

# **MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE**

## **I1 MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE PROCEDURE INCLUDING SICKNESS REPORTING AND SELF-CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. SICKNESS ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

- 1.1 The Council has a duty of care for its workforce and is therefore concerned for the well-being of its employees and seeks to protect their health and safety by creating a sound working environment. The Council aims to strike a reasonable balance between meeting the genuine needs of employees during times of illness and maintaining the quality of service delivery to local residents.
- 1.2 When illness or injury occurs, paid sick leave will be given in accordance with the contract of employment. This is conditional on the employee complying with the council procedures for notifying absence.
- 1.3 In return, the Council expects staff to care for their health and seek medical help whenever appropriate, to maintain good attendance at work and to notify absence promptly to keep their manager fully informed of the position if they are unable to attend for work.
- 1.4 This procedure outlines the processes to be followed by management in considering cases of sickness absence and will be made available to all employees. It should be noted that the terms of this procedure are subject to local consultation with the trades unions and can therefore be amended from time to time.

### **2. NOTIFICATION**

- 2.1 If an employee is unable to attend work due to sickness they must notify their manager within one hour of their normal start time. If there are any specific requirements in the employee's service area they will be notified of this by their manager.
- 2.2 An employee must telephone their manager to inform them of the reason why they cannot attend. They should indicate, as far as is possible, what steps they are taking to assist a recovery, when they expect to attend work again, and highlight any urgent work commitments that they are aware of which may need covering in their absence. Unless an employee is informed otherwise a text message is not an acceptable means of notifying absence.
- 2.3 If it is not possible for an employee to speak to their line manager, a message should be left with a contact telephone number. Their line manager may then contact them to clarify the position.

- 2.4 An employee should make contact with their manager on a regular basis during their period of sickness – on their first day of absence; and as a minimum, on the fourth day, the eighth day, and weekly thereafter. The purpose of this contact is to keep management updated of an employee's progress and the likely date of their return to work.

### **3. CERTIFICATION**

- 3.1 A self certification form must be completed for any period of absence up to 7 calendar days. If an employee's sickness continues beyond 7 calendar days they must then provide a medical certificate from their doctor. Medical certificates must be submitted promptly to ensure that the absence is properly authorised so that an employee can receive the appropriate entitlement to sick pay. Failure to do so could lead to suspension of sick pay.

### **4. SICK PAY**

- 4.1 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)/Occupational Sick Pay will be in accordance with an employee's contract of employment and their length of continuous local government service including The Redundancy Payments (Local Government) (Modification) (Amendment) Order 1993.

### **5. RETURN TO WORK**

- 5.1 On the employee's return their line manager will meet with them on their first day back for a return to work discussion (RTW) or as soon as possible thereafter. The employee will be provided with a self certification form which they should complete and return to their manager.
- 5.2 The manager must talk with the employee to ascertain the employee's state of health (e.g. fully able to work, or in need of permanent or temporary adjustments) and whether there is anything that needs to be done to avoid a recurrence of the illness and offer appropriate support and assistance e.g. advice on availability of the Council's occupational health support facilities – Counselling Service; Stress Clinic; specific health campaigns. If an employee's absence record is approaching the trigger points under this procedure, the manager must ensure the worker fully understands the implications for them should their attendance record not improve. Managers must ensure that any necessary action required as a result of this discussion is followed.
- 5.3 If the employee has had an accident at work, the return to work discussion should still take place and the manager and employee should follow the Council's Accident Reporting Procedure.

### **6. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**

- 6.1 The council has an Occupational Health Unit (OHU) which is staffed by two Occupational Health doctors and two nurses. The OHU supports the active management of long and short term sickness to encourage successful return to work and/or advises managers on the appropriate alternatives. An employee may be asked to attend an appointment

with the OHU Manager and will be expected to do so, in their best interests and to enable your manager to support their return.

- 6.2 If an employee fails to attend an appointment with the OHU without good reason, decisions regarding their sickness/attendance will be made on the basis of the information that is available to their manager.
- 6.3 It is possible for an employee to self-refer to the OHU via the HR Business Team or by directly contacting the OHU.

## **7. COUNCIL STANDARDS FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE**

- 7.1 The council trigger for a review of your sickness absence record is:
  - 6 days absence in a 12 month rolling year \*

(\***Please note** These are the triggers for full time staff. Triggers for part time staff will be proportionate to the part time hours worked and the working pattern).

## **8. STAGE ONE REVIEW**

- 8.1 This stage applies where the employee has had 6 days absence within a 12 month rolling year. The employee will be given 5 working days notice to attend a meeting with their line manager – they will have the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a trade union or workplace colleague. If a female employee requests to be seen by female manager, effort must be made to find a suitable alternative (likewise for a male employee wishing to see a male manager).
- 8.2 The purpose of this stage is for the manager and employee to have a full and in-good-faith discussion on the cause(s) of the sickness absence and manage any work-related factors that may contribute. The manager will investigate the reasons for absence and explore options and offer appropriate support which may permit the employee to improve attendance (e.g. adjustments to the work or workplace, specifically addressing disability-related absence and adjustments where this is relevant); be flexible about arrangements to discuss sensitive medical issues; discuss workplace issues that arose during their absence; explain the stages of the procedure; and keep accurate records of the matters discussed and confirm discussion in writing.
- 8.3 The employee is entitled to provide management with all information they feel is relevant, the right to confidentiality of medical and other personal issues and access to the records of the matters discussed. Employees will be expected to attend the meeting and inform their manager of the cause of sickness absence, consider any support offered, keep their manager informed of relevant facts and issues, including the provision of medical certificates, evidence of hospital appointments etc.

8.4 The manager will need to decide after the review meeting on one of the following actions, which will need to be confirmed in writing within 5 working days:

- to advise the employee that attendance is unsatisfactory and that a formal target is being set. The employee to be advised that the matter will progress to Stage Two of the procedure if an acceptable level of attendance is not achieved i.e. less than 3 days absence in 3 months and less than 6 days absence in the ensuing 12 months \*

or

- that, having considered all relevant information, their decision not to set a target. The employee to be advised that this decision will be reviewed should the absence record give further cause for concern in the future.

(\***Please note** these are the targets for full time staff. Targets for part time staff will be proportionate to the part time hours worked and the working pattern.)

8.5 The employee has the right of appeal against the issuing of a formal target at this stage – see Appeals section of this document

## **9. STAGE TWO REVIEW**

9.1 Where an employee fails to reach the targets set at Stage One, the manager will refer the case to Stage Two of the procedure.

9.2 A more senior/alternative manager will hold a formal absence review meeting with the employee unless organisational constraints render this impractical. The employee to be given 5 working days notice of the meeting and advised that they can be accompanied by a trade union or workplace colleague.

9.3 The purpose, conduct and requirements of the meeting are similar to that of Stage One but it is expected that the manager who made the decision at Stage One will also be present. The manager conducting the review will need to make the employee fully aware of the implications of their absence being considered at Stage Two.

9.4 The manager will need to decide after the review meeting on one of the following actions, which will need to be confirmed in writing within 5 working days:

- to advise the employee that attendance is unsatisfactory and that a formal target is being set. The employee to be advised that the matter will progress to Stage 3 of the procedure if an acceptable level of attendance is not achieved i.e. less than 3 days absence in 3 months and less than 6 days absence in the ensuing 12 months \*

or

- that, having considered all relevant information, their decision not to set a target. The employee to be advised that this decision will be reviewed should the absence record give further cause for concern in the future

(\*Please note these are the targets for full time staff. Targets for part time staff will be proportionate to the part time hours worked and the working pattern.)

- 9.5 The employee has the right of appeal against the issuing of a formal target at this stage – see Appeals section of this document.

## **10. STAGE THREE – FINAL ABSENCE REVIEW**

- 10.1 The consideration of dismissal at Stage Three has been reached where the employee has not achieved an acceptable level of attendance following the issuing of formal targets.
- 10.2 At the Stage Three Final Absence Review hearing the Chief Officer or officer acting under delegated authority will consider the implications of the absence record upon the ongoing employment of the individual. The employee to be given 10 working days notice of the meeting and advised that they can be accompanied by a trade union or workplace colleague. They will also be advised that dismissal may be an outcome of the review.
- 10.3 The Chief Officer or officer acting under delegated authority to confirm the decision of the hearing in writing to the employee. If dismissal is the outcome, the employee to be advised of their right of appeal.

## **11. APPEALS**

- 11.1 Employees can appeal against a target being set under Stages One and Two of the procedure or a dismissal under Stage Three. An appeal hearing will be held at which the decision will be reviewed. The outcome will be to confirm the original decision, substitute a revised target, or overturn the original decision. The decision is final.
- 11.2 An employee who wishes to appeal must inform the designated officer in writing within 10 working days of being given the notification of the decision at Stage One, Two or Three. The written notice of appeal must give details of the grounds for the appeal.

## **12. CONTINUOUS/LONG TERM ABSENCE**

- 12.1 It is the intention that long term sickness will be approached in a sensitive yet practical way. If an employee has continuous sickness absence of 20 working days or more (pro rata if part time) their manager will, via Human Resources, normally arrange an appointment

for them to see the OHU doctor. This will enable their manager to obtain relevant occupational health advice as to their situation and any recommendations as to how the Council may support their return to work.

- 12.2 The Council's OHU doctor may wish to seek information from the employee's doctor or any specialist that may be treating them and the employee will be asked to provide their written consent to this. Any reports provided by their medical advisers are confidential to the OHU and are not provided to their manager.
- 12.3 Following their appointment the OHU doctor will provide a report to the employee summarising relevant advice and any recommendations to be considered. On receiving the report their manager will arrange to meet with them to discuss the report. The employee will be notified of the time, date and place of the meeting and will have the right to bring a trade union representative or a work colleague. This meeting can be held even if the employee has returned to duty.
- 12.4 At the review meeting the manager will discuss with the employee their current medical situation, any recommendations to consider reasonable adjustments, the likelihood of a return to work (if the employee is not back to work) and the impact of their absence on service delivery.
- 12.5 All staff absence whatever the reason has an impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services and the line manager will need to consider this in their overall review of the ongoing absence. The employee will have the opportunity to inform their manager of any factors or personal circumstances that they would like taken into account.
- 12.6 If the employee is unable to attend the meeting they have the option to provide the relevant information in writing to their manager.
- 12.7 Following the meeting with the employee (or consideration of any written information sent to the manager) the manager will decide in the light of all the information before him/her whether it is possible to wait any longer for a return to work or, if the employee is back to work, if a case needs to be reviewed by a Chief Officer.
- 12.8 If the manager decides that it is not possible to wait any longer for a return and/or wants to refer the case to a Chief Officer hearing, he/she will write to inform the employee that termination of employment is being considered. The employee will be advised that they have the opportunity to make further representations at a formal meeting with the Assistant Director (Acting with delegated authority as Chief Officer) or that they can make representations in writing which will be considered by the Assistant Director. The employee has the right to be

accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague to the formal review meeting.

- 12.9 At the meeting the Assistant Director will consider the available information and may consider alternatives to dismissal.
- 12.10 The structure for the meeting is that management will present the facts regarding the period of continuous absence. The employee will have the opportunity to present their case. Questions can be asked by both parties and the Chair of the hearing.

### **13. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 13.1 The employee can be accompanied/represented at all meetings of this procedure (including appeals) by an accredited trade union representative or work colleague, and must be informed of this. The employee must be given at least 5 working day's notice in writing of these meetings, and 10 working day's notice in writing of the meeting to consider possible dismissal.
- 13.2 Meetings under this procedure could be held at the employee's home if the employee agrees. Where exceptionally it is not possible to hold a meeting with the employee either at work or at home, the employee may request a trade union representative or work colleague to speak on their behalf, or may be given the opportunity to respond in writing or equivalent method.
- 13.3 Managers must be particularly alert to the possibility that absence may be caused by a disability, and consider getting specialist advice (e.g. from Human Resources or the OHU) where this is the case – see managers' guidance note.
- 13.4 An employee's failure to comply with a referral to the OHU without good reason may constitute a disciplinary offence i.e. employee must attend medical appointments and will need to present good reason if they are unable to do so. In addition, an employee failing to supply a medical certificate to support absence in a timely manner, might find themselves subject to disciplinary action and be subject to a stop to pay.
- 13.5 No action will be taken under the procedure in respect of a trade union representative i.e. branch officials or shop stewards, until the circumstances of the case have been discussed with a senior representative or paid official of the trade union.
- 13.6 Where it appears that the employee may be suffering from ill -health that would qualify for early retirement on the grounds of permanent incapacity under the pension scheme, the relevant provisions of the pension scheme will operate.



## **SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT NOTES FOR MANAGERS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The following are a number of points that managers may find useful in managing the sickness absence of employees. They are not part of the policy but are intended to be useful as guidance and prompts during discussions with employees and to assist managers to take effective action.
- 1.2 The policy requires management to be fully aware and trained on its contents, and looks for managers to take prompt remedial action to assist and support staff but also to deal with absence issues and the problems they cause. It also necessitates that managers adopt an assertive, common-sense approach that needs to be balanced against the requirement to make fair and reasonable decisions on employees in accordance with the procedure.
- 1.3 It remains important for managers to note that all absences should be included in making sickness management assessments and this document provides guidance on those factors which managers should use in determining whether to move cases forward under the terms of the procedure. This is particularly important in those cases where issues of disability arise.
- 1.4 Managers need to be aware that the review of sickness absence is a continuous process. This procedure requires managers to regularly review sickness absence records over 'rolling' three and twelve-month periods. If managers do not understand the concept of rolling periods, they should contact their respective HR contacts to seek guidance.

### **2. NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE (PARAGRAPHS 2.1-2.4)**

- 2.1 All employees should inform their line manager that they are unable to attend for work at the earliest opportunity and certainly within one hour of the service opening hours e.g. 10.00 a.m. for most staff on a normal working day. In certain areas however local arrangements might need to be applied and confirmed, as managers will need to be informed at an earlier time.
- 2.2 Unless specifically unable to do so, the employee should ask to speak to their immediate line manager directly and where this is not possible, arrangements will need to be put in place for the manager to speak directly to the employee at the earliest opportunity. Text messages on mobiles and electronic emails will not suffice for the purposes of reporting absence, only as a last resort or in specifically agreed service areas should staff communicate absence by these means, they must however also offer an alternative line of communication e.g. telephone contact number for the manager to call and confirm details.

- 2.3 Employees are required to contact managers on a regular basis during their period of sickness absence – on their first day of absence; and as a minimum, on the fourth day, the eighth day, and weekly thereafter. The purpose of this contact is to keep management updated of progress and the likely date of a return to work. Managers will need to take account of any specific difficulties or limitations that employees might have in keeping to these contact requirements e.g. admittance to hospital.

### **3. ON RETURN TO WORK (PARAGRAPHS 2.6 – 2.7)**

- 3.1 Upon an employee's return to work after a period of absence, as part of supportive action it is mandatory that a discussion takes place between the employee and the line manager. The nature of this discussion will vary according to the particular circumstances of the case. For example, the discussion might be less formal if an employee with an excellent absence record has been sick for just one day, as opposed to a worker whose absence might have implications for them under the terms of the procedure, e.g. approaching trigger levels and the absence will need to be discussed and recorded more formally. The discussion should take place at the earliest opportunity i.e. first day back at work, but such is the varied nature of the Council's services, this document recognises the need for the timing to best fit specific service need. If the meeting cannot go ahead on the first day back, then this fact should be formally noted. If a female employee requests to be seen by female manager, effort must be made to find a suitable alternative (likewise for a male employee wishing to see a male manager).

### **4. STAGE ONE REVIEW (PARAGRAPHS 8.1 – 8.5)**

- 4.1 This stage applies where the employee has the following absence level :

6 days absence within the preceding 12 months \*

(\* These requirements relate to staff working a standard 5 day working week – for staff working different patterns e.g. 6 day working week, part time employees, advice should be sought from Corporate HR )

- 4.2 In order to ensure that management action is both prompt and effective, management need to ensure that employee absences are closely monitored and action taken promptly when trigger levels are reached. Staff need to be advised when the trigger levels are being approached and seen quickly if they exceed the Council's standards.
- 4.3 For staff with more than one job in the Council, the absence record for the 2 (or in some cases, three) jobs combined will constitute the record of the employee. Advice and agreement will need to be sought from the appropriate Human Resources support as to which manager

should hold the meeting. An employee who transfers across departments will carry their absence records and action taken under the procedure with them.

- 4.4 The discussion at Stage One of the procedure needs to confirm the absence record, the nature of the absence, any work-related factors and the support management might offer to employees, including any adjustments (especially important in disability cases), to avoid future absence or assist them to come back to work sooner.
- 4.5 The manager will arrange a date to meet the employee providing 5 working days notice – the employee has a right to be accompanied by a trade union or workplace colleague. In cases where a female employee requests to be seen by female manager, every effort must be made to find a suitable alternative (likewise for a male employee wishing to see a male manager). Following the meeting, the managers' decision will be followed up in writing within 5 working days.
- 4.6 The details of the manager's role at Stage One are set out in Section 8.2. of the procedure. Managers should note that the overall tenor of the meeting at Stage One is aimed to be a supportive one with the employee.
- 4.7 At the end of the meeting the manager will need to decide either
  - to advise the employee that attendance is unsatisfactory and that a formal target is being set. The employee to be advised that the matter will progress to Stage Two of the procedure if an acceptable level of attendance is not achieved i.e. less than 3 days absence in 3 months and less than 6 days absence in the ensuing 12 months.or
  - that, having considered all relevant information, their decision not to set a target. The employee to be advised that this decision will be reviewed should the absence record give further cause for concern in the future.

(NB - These targets will be pro-rata for part time staff)
- 4.8 Should the employee fail to meet the targets set they will proceed to Stage Two of this procedure – paragraph 3.1 The factors that managers need to consider at all stages in determining decisions are:
  - Employees previous absence record

- Demands of the post, the need to provide services and the impact of absence upon colleagues
- Have work problems exacerbated absence, including accidents at work
- Reasons and nature of the absence and medical information available
- Issues of disability - if it is established that the employee has a disability, further advice is provided under the section of Special Circumstances at the end of these guidance notes and from the Council's HR practitioners.

4.9 It is possible for managers to use the Bradford Factor analysis in deciding to set targets for employees. The Bradford Factor is a technique that allows organisations to look at sickness absence by illustrating how disruptive short term absence can be on service delivery relative to longer spells of absence. The scores attributable to the Bradford Factor identify individuals with serious levels of short-term absence and whose patterns give management cause for concern. Further details on the Bradford Factor are available from Human Resources who will be ready and willing to advise managers.

## **5. STAGE TWO REVIEW (PARAGRAPHS 9.1- 9.5)**

- 5.1 The Stage Two Review should normally be conducted by a more senior/ alternative manager than the one who met with the employee at Stage One of this procedure. Arrangements for the review meeting and the decision will need to be confirmed in writing. It is expected that the manager who dealt with the absence at Stage One will be present at the meeting.
- 5.2 If a further target is set (paragraph 9.4) the targets will remain as those outlined throughout this procedure i.e. less than 3 days absence in 3 months and less than 6 days absence in 12 months (pro rata for part time staff). Staff need to be made aware of the fact that a failure to meet these targets may result in their case progressing to Stage Three Final Absence Review where a Chief Officer or officer acting under delegated authority will consider the implications of the absence record upon the ongoing contract of the individual – and dismissal may be an outcome.
- 5.3 The factors that management use in determining upon a case will include – previous absence record, reasons for absence, demands of post and service, effect of absence upon colleagues, any work problems, medical information and any issues of disability (if applicable, see guidance notes under Special Considerations at the end of this document).
- 5.4 As indicated in the introduction managers need to make assertive, fair, common-sense decisions on employees' cases.

## **6. STAGE THREE – FINAL ABSENCE REVIEW (PARAGRAPHS 10.1 – 10.3)**

- 6.1 It should be noted that the Stage Three Final Absence Review constitutes a formal hearing of the case to consider the contractual obligations of the employee to the Council. The hearing will be chaired by a Chief Officer (or service head with delegated authority to dismiss) as dismissal is a possible outcome at this stage. Once again managers at this stage will need to consider the factors that have been used throughout the process in determining whether a decision is taken to dismiss.

## **7. CONTINUOUS SICKNESS ABSENCE**

- 7.1 For those employees who have continuous absence (e.g. 20 working days – 4 working weeks), managers should refer the case to the Occupational Health physician at the earliest opportunity. As soon as the manager is aware that an employee will be off for at least 20 working days, the department should refer the employee to the OHU. It should also be noted that managers can refer an employee to the

Occupational Health physician at any time during their employment provided they have good, reasonable cause to do so.

- 7.2 It is not necessary for a manager to wait until they receive an OHP report before interviewing a member of staff who has been off on continuous absence, management should consider whether they might wish to interview the employee before a full report has been received if they feel there has been an undue delay or where they might wish to consider what they can do for an employee to assist a return to work at an early stage.
- 7.3 In cases where an employee has been off for longer than 20 working days – 4 working weeks), managers must note that it is possible to review the case and convene a Chief Officer absence hearing even if the employee has actually returned to duty. It may be that the employee's continuous absence/s provide such cause for concern that the manager may wish for them to be seen by a Chief Officer to consider the affect their absence/s might have on their continued contract of employment.
- 7.4 For those employees who are absent on a continuous basis it is hoped that the Chief Officer Absence hearing will be able to take place with the employee in attendance. If it is not possible for the employee to attend such a meeting due to ill health, the manager will continue to acquire as much information as possible on the case and propose to meet with the employee's representative if there is one. If this is not possible, the manager will need to communicate and advise the employee in writing of the outcome of the review.
- 7.5 This review hearing should also have, to assist any deliberation, a recent medical report on the case and both management and the employee should make every effort to ensure a recent report is available to the Chair.
- 7.6 If, as an alternative to dismissal, a further target is issued at the Chief Officer hearing stage, it will normally be accompanied by the same targets as established throughout this process – less than 3 days in 3 months and less than 6 days in 12 months (pro rata for part time and disability issues to be referred to 'Special Considerations' paragraph of this document). Failure to meet these targets will result in the case going back to the Chief Officer for further consideration.

## **8. GENERAL APPROACH FOR CONTINUOUS ABSENCE CASES**

- 8.1 Continuous absence cases (i.e. employees whose absence is longer than 20 working days – 4 working weeks in duration) can have their absence reviewed at a Chief Officer hearing of this procedure. Managers will need to make a decision on the circumstances of each specific case. In arriving at their decision they should apply the following factors to assess at what level the case should be dealt with –

(a) nature and duration of absence/s; (b) overall absence record; (c) need for work to be undertaken; (d) effect on service delivery and colleagues; (e) does the employee have a disability ?; (f) personal and work circumstances/environment. However, throughout the period of absence good practice involves:

- Maintaining regular contact with the employee (recommend writing monthly if possible).
- Managers must be able to evidence that they have, or attempted to, communicate and consult with employees on continuous absence. This is particularly important in cases where continuous absence leads to the consideration of dismissal.
- Referring employee to the Occupational Health Physician as soon as manager is aware absence will be at least one month.
- Where possible, call employee to a meeting within 2 months of first day of absence to discuss – prognosis; treatment; likely length of absence; possible return date; additional support that might be offered; medical reports; pay position; update on service; implications of absence for service and colleagues; procedural implications for non-return. Managers will need to be mindful of all these factors in dealing with the case.
- If case involves disability, see advice under “Special Considerations” below.
- Managers need to ensure staff are kept informed of the sickness absence procedure as it relates to continuous absence.

## **9. APPEALS (PARAGRAPHS 11.1 – 11.2)**

- 9.1 The right of appeal applies to Stages One and Two of this procedure. In the Stage Three and continuous absence hearing stages the right of appeal only applies where dismissal is an outcome.
- 9.2 Employees will need to make clear their specific grounds for appeal and the appeal process will need to be monitored and organised by the appropriate HR contact. The Stage 3/continuous absence appeal (against dismissal) will be organised and monitored by the Employee Relations Section in Human Resources.

## **10. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS (PARAGRAPHS 4.1 – 4.6)**

- 10.1 If an employee indicates that they are unable to attend to a meeting under this procedure due to the inability of their trade union to provide representation (refer to paragraph 4.1), management will allow for only one postponement for this reason. If the problem persists at the rearranged meeting the employee needs to be informed that it is their

(and their trade unions') responsibility to arrange adequate representation, and that meeting could proceed in their absence if they fail to attend. It would assist the process, if possible, for dates to be agreed with representatives prior to the formal notification of meetings being sent.

- 10.2 When an employees indicates, or where the manager is aware, that the absence record/case is affected by a disability, the manager must get advice and support from their HR contact and OHU. Any advice, guidance and support will need to recognise the responsibility for considering the possibility of reasonable adjustments on the part of the employer, these reasonable adjustments can include the establishment of different targets for those staff who fall under the disability discrimination legislation.
- 10.3 All managers are required to make holistic assessments on employees' sickness absence when they trigger the procedure. However if any sickness occurs during pregnancy, managers are required to make formal note if the absence is directly-related to the fact that the employee is pregnant. Not all absence during pregnancy may necessarily be pregnancy-related, but any sickness, supported by medical certificate that does confirm a link, requires managers to take full account of this fact in arriving at a decision when reviewing cases. All such cases must be discussed with Corporate HR.
- 10.4 In those cases where employees are failing to attend medical appointment/s with the Council's OHP, they will be advised of the fact that it is a condition of their contract of employment that they must make themselves available for such an appointment. An employee's failure to comply with a referral to OHU without good reason may constitute a disciplinary offence, the consideration of stopping pay, and could result in management taking action on their case with only the information available to them at the time (i.e. no medical report).
- 10.5 In cases where the employee has failed to provide the Council with the necessary medical evidence to support absence (i.e. provision of medical certificates) within reasonable timescales, such action might constitute a disciplinary offence with possible consideration of stopping pay.