be counted as sick leave.

Access to Medical Records

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for the Council to obtain a Medical Report from your Doctor/Specialist/Occupational Health in order to establish:

- the reason for and likely duration of absence
- when you will be able to return to work, and whether the problem will recur
- what, if any, treatment is being prescribed
- whether you can carry out all the duties of the job, and
- what, if any, reasonable adjustments are recommended

This will enable the Council to plan workloads. It is in the interests of both yourself and the Council to establish, with the benefit of expert medical opinion, your ability to work. You have certain rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988.

Your Doctor/Specialist/Occupational Health cannot submit the report to the Council without your consent. You may withhold consent to the report being sought or can request to see the report prior to it being forwarded to the Council.

If you indicate that you wish to see the report in advance, the Council will inform you when the Doctor/Specialist/Occupational Health has been written to, and the Doctor/Specialist/Occupational health will also be notified that you wish to see the report. You then have 21 days to contact the Doctor/Specialist/Occupational Health regarding arrangements to see the report.

Should you indicate that you do not wish to see the report before the Council, you still have the right to write to the Doctor/Specialist/Occupational Health if the report has not been provided to the Council, and you have 21 days to contact the Doctor/Specialist/Occupational Health regarding arrangements to see the report. You have the right to ask the Doctor/Specialist/Occupational Health for a copy of the report for up to 6 months after it has been supplied. (There may be a charge for this.)

You may ask the Doctor/Specialist/Occupational Health to amend any part of the report which you consider to be incorrect or misleading. If the Doctor/Specialist/Occupational Health is not in agreement, you may attach a statement of your views with the report. If the Doctor/Specialist/Occupational Health thinks that you or others would be harmed by the report, or any part of the report, it can be withheld from you.

No decision will be made that could affect your employment without careful consideration of all the circumstances.

Where the Council wishes to obtain a medical report, you will be asked for your written consent. Should you withhold such consent the Council will take a decision regarding your continuing employment without the benefit of medical opinion.

Return to Work Interview & Form

A return to work interview should take place, in private, after every period of absence.

In the majority of cases the interview will be informal, simple and fast. The purpose of the interview is to have a two-way discussion, employees should feel that their manager is supporting them and they should be given every opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have with regard to their absence.

Begin the interview by welcoming back the employee and letting them know they have been missed

Explain the purpose of the interview and make it clear that it is routine to conduct one with all employees who are absent due to sickness and on every occasion of absence

You need to check that the employee has followed the correct absence reporting procedures and completed a self-certificate form, which should be attached to this form (effective from 1st day of absence)

You need to gain information on the following:

1. The reason for the absence and whether the employee is fit enough to resume their duties
2. Whether temporary adjustments need to be made to their duties or to the workplace such as a phased return after long term sickness
3. Whether the absence was work related
4. What preventative measures they are taking to reduce the likelihood of such absence occurring in the future

In cases of persistent absence you should remind the employee of the importance of full attendance and the impact their absence has on their colleagues, the team and service delivery. You should explain, with sensitivity dependant on circumstances, that continued periods of absence could lead to formal action being taken.

In all cases you should summarise any action you have agreed should take place, for example referral to Occupational Health, changes to working arrangements, etc

Incorrect Sickness Reporting

Procedure for Interviewers, Line Managers and Heads of Service.

All staff are expected to report sickness in accordance with the town council's sickness reporting policy and procedure, which may include local arrangements within specific teams. Should a member of staff fail to report their sickness correctly this MUST be picked up in their return to work interview.

First instance of incorrect reporting

Person undertaking the return to work interview (the interviewer) to address the incorrect reporting at the interview, noting any mitigating circumstances, reminding the individual of the correct reporting procedure and making a note on the individual's personnel file of the conversation.

Subsequent instances of incorrect reporting

The interviewer to complete the return to work interview, and note the incorrect reporting of sickness. Immediately after the return-to-work interview is complete, separately conduct an investigation meeting to establish what happened, why the individual did not report sickness correctly and noting any mitigating circumstances.

The interviewer to pass this investigation report to their line manager/head of service for them to determine whether a disciplinary meeting is required in line with the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

Employee absence - Return to work meeting

Employee Name	
Job Title	
Payroll Number	
Date of Meeting	
Manager Conducting Meeting	
Manager's Job Title	

PREVIOUS ABSENCES (IN 12-MONTH ROLLING PERIOD) Not including this occurrence

Occurrences	
Days Absent	

DETAILS OF LATEST ABSENCE

First Day Absent	
Date Returned to Work	
Last Day Absent	
Total number of days absent	
Total number of working days absent	
Has the employee completed a self-certification form?	

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

The following questions are a **guide** for line managers to follow to ensure that all aspects of the return-to-work meeting are discussed and documented. **Please record all answers or discussions and recommendations or actions on this form.**

REASON FOR ABSENCE

What was the reason for the absence? Give details.				
Sickness or illness	Yes		No	
Mental Health	Yes		No	
Injury. How did the injury occur?	Yes		No	
Medical Procedure. (Includes dental).	Yes		No	

*You **must** give details of the above answers:*

ACCIDENT AT WORK

Was this absence due to an accident or injury at work?	Yes		No	
If yes, did they report the accident or injury to a manager?	Yes		No	
If yes, was an accident form completed?	Yes		No	

*You **must** give details of the above answers:*

FIT TO RETURN

Is the employee fully fit and ready to return to work?	Yes		No	
Did the employee seek medical assistance?	Yes		No	
Does the employee have a doctor's note saying they are fit for work?	Yes		No	
Has a doctor recommended any actions?	Yes		No	
Is there anything that might affect their recovery?	Yes		No	
Is the absence related to an ongoing medical condition?	Yes		No	
Has the employee been referred for any specialist treatment?	Yes		No	
Was the absence related to disability or pregnancy?	Yes		No	
Does the employee require any actions to support their return to work?	Yes		No	
Was the absence connected with their work?	Yes		No	
Is there anything we can do to help?	Yes		No	

*You **must** give details of the above answers:*

OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Have you updated the employee on any changes at work while they have been off?	Yes		No	
Have you let the employee know that the information they share is confidential? (Unless there are any safeguarding concerns).	Yes		No	
Did they follow the correct sickness reporting procedure?	Yes		No	

*You **must** give details of the above answers:*

IF THERE HAVE BEEN 3 (Including this occurrence) OR MORE SICKNESS ABSENCES IN THE LAST 12-MONTHS DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:

Are the absences related?	Yes		No	
Are there any actions we can put in place to prevent further absences?	Yes		No	
Are there any actions they can put in place to prevent further absences?	Yes		No	
Have actions from any previous discussions been carried out?	Yes		No	
Do they require further support?	Yes		No	
Have they contacted the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for support?	Yes		No	
Have they received help from the EAP?	Yes		No	
Is there anything we can do to help?	Yes		No	
<i>You must give details of the above answers:</i>				

MANAGER'S ASSESSMENT OR RECOMMENDATIONS

Discuss with employee any recommendations. Can be at a secondary meeting if you require time to assess or get further information or advice.

Do further actions need to be put in place?	Yes		No	
Do you require the employee to have an occupational health assessment?	Yes		No	
Do any reasonable adjustments need to be made?	Yes		No	
Does the employee need mental health support?	Yes		No	
Do you recommend the employee contacts the Employee Assistance Program?	Yes		No	
Is a workplace assessment or risk assessment needed?	Yes		No	
Does a review meeting need to take place to discuss progress of any actions?	Yes		No	
<i>You must give details of the above answers:</i>				

I confirm that I have given full details of the meeting as required above and that I have discussed/informed the employee of any recommendations or actions that now need to be put in place.

Manager's Signature		Date	
Employee's Signature		Date	

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

Self-Certificate for sickness and injury absence

This form must be completed by an employee returning to work after sickness or injury absence.

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS

Name	
Department	
Job Title	
Payroll Number	

I certify that I was unfit for work because of sickness on:

First Day Absent		day	Date	
Last Day Absent		day	Date	
Day Returned to Work		day	Date	

The reason for my absence was: (it is not enough to say "sick", "felt ill", etc)

Was this absence due to an injury at work?	Yes		No	
Did you consult your doctor on this occasion?	Yes		No	
If you were absent for more than 7 days, have you submitted a MED3/Fit Note?	Yes		No	

I declare that the information given above is true. I understand that it will be used to establish my right to sick pay and that to give false or misleading information can result in disciplinary proceedings which may lead to dismissal.

Signed		Date	
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NJC SICKNESS SCHEME

EXTRACT FROM THE GREEN BOOK

10.1 The scheme is intended to supplement Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefit so as to maintain normal pay during defined periods of absence on account of sickness, disease, accident or assault.

10.2 Absence in respect of normal sickness is entirely separate from absence through industrial disease, accident or assault arising out of or in the course of employment with a local authority. Periods of absence in respect of one shall not be set off against the other for the purpose of calculating entitlements under the scheme.

10.3 Employees are entitled to receive sick pay for the following periods:

- During 1st year of service 1 month's full pay and, after completing 4 months' service, 2 months' half pay
- During 2nd year of service 2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
- During 3rd year of service 4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
- During 4th and 5th year of service 5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay
- After 5 years' service 6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay

Authorities shall have discretion to extend the period of sick pay in exceptional cases.

10.4 The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence shall be calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day the aggregate of periods of paid absence during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of absence.

10.5 In the case of full pay periods sick pay will be an amount which when added to Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefit receivable will secure the equivalent of normal pay.

10.6 In the case of half pay periods sick pay will be an amount equal to half normal earnings plus an amount equivalent to Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefit receivable, so long as the total sum does not exceed normal pay.

10.7 Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.

10.8 The Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefits to be taken into account for the calculation of sick pay are those to which an employee is entitled on the basis that the employee has satisfied so far as is possible:

- (i) the conditions for the reporting of sickness as required by the authority;
- (ii) the claiming of benefits

(iii) the obligation to declare any entitlement to benefits and any subsequent changes in circumstances affecting such entitlement.

10.9 An employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with infectious disease shall be entitled to receive normal pay. The period of absence on this account shall not be reckoned against the employee's entitlements under this scheme.

10.10 If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery or the employee's own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional sport or injury while working in the employee's own time on their own account for private gain or for another employer sick pay may be suspended. The authority shall advise the employee of the grounds for suspension and the employee shall have a right of appeal to the appropriate committee of the authority. If the authority decide that the grounds were justified then the employee shall forfeit the right to any further payment in respect of that period of absence. Repeated abuse of the sickness scheme should be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Sickness Scheme

4.1 An employee shall not be entitled to claim sick pay under the scheme unless:

- (i) notification is made immediately to the person identified for this purpose by the authority;
- (ii) further notification is made as required by the authority;
- (iii) a doctor's statement is submitted to the authority not later than the eighth calendar day of absence;
- (iv) subsequent doctor's statements are submitted as necessary;
- (v) in cases where the doctor's statement covers a period exceeding fourteen days or where more than one statement is necessary, the employee must, before returning to work submit to the authority a final statement as to fitness to resume duties;
- (vi) on return to work the employee signs a statement detailing the reasons for absence for all absences up to and including seven days.

4.2 An employee shall, if required by the authority at any time, submit to a medical examination by a medical practitioner nominated by the authority, subject to the provisions of the access to Medical Reports Act 1988 where applicable. Any costs associated with the examination should be met by the employing authority. Where it is necessary to obtain a second medical opinion, it should be provided by an independent medical referee.

4.3 Where, for the purpose of qualifying for sick pay under the scheme, an authority requires a doctor's statement from an employee, the authority will reimburse the employee the cost of such a statement on the provision of a receipt.

4.4 An employee who falls sick during the course of annual leave shall be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of a doctor's statement.

4.5 Where an employee is receiving sick pay under the scheme, sick pay should continue if a public or extra statutory holiday falls during such sickness absence. No substitute public or extra statutory holiday should be given.

4.6 Widows and married women exercising their right to be excepted from the payment of full rate National Insurance Contributions shall be deemed to be insured in their own right for all National Insurance benefits.