



PRESTATYN TOWN COUNCIL

Sickness and Injury Absence Policy & Procedures

2025 – 2026

VERSION UPDATES

Version	Date	Section	Details of Change
V1	July 2025	Whole Document	Major changes
V2	December 2026	Legislative changes – SSP	Updated to reflect upcoming legislation changes
V2	08.01.2025	Sick pay	Minor edits to reflect PTC's commitment to NJC sick pay terms and conditions

APPROVALS AND DISTRIBUTION

Version	Date	Meeting	Reference
V2	08.01.2025	Policy Review Sub-Committee	-
V2	11.02.2026	Finance & Management Committee	Policy approved

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INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to employees and workers of Prestatyn Town Council (PTC). It sets out the Council's policy and procedure when employees suffer sickness or injury which renders them absent from work. When dealing with the management of sickness absence and ill health, councils need to balance the needs of the individual with the needs of the organisation.

REPORTING SICKNESS ABSENCE

Employees must inform PTC on the first day of sickness absence and provide details as to why they are absent and when they expect to return. If the absence continues, the employee must provide regular updates to PTC.

Personal contact (i.e. telephone) is always required and the sending of text messages, WhatsApp messages, email or notification by social media will not be deemed acceptable.

A sickness Leave Request Form must be completed upon the employee's return to work and their monitoring form updated (*see Appendix 1*).

Failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Notification of Infectious Diseases

If an employee is suffering from or has symptoms of a notifiable infectious disease, e.g. Covid, measles, mumps, food poisoning – or has been in close contact with someone with these symptoms, they must inform PTC. A fit note is required to certify that it is safe to return to work.

FIT NOTES AND PROOF OF SICKNESS

Employees must provide a 'fit note' (sometimes called a 'sick note') if absent due to ill-health for more than 7 days in a row. This includes non-working days, such as weekends and bank holidays.

The fit note will say the employee is either 'not fit for work' or 'may be fit for work'. If the note says the employee 'may be fit for work', any changes that might help the employee return to work (e.g. different hours or tasks) should be discussed. The employee must be treated as 'not fit for work' if there is no agreement on these changes.

Employers can take a copy of the fit note. The employee should keep the original.

Acceptable Forms of Fit Notes

Employees can get a fit note from the following healthcare professionals:

- GP or hospital doctor
- Registered nurse
- Occupational therapist
- Pharmacist
- Physiotherapist

The healthcare professional needs to assess the employee's fitness for work before giving a fit note. Fit notes are free if the employee has been ill for more than 7 days when they ask for one. The healthcare professional might charge a fee if the employee has been ill for 7 days or less.

Other Proof of Sickness

If their employer agrees, the employee can use a similar document called an Allied Health Professional (AHP) Health and Work Report instead.

Someone working in any of the following occupations can provide this:

- Art Therapist
- Dramatherapist
- Chiropodist
- Dietitian
- Music therapist
- Occupational therapist
- Operating Department Practitioner
- Orthoptist
- Osteopath
- Orthotist
- Paramedic
- Physiotherapist
- Podiatrist
- Prosthetist
- Radiographer
- Speech and language therapist

A physiotherapist or occupational therapist will give either a fit note or AHP Health and Work Report depending on the employee's needs. The AHP Health and Work Report cannot be used to apply for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

Procedure For Keeping in Touch

Short-Term Absence

For short-term sickness absence (up to two weeks), daily contact (in the absence of a Fit Note) must be maintained with PTC to keep management updated as to the employee's condition and expectation to return to work.

Mid-Term Absence

For mid-term sickness absence (more than two weeks but less than four weeks), employees must keep in weekly contact with PTC at a minimum to update on their condition and when they expect to return to work. The responsibility for this lies with the employee. Contact in the form of an email or phone call is permitted.

Failure to contact PTC will result in management attempting to contact the employee for wellbeing purposes. The employee will not be held accountable for a first-time failure to follow policy; however, continuous failures will be considered a breach of policy.

Upon return to work, a Return-to-Work Interview should be conducted to assess the employee's well-being.

Long-Term Absence

When a sickness absence reaches four weeks, the employee should be invited (if appropriate) to an Absence Review Meeting, particularly if there is no likely imminent return to work. This should be a written detailed invitation (see **Appendix 1**) with an explain that a colleague or family member may accompany them to the meeting.

Absence Review Meeting

During the meeting, the below will be discussed:

- The absence and its likely duration
- Any advice from medical advisors
- Any reasonable adjustments that can be made to enable them to return to work, such as a temporary change to duties or a phased return to work.

Employees must keep in fortnightly contact with PTC and keep PTC informed of their progress. This contact may be in the form of face-to-face meetings or via phone call or via email, dependent upon the employee's circumstances and wellbeing. A day, time and PTC contact for this communication must be discussed with PTC once a sickness absence becomes long-term (i.e. after the fourth week of absence).

Failure to stay in contact with PTC (on an at least fortnightly basis) will result in management attempting to contact the employee for wellbeing purposes outside of agreed date/times. The employee will not be held accountable for a first-time failure to follow policy; however, continuous failures will be considered a breach of policy.

Mental Health Absence

Absence due to mental health issues will be dealt with sensitively by PTC. The purpose, type and level of contact will be discussed with the employee to make sure that it is useful and not overwhelming.

If an employee finds regular contact too difficult, PTC will ask if there is someone else who can be kept in touch with (e.g. a partner or family member).

Capability Review

Long-term or continued absences from work on account of sickness or injury, may trigger a Capability Review Meeting for the employee (see **Appendix 2** for the meeting invitation template).

Any 3 separate absences totalling 8 days or more experienced within 3 calendar months, will lead to a capability review.

A noticeable pattern to absences (e.g. the employee is often ill on a Friday) may also trigger a capability review.

Capability Review Meeting

During the meeting, the below will be discussed:

- Any absences, their duration and causes
- Any advice from medical professionals
- Any reasonable adjustments that can be made to the employee's role or work environment
- Any disciplinary consequences

Returning to Work

Self-Certification

If employees are off work for 7 days or less, they do not need to provide a fit note or other proof of sickness from a healthcare professional. Upon returning to work, an informal return to work meeting will take place, as needed, and the employee will be asked to confirm they have been off sick. This is called 'self-certification'.

For periods of absence of 3 days or less, a Leave Request Form (**Appendix 1**) must be filled in upon the employee's return. For periods of absence more than 3 days but less than 7, the employee must fill out the Return-to-Work Form (see **Appendix 4**) and return this to their line manager.

Reasonable Adjustments

Employers must make changes to an employee's working conditions if they are disabled. These changes are known as 'reasonable adjustments' and could include working shorter hours or adapting equipment that an employee uses at work.

Sick leave and Statutory Holiday Entitlement

If an employee becomes ill just before or during scheduled annual leave, sick leave may be taken instead with mutual agreement. PTC cannot force employees to take annual leave when they are eligible for sick leave. Any rules relating to sick leave will still apply.

Statutory holiday entitlement is built up (accrued) while an employee is on sick leave (no matter how long they are absent). Any statutory holiday entitlement that is not used due to illness can be carried over into the next leave year.

When an employee changes their holiday to sick leave they are paid according to NJC sick pay terms and conditions. The exceptions to this rule are:

- They were off work sick and being paid 'occupational sick pay'

Sick Pay

Statutory Sick Pay

From April 2026, Statutory sick pay (SSP) will be payable from the first day of absence. Before April 2026, SSP begins on the 4th qualifying day of absence and continues for as long as an employee is absent up to a maximum of 28 weeks. Qualifying days are the employee's normal working days.

From April 2026, the SSP rate will be 80% of average weekly earnings or £118.75 per week, whichever is the lower amount.

When SSP is not due:

- If the sickness notification procedure has not been followed correctly
- If employment has been terminated
- Where Statutory Maternity, Adoption, Paternity Pay, etc, is being paid
- For days when an employee does not normally work (e.g. for Monday – Thursday working days, Fridays would not be paid for SSP)

Additional Sickness Absence Payment

PTC will provide an additional benefit over and above any SSP entitlement in accordance with NJC sick pay terms and conditions; the notification process must be followed in order to qualify for this.

The additional benefit cannot be claimed for:

- Absence due to incapacity to work due to elective surgery (e.g. cosmetic surgery)
- Incapacity for work due to participation in extreme sports
- Absence due to sickness during disciplinary proceedings or during investigations into alleged breaches of rules, procedures, obligations, etc

Any periods of paid absence occurring during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of a further period of absence, will be considered when assessing eligibility.

Eligibility for sickness payment will not prevent PTC from terminating employment prior to the expiry of the above maximum benefits.

PTC reserves the right at its discretion to withdraw or amend this benefit at any time if employee absences are excessive. Disciplinary action will be taken where appropriate, including circumstances where sickness absence has been falsely taken.

Sickness or industrial injury benefit must be claimed from the appropriate Government Agency, where payable, and such benefits will be deductible from the above payments.

Absence due to Sickness or Injury Caused by a Third Party

Any sickness payments made by PTC will be considered a loan and repayable if compensation for loss of earnings is recovered from the third party.

Long-term Sickness

Employees who are off work sick for more than 4 weeks may be considered long-term sick. A long-term sick employee is still entitled to annual leave.

Dismissing a Long-term Sick Employee

PTC is a small team and there is not the capacity to keep an employee's job open long-term, particularly if an employee's health seems unlikely to improve enough for them to be able to return to work in the foreseeable future.

After an absence of a sufficient duration (as covered by the employee's contract of employment or the guidelines for National Association of Local Councils (NALC)), a dismissal on the grounds of capability (ill health) will be considered as a last resort if the following have been investigated, explored or have occurred:

- Consideration as to whether an employee can return to work, such as by working flexibly or part-time, doing different or less stressful work (with training if necessary).
- Consultation with the employee about when they could return to work and if their health will improve.
- The employee has failed to keep in regular contact with PTC as agreed and is in breach of sickness absence policy and procedures.
- 1. The available support services, such as any occupational health or employee assistance programme, have not enabled the employee's health to improve to the point where they could return to work.

If an individual has been employed for more than 6 months (after April 2026) and/or their absence is due to a disability, there is the risk of an unfair dismissal and/or discrimination claim if the process is not handled reasonably. Before considering dismissal, a series of meetings should be held with the employee and medical information obtained to guide the decision-making process.

Procedure for Dismissal

The initial steps in a reasonable process are detailed below:

1. Regular meetings with and progress updates from the employee.
2. Check if the employee has a condition that counts as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and explore reasonable adjustments to enable them to return to work if so.
3. A referral/s to Occupational Health or relevant medical advisor.
4. Gain advice from a medical professional (with the employee's permission) and see if the employee is unlikely to be able to return in the medium term.
5. Compile evidence for the effect that the employee's absence is having on the company (e.g. meeting public expectations of service, paying a temporary worker to cover their role or increases in other employees' workloads).

Once this has been completed:

1. Invite the employee to an Absence Review Meeting and clearly signpost that the outcome could be that they are dismissed for capability (ill health).
2. After having a discussion and exploring the medical information available, adjourn to decide the way forward and then communicate this to the employee both verbally and in writing.
3. If being dismissed, the employee is entitled to their contractual notice, accrued holiday pay and the right to appeal the decision.

Employee Appeals

If an employee chooses to appeal the decision for a capability dismissal, they have the right to appeal. There may be the need to repeat the Absence Review Meeting with a different manager or representative of PTC, or a different manager or representative of PTC may make the decision on the evidence available. The appeal decision is considered final.

Terminal Illness

Individuals with a terminal illness may live for days, weeks, months or years, depending on their diagnosis and treatments. Avoid making assumptions about what is in the employee's best interests. Some individuals may wish to remain with the organisation in order that their dependents can benefit from any death in service scheme that may be offered.

Others may be struggling financially and benefit from any pay in lieu of notice and untaken accrued holiday pay made available because of dismissal. It is important to understand an employee's wishes before making decisions that will affect them and their dependants.

Access to Medical Records

In certain circumstances PTC may need to obtain a medical report from a medical professional [or health advisor] in order to establish details of an employee's absence. This will help PTC plan workloads, manage the business needs and judge the employee's ability to work.

Written consent will be requested from employees when PTC wishes to obtain a medical report. Individuals have the right to refuse to consent to this under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988; should they do so a decision will be made regarding the employee's continued employment without the benefit of medical opinion.

An individual can also request to see a report prior to it being shared with their employer. PTC will inform the medical professional of this and inform the employee when a report has been requested. The employee then has 21 days to contact the medical professional regarding arrangements to see the report. If the employee has indicated that they do not wish to see the report first, they may still contact the medical professional to request first viewing if the report has not already been provided to PTC. The individual will then have 21 days again to make the arrangements to see the report.

The employee can request amendment/s to a report if they consider any parts incorrect or misleading. If the professional is not in agreement with the amendment/s, the employee may attach a statement of their views with the report.

If the medical professional believes that the employee or others would be harmed by any part of the report, they can withhold the report from the employee.

Employee Benefits

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

PTC recognises that employees may face and need assistance with a variety of issues throughout their lives. As part of the commitment to employee wellbeing, support may

be available for a range of issues including legal, financial, emotional, health issues and work-related concerns.

Employee Counselling

Employees may seek advice, support and counselling in total confidence if they are being subjected to bullying or harassment. There is no obligation to take a complaint further.

The EAP can also provide advice, guidance and assistance with:

- Counselling and resolving problems
- An informal interview with the person complained against to pursue a solution without recourse to formal disciplinary or grievance procedures.
- Assisting with a grievance submission
- Helping to stop behaviour from another individual, where appropriate, which has caused offence.

Appendix 1

LEAVE TRACKING FORM

For leave, e.g. sickness absence.

EMPLOYEE TO COMPLETE	
Employee Name	
Employee Role	
Time of Leave	
Date of Leave	
Times Worked on Day of Leave <i>(if applicable)</i>	
Hours Worked Before Leave <i>(if applicable)</i>	
Type of Leave	
Date of Return	
MANAGEMENT TO COMPLETE	
Sick Note Received	
Length of Leave Period Absent	
Employee Leave Days Taken to Date	
Manager's Signature	Signature: Date:

EMPLOYEE LEAVE ABSENCE TRACKING FORM

1 day = 7.4 hours (based on 37 hour working week over 5 days) Where sick leave has been taken in hours, 0.5 days = 3.7 hours

Leave time can be rounded to blocks of time equivalent to 0.5 days.

Employee	
Start Date	

[illegible]

Appendix 2

Employee Invitation to Absence Review Meeting Template

Dear

You are hereby invited to an Absence Review Meeting to discuss your recent absence/s from work.

The time and date of this meeting is:

Should this date / time not be suitable or if you are not capable of attending a face-to-face meeting, please inform Prestatyn Town Council of this via phone or email within twenty-four hours of receiving this letter to discuss a suitable alternative.

A colleague, family member or union representative may accompany you to the meeting, as appropriate.

Please bring to the meeting any medical reports or written advice (or other relevant evidence) that you wish to rely upon.

In this meeting, a return-to-work date will be established if possible, and any reasonable adjustments can be discussed (such as work hours or to the work environment) to aid with this.

If the sickness absence is likely to be ongoing and a return to work cannot be immediately foreseen, details for keeping in touch with Prestatyn Town Council will also be discussed.

Yours sincerely,

Prestatyn Town Council

Appendix 3

Employee Invitation to Capability Review Meeting Template

Dear

You are hereby invited to a Capability Review Meeting to discuss your recent absences from work. Any 3 separate absences totalling 8 days or more experienced within 3 calendar months, trigger a capability review.

The time and date of this meeting is:

Should this date / time not be suitable or if you are not capable of attending a face-to-face meeting, please inform Prestatyn Town Council of this via phone or email within twenty-four hours of receiving this letter to discuss a suitable alternative.

Present at this meeting will be:

A colleague, family member or union representative may accompany you to the meeting, as appropriate.

Please bring to the meeting any medical reports or written advice (or other relevant evidence) that you wish to rely upon.

In this meeting, a return-to-work date will be established if you are currently absent from work, and any reasonable adjustments can be discussed (such as work hours or to the work environment) to aid with this.

During the meeting, the below will be discussed:

- Any absences, their duration and causes.
- Any advice from medical professionals.
- Any reasonable adjustments that can be made to the job role or work environment.
- Any consequences for you resulting from the absences.
- What changes the Council wishes to see from you moving forward and any timescales or other relevant details for these.

Yours sincerely,
Prestatyn Town Council

Appendix 4

RETURN TO WORK FORM – TO BE COMPLETED BY MANAGER / INTERVIEWER	
Date of Interview:	
Interview Conducted By:	
Number of Working Days Absent:	
Number of Occasions Absent:	
Number of Days Absent in Last 3 Months:	
Number of Days Absent in Last 12 Months:	
Details of the Injury / Sickness:	
Are you fit to return to work?	
If returning due to the expiry of a current certificate, do you have a Doctor's agreement?	
Did you consult a medical professional of health advisor during your absence?	
Are you taking any medication? And should PTC be aware of anything regarding this?	

Have you been advised to avoid using machinery or similar?	
Do you have any underlying or recurring health issues?	
How would you describe your general state of health?	
Is the cause of the absence likely to reoccur?	
Are you experiencing any related family or personal problems?	
Job Related Factors	
Is there any aspect of your job that you feel is potentially contributing towards your health problems?	
Have you any suggestions, if so, for how to overcome this problem/s?	
Agreed Action Points and Timescales	

Further Questions (where relevant)	
You have a poor attendance record, characterised by short periods of absence. How do you explain this?	
What action/s are you going to take to reduce your sickness absence?	
Do you consent to PTC contacting your medical professional / GP / health advisor for a medical report?	
I confirm that this is an accurate record of the discussion with my manager / the PTC representative and declare myself fit for work:	Name: Date: Signature:
I confirm that I have discussed the above questions and topics with the employee:	Name: Date: Signature:

