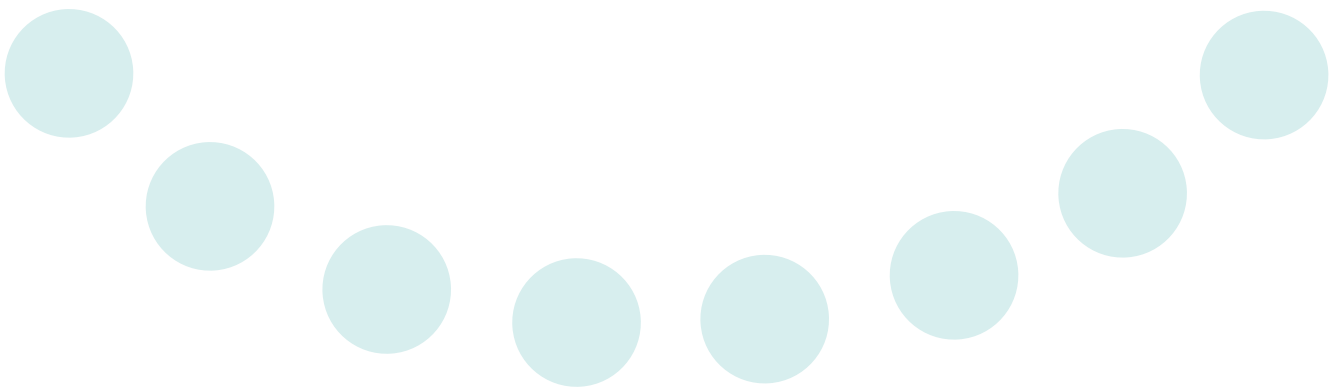


Hinckley & Bosworth  
Borough Council

# ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

2009



## **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY (NON SICKNESS RELATED)**

### **1. Introduction**

Absence from work needs to be managed in a professional manner. It is in both the employer's and the employee's best interest to monitor absence and where possible plan how best to deal with absence, fairly and effectively.

### **2. Policy Statement**

The Council's policy is to ensure that appropriate procedures are maintained in order to provide a high level of attendance at work and to give positive assistance to all employees whilst a high quality service is maintained. Low levels of attendance can lead to low morale amongst the workforce and poor service provision. Everyone in the organisation must be committed to playing their part to ensure that the Council's procedures are adhered to, so that the policy is effective.

### **3. Sickness Absence**

The management of sickness absence is managed through the council's Attendance Management Framework policy.

## **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE**

### **1. Why Is There A Need For An Absence Management Procedure?**

This procedure explains to all employees what is expected of them before, during and after an absence. The procedure also explains how each absence will be treated, ensuring that it is dealt with equally, fairly and in a consistent manner. The aims of the procedure are to:-

- a) Provide the necessary support, guidance and where appropriate Counselling to employees where an absence problem has been identified.
- b) Provide a fair and consistent way of dealing with and monitoring absence.
- c) Provide the necessary support and guidance to Managers in dealing with excessive absence.

### **2. What Is Absence?**

Absence is anytime when you are not carrying out your normal duties and responsibilities at work for whatever reason.

This can include annual leave, flexi leave, training/study leave, sickness absence, compassionate leave etc. Please see the full list as detailed below.

3. **Who Does the Absence Procedure Apply To?**

The policy applies to all employees of the Council.

4. **What is Absence Management?**

Absence Management is about ensuring that all absences are wherever possible, planned ahead and agreed between you and your Manager, thereby assisting in maintaining a satisfactory level of service whilst still complying with Health and Safety at Work Regulations. Absence Management is also about dealing with absence to ensure that it does not have an adverse effect on your colleagues or to the continuing provision of high quality services.

If the procedures are followed then absences will be viewed in a sensitive and understanding manner with a level of support and assistance that you would expect from a good employer, to ensure, so far as possible, that the absence suits your personal needs and minimises disruption to the Council's services.

5. **Planned Absences**

a) **Annual / TOIL**

All requests for annual leave, flexi leave and Time off in lieu must be authorised by your line manager. Employees are expected to give reasonable notice – as a guide this would be double the amount of leave being requested.

b) **TOIL Policy**

With the agreement of your manager, you can save any approved extra hours worked as TOIL and “bank” them to be taken as time off in the future. Please refer to the TOIL policy for more information.

c) **Religious Holidays**

All employees are entitled to a celebration or faith day taken from their annual leave entitlement to allow them to join in their own religious or cultural celebrations. Automatic approval will be given by line managers.

d) **Unpaid Leave**

If due to exceptional circumstances additional leave is required to your annual leave, this must be requested in the same way as annual leave as detailed above. Up to 3 days unpaid leave will be granted on each occasion.

e) **Jury Service**

If you are required to undertake Jury Service duties you should inform your manager as soon as possible. You will be required to produce the written confirmation of your Jury Service to your manager. There is not a maximum duration stipulated for Jury Service, although normally your written notification will give you the dates of the specific period when you will be required to attend. All requests for Jury Service will be granted. If during the period the Jury Service do not require you to attend you will

be expected to return to work, not doing so will be deemed to be unauthorised absence and be dealt with as detailed below.

During your Jury Service, you will be paid as normal. Your written notification should include a form to be completed by your manager requesting details of your earnings. On the completion of your Jury Service you will be reimbursed payments for your time, meals, travel costs and any other out of pocket expenses that you may incur. Any payment to you from the Jury Service for your time to attend must be repaid to the Council. If you have any queries on your notification of duties, please speak to your manager immediately or contact the Human Resources Section.

f) **Public Duties**

Where employees have been appointed/elected to serve in a public capacity, for example as a governor of a school, Justice of the Peace or working for any other recognised public body or statutory organisation, reasonable time off without pay may be given. Please discuss any plans to take on such commitments with your line manager. It may be considered reasonable to expect an employee who has extensive public duties to devote part of their annual leave to the performance of those duties. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

g) **Local Council Duties**

Only employees who are not in politically restricted posts will be eligible to stand as a Councillor, although no time during your employment are you entitled to seek election as a Councillor at this Council.

If you were elected as a Councillor in another authority paid time off for any associated duties would be granted up to ½ day per month. The timing of any time off you will need to discuss and gain agreement from your manager.

h) **Interview Leave**

If you apply to work at any other organisation, and are granted an interview, you will be expected to either book the time off as holiday, flexitime or arrange the time to be outside of normal working hours.

i) **Career Breaks**

You can take a career break for up to five years. This gives you the opportunity of returning to the Council without having to apply for a new job instead you will be offered up to three jobs (as they become available) on the grade you were on when you took the break. If you are on a career break you will not have a contract of employment except during periods of training or work experience, at least two paid weeks per year to update your knowledge and provide holiday cover for some teams.

j) **Training and Development**

See Training & Development Policy for guidance upon paid time off.

k) **Volunteer Reserve Forces (VRF's)**

The Volunteer Reserve Forces consist of men and women who train in their spare time to serve alongside the regular forces in times of increased demand. Examples of VRF's are as follows: Royal Navy Reserves, the Royal Marine Reserve, the Territorial

Army (TA) and the Reserve Air Forces. Where a reservist is compulsorily mobilised, employees are permitted to take unpaid leave to carry out their military duties. Please contact Human Resources for further information.

l) **Maternity Entitlement**

Maternity leave will be given in accordance with the nationally agreed scheme. Further details are available from the Human Resources Section.

m) **Paternity/Maternity Support Leave**

Paternity/Maternity Support Leave will be given in accordance with the nationally agreed scheme. Further details are available from the Human Resources Section.

n) **Parental Leave**

Parental leave will be given in accordance with the nationally agreed scheme. Further details are available from the Human Resources Section.

o) **Adoption Leave**

Adoption leave will be given in accordance with the nationally agreed scheme. Further details are available from the Human Resources Section.

p) **Time Off For Medical Screening**

Paid time off will be granted for the purpose of medical screening, subject to receipt of an official notification/appointment card. Medical screening will include any national wellbeing programme.

q) **Dentist/Doctors Appointments**

All employees are expected, where reasonably practicable, to take other medical/health related appointments outside of core or normal working hours for example: G.P, physiotherapy, dental, optician, chiropody appointments etc. When this is not possible appointments may be taken within normal working hours with the time to be made up by the employee by arrangement with the line manager. These absences should not be recorded or monitored as sickness absence.

r) **Hospital Appointments**

Employees should strive to accommodate appointments outside core or working hours if possible. However time off for the following will be with pay and should not be recorded or monitored as sickness absence

- ante natal care
- disability related treatment i.e. rehabilitation, assessment, treatment
- hospital appointments

Employees will be required to produce evidence of such appointments

## 6. **Unplanned Absences**

### a) **Time off For Unexpected Family Crisis**

Under the Employment Rights Act 1996, employees have the statutory right to unpaid leave during working hours to deal with unexpected and sudden incidents involving a dependant (being spouse, partner, child, parent, family members who live in the same house).

Emergency leave is designed to help you deal with emergencies and unforeseen circumstances and to allow employees to make provisions for the long term; it is intended for short term emergencies only. The situations in which employees may take time off are limited to:-

- i) Providing assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- ii) Making arrangements for provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured
- iii) When a dependant dies
- iv) When arrangements for care of the dependant fail (i.e. a childminder does not turn up)
- v) Dealing with an incident which involves a child during school hours

Additionally, to support our employees, the council will grant up to one day's paid leave; this is subject to approval by the line manager. Wherever possible, managers should consider utilising excessive holiday/flexi accruals before granting the provision of one day's paid leave.

### b) **Compassionate Leave**

Reasonable time off will be granted, up to a maximum of 3 days, with pay for compassionate leave following a death of a member of the family (i.e. parent, spouse, partner, child, brother, sister, step parent or step child). You are advised to discuss the situation with your Manager/Head of Service so that the time off can be granted sympathetically to suit your own personal circumstances.

### c) **Unauthorised Absence**

All absences taken, which are not authorised (i.e. do not fall into one of the given categories), or are taken without giving the appropriate notice, will be classed as unauthorised and will be without pay. Any periods of unauthorised absence will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action being taken.