

APPENDIX

The following Council policies are used to help support employees with long term health difficulties.

- Attendance Management
- Occupational Sick Pay
- Flexible Working
- Leave Scheme
- Flexi-Leave
- Redeployment
- Menopause policy
- Flexible Retirement
- Ill-Health Retirement

The Council is as flexible as possible in its approach, taking into account each individual's personal circumstances, whilst at the same time balancing the operational requirements of service delivery.

The main principles are as follows:

- to respect the employee's dignity and privacy; no sensitive information will be shared with anyone without the employee giving prior consent
- to maintain employee engagement and ensure that managers make every effort to communicate with the employee in line with the attendance management policy
- to ensure the employee suffers no financial detriment to pay or benefits in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment
- to be as flexible as possible regarding work processes which will enable employees to manage their medical treatment while maintaining effectiveness and efficiency at work
- to continue to provide access to development and training opportunities
- to provide the employee with information and support throughout their illness
- to support the team and be sensitive to the impact on colleagues

Long term sickness is defined by the Department of Work and Pensions as any absence lasting more than four weeks (28 calendar days). The Council uses this to define its long term sickness cases for the management of cases and for statistical analysis and reporting.

In terms of the Council's long-term sickness cases, there are currently 18 cases with the earliest absence commencing April 2019. In terms of the various conditions reported, these include cardioinversion, fractured skull, depression, osteoarthritis, rotator cuff repair, prostate cancer, fractured fibia/tibia, knee replacement, labyrinthitis, atrial fibrillation, and stress.

HR ensures that employees have access to counselling through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and support from Occupational Health. They also

provide details of any relevant HR policies which may be available to support the employee.

In exceptional circumstances, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the General Management Team and Human Resources, may authorise an extension of pay during a lengthy period of absence if sick pay has been exhausted.

Where an employee wishes to return to work in-between periods of treatment (e.g. chemotherapy) advice from Occupational Health is sought, and following the advice, it may be agreed to allow an employee to return utilising the following support:

- working from home on either a full or part time basis
- planning a reduced or more flexible schedule for example by changing the working hours so that the employee can travel at less busy periods
- agreeing where possible for the employee to undertake lighter duties for a period of time
- asking colleagues to be supportive and reallocating some of the work where possible or if necessary
- allowing the employee to take a short break at intervals during the day

In accordance with the Council's Flexi-Time Policy, there will be consideration of allowances being provided where requested in exceptional circumstances (such as extended periods of regular on-going treatment), with the prior agreement of the Chief Officer/Head of Service, in conjunction with Human Resources.

Returning to work after a lengthy absence can be physically and emotionally stressful and the Council provides suitable support as is necessary and appropriate to assist individuals at every stage of their recovery. Further to Occupational Health advice, the following options are often implemented:

- a phased return to work within a fixed timescale, increasing hours gradually over an appropriate period of time.
- working from home if practicable
- working flexible or reduced hours for an extended temporary period
- changing the role or some responsibilities for a temporary period
- support with transport to and from work where reasonably practicable
- making alterations to the workstation or physical location

If an employee's illness causes a disability which affects their return to work, the Council will, where reasonably practicable, consider making any reasonable adjustments to enable the employee to continue to work.

Where an employee fulfils the criteria for ill-health retirement, the employee is fully consulted and, once the certificate is received, the matter will be considered by the relevant Head of Service and the employee advised accordingly.

Where an employee is not medically able to return to their substantive post but is still able to work in perhaps another role, redeployment is explored following Occupational Health advice. Where possible, reskilling and re-training is also

explored and appropriate training may be discussed with HR and the Learning and Development Team in order to support an employee.

In addition to the support outlined above, the Council has voluntarily signed up to the following:

Mindful Employer Charter

The Council signed the Charter for Employers who are Positive about Mental Health in June 2015 demonstrating a commitment to supporting employees and job applicants who suffer from mental health issues – this can include longer-term mental health conditions.

Disability Confident Employer

The Council has held a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer status since its introduction in 2016 and is a voluntary scheme demonstrating that the Council actively supports people with disabilities into employment.

There are key requirements to satisfying being a 'disability confident' employer including making adjustments for staff and applicants who may have disabilities or long term conditions which could fall under the Equality Act 2010.

Dying To Work Charter

The Council has signed up to the TUC's 'Dying To Work' Charter.

Many workers get a serious illness at some time in their working lives, and sadly, sometimes there is no effective treatment. In these cases, the employee may face a time of huge emotional stress, fear and uncertainty. The Council, therefore, has a duty of care to these employees and help and support should be provided to them. Sometimes the nature of the illness is such that the person is unlikely to be able to work again. In other cases, a person may decide that they do not want to work anymore and would rather spend their remaining time with their family and friends, getting their affairs in order, or simply doing what they want.

By signing this, the Council has agreed to support any employee diagnosed with a terminal illness by continuing to provide safe and reasonable work to help maintain dignity, continuity of employment and the right to choose the best course of action for themselves and their families without undue financial loss.

Their employment will be protected for the duration of their terminal illness, preserving their death in service benefits for their loved ones.

Local Government Equality Framework

The Equality Act 2010 challenges organisations to know how age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, sex, and sexual orientation describe the experiences of local communities, both individually and collectively. Thinking about the relationship between these 'protected characteristics' explains the difficulties and opportunities arising from the diversity of local areas. They are a reminder that

the consequences of difference on effective service delivery cannot be avoided either for the provider or the user.

Organisations are expected to use this understanding to demonstrate 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Access To Work

The Council regularly engages with Access to Work to support employees to remain in employment. If eligible, Access To Work will arrange a workplace assessment and provide the Council with recommendations of reasonable adjustments including a cost list. The Council will support all reasonable requests.