

Barrowden Parish Council Sickness and Absence Policy

This policy applies to the Clerk to Barrowden Parish Council (the Clerk) and should be read in conjunction with the Clerk's Contract of Employment, which shows the terms and conditions of service.

1) Absence due to sickness

"Sickness" is defined as incapacity to carry out the duties and responsibilities which the Clerk is contractually obliged to do because of their own accident or illness.

- a) The Clerk is expected to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance.

If due to sickness, the Clerk is unable to:

- i) Complete the contracted hours in a week
- ii) Meet deadlines
- iii) Attend meetings or events (of the Council or prearranged external events)

The Clerk (or someone on his/her behalf) should notify the Chair of Barrowden Parish Council (the "Chair") as soon as this becomes apparent, indicating the reason for absence and if possible, an expected date of return.

The Clerk may not always feel able to discuss their medical problems with the Chair. The Council must always be sensitive to individual concerns and make appropriate arrangements where necessary.

In the event of an accident at work the Chair should be notified as soon as possible so that any necessary follow-up action can be taken.

If the Clerk does not contact the Chair to advise of absence due to sickness the Chair will attempt to contact the Clerk as soon as absence becomes evident. The Council's disciplinary procedures will be used if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or is thought to be unsatisfactory.

The Chair will check with the Clerk to ascertain if there is any information they need to know about current workload. If the absence is likely to exceed four weeks there is a shared responsibility for the Chair and Clerk to maintain contact at agreed intervals.

2) Evidence of incapacity – The Clerk can use the self-certification arrangement for the first seven calendar days. If the period of incapacity exceeds this, a "Fit Note" from the Clerk's GP is required to cover every subsequent day, (submitted to the Chair).

The Clerk's GP might indicate on the Fit Note that the employee "may be fit for work taking into account the following advice". The Council will consider this advice and arrange a meeting with the Clerk to agree possible amendments with the aim of facilitating return to work. If this is possible the Clerk will return to work and the situation will be reviewed regularly. If this is not possible the Clerk will remain on sick leave.

Provided s/he complies with the requirements of this policy, the Clerk will receive sick pay if absent from work due to sickness as per the Written Statement of Employment

When sick leave coincides with booked annual leave it will normally count as sick leave. Whilst absent due to sickness the Clerk is not permitted to undertake any paid work for another employer

or on a self-employed basis without the written permission of the Council. If the period of absence exceeds four weeks the Council may request the Clerk's permission to contact his / her GP to ask for a medical report on the condition. The Clerk may ask to see this report.

The Council has the right at any time to require the Clerk to submit to examination by an independent medical practitioner selected by the Council, to obtain a confidential report on the Clerk's condition from such practitioner and to discuss with such practitioner the findings of his / her examination and his / her prognosis of the Clerk's likely recovery and or fitness to resume work and any recommended treatment.

If appropriate the Council will refer to the "Fit for Work" service, which offers a free and impartial work related health advice to employers and employees – www.fitforwork.org .

3) Extended absences – the Council will be sympathetic if the Clerk is ill. However, if the Clerk is absent through sickness, sporadically or continuously for a period of 3 months or more, it may become necessary to terminate the employment. Termination will not take place without full consultation with the Clerk. In the event of termination, the reason and circumstances leading to the decision will be documented in writing to the Clerk, termination will be managed in accordance with the Clerks Contract of Employment. The Clerk may raise any grievance relating to this in line with the Council's Grievance Policy.

If the Clerk has a condition that means they might be considered disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, the Council will attempt to make reasonable adjustments to the job to accommodate his / her requirements. The Clerk will be fully consulted at all times. If after a reasonable period of time adjustments prove not to be a viable option, a decision to terminate the employment may result. The termination will be managed in accordance with the Clerks Contract of Employment. The Clerk may raise any grievance through the Council's Grievance Policy.

4) Return to work – when the Clerk returns to work the Chair will bring the Clerk up to date with any changes and hand over any ongoing work as appropriate. If the absence has exceeded four weeks (or less if deemed appropriate) the Chair will meet with the Clerk to check that he / she is fit to return to work and establish whether there is anything the Council can do to help.

The Council respects confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness. This policy will be implemented in line with all data protection legislation, the Council's Data Protection Policy and the Access to Medical Records Act 1988.

5) Absence due to maternity/paternity/adoption

The Clerk's entitlement to maternity/paternity/adoption leaves is as set out in the relevant legislation.

6) Absence due to other reasons

The Council will support the Clerk where there are genuine reasons grounds for leave of absence. The leave of absence must be reasonable in the particular circumstances and will not be paid. Requests will be made in writing and considered by the Council in the light of the circumstances, legal requirements and operational needs.

The Clerk is legally entitled to take reasonable unpaid time off to deal with certain prescribed emergencies involving certain dependents, for example if a dependent falls ill or is injured or if care arrangements fall down. A dependent is a child (including an adopted child), spouse, parent, someone who lives in your household, someone who reasonably relies on you (e.g. an elderly relative).

7) Return of Council Equipment

If the Clerk is absent for an extended period (e.g. one month or more) the Parish Council may require them to return Council equipment until they are well enough to return to work

If the employee does not return to work following a period of absence, they will be required to return all outstanding Council equipment on the date of termination of his or her employment.

8) Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

9) Continuous Service

No period of employment before the date of commencement of employment counts as part of the Clerk's continuous service.