

HR Committee – 9th January 2025

Revised Short term and Long term Sickness Policies

Purpose	For Review To agree the introduction of the revised short and long term sickness policies.
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	The council already has in place policies for the management of short and long term sickness absence. However, the opportunity has been taken to review these to ensure compliance with best practice and legal considerations in relation to all equality matters including disability and pregnancy.
Recommendation(s)	That the attached policies are agreed and implemented with effect from 1st January 2025
Reasons for recommendation(s)	It is essential for the fair and consistent treatment of all employees that we have agreed policies for the management of sickness absence. Managers need a framework that they can work with allowing them to support employees through difficult times, in line with our ambition to be an Employer of Choice.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jeremy Heron
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune - Strategic Director, Corporate Resources, S151 and Transformation
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Introduction and background

1. The council's current sickness absence policies have been in place for a number of years. The opportunity has been taken to review the policies taking into account current best practice.
2. Consideration was given as to whether one policy should be introduced which combined both long and short term sickness absence, but current best practice has led to the decision to retain two separate policies but with the ability to move from one to the other if necessary.

Changes made to policies

3. One main aspect to note is that the trigger points within the policies have remained the same.
4. The short term policy will now cover absences up to 27 days rather than 20. An absence of 28 days or more will be reviewed under the Long Term Policy.
5. One review stage has been removed in the overall process.

Corporate plan priorities

6. The proposed policies give managers the framework required to support employees and contributes to the council's ambition to be an Employer of Choice, the means and mechanism to ensure that we are able to give employees the support that they require.

Options appraisal

7. Not required.

Consultation undertaken

8. The leadership team have been consulted on the draft documents and their comments taken into account. A range of managers have also been asked for comment.

Both External and Internal Employee Side Representatives have been asked for comment.

Wherever possible the comments made have been taken into account in the proposed policies.

Financial and resource implications

9. No direct financial implications although the need to cover for sickness absence would bring a cost to the authority.

Legal implications

10. None.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

11. None.

Equalities implications

12. The framework provided by the policies will ensure that all staff are treated fairly and that any protected characteristics are considered and taken into account during the management of absence.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

13. All information regarding sickness absence is treated as confidential.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Short Term Sickness Policy
Appendix 2 – Short Term Sickness Flowchart
Appendix 3 – Long Term Sickness Policy
Appendix 4 – Long Term sickness Flowchart

Background Papers:

None