
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Employees

Attendance Management Policy

The new Attendance Management policy comes into effect on 1 March 2020. This policy replaces the Wellbeing at Work policy 2016. In addition to the Attendance Management Policy a Wellbeing Strategy 2020/22 is being developed which will outline the actions and support mechanisms available to support and improve employee wellbeing. The Attendance Management policy applies to Chief Officers, Craft, Local Government employees, Teachers and Employees on SNCT Conditions of Service.

Manager and Employee Toolkits have been developed to support the policy which will be available on the HUB alongside the policy.

This FAQ documents aims to provide you with the answers to some of the questions you may have in relation to the policy changes and how this affects you.

1. What changes does the Attendance Management Policy bring?

The main changes are outlined as follows:

- The name of policy has changed and within it the names of the various meetings your manager will undertake with you;
- The policy has been streamlined to support clearer understanding of the stages of the policy;
- The support mechanisms available for employees still remain but are outlined in the Manager and Employee Toolkits which support the Policy;
- The policy no longer refers to the disciplinary policy but allows for improvement plans to be issued through this policy where an improvement in attendance is required;
- The absence triggers remain the same apart from the 8 working day trigger which has been amended from 8 working days in a calendar year to 8 working days in a rolling year. There is further information in relation to the policy triggers in question 5.

2. Why does the Council have an Attendance Management Policy?

The Council is committed to supporting employees in achieving good attendance levels at work. This commitment will be underpinned by delivery of our Wellbeing Strategy which aims to encourage, guide and support employees in adopting a healthy lifestyle in a culture that promotes positive, physical and mental health and wellbeing. This is reinforced by ensuring a range of support mechanisms, including early intervention, is available for employees.

3. What are the different types of absence?

The different types of absences are defined as:

- Short Term absence is defined as a single occurrence which lasts up to 20 calendar days;
- Long Term absence is defined as a single occurrence of absence of 21 calendar days and above;
- A rolling year is from the date of the current absence looking back exactly 12 months i.e. 1 July of the current year looking back to 30 June of the previous year.

4. Why do I need a Return to Work meeting?

The Return to Work meeting represents best practice and is key to supporting employee wellbeing and attendance at work. Your Line Manager will arrange to meet with you on your return to work. This should normally take place on the day you return from sick leave or, where this is not possible, within 2 working days of your return to work. This is an opportunity for your Line Manager to ensure you are fit to be back at work, discuss the reasons for your absence, offer any support and highlight areas of concern to ensure optimum attendance at work is achieved.

5. What are the Absence Triggers in the policy?

The procedure for managing absence will be followed when:

- the reason for absence requires further support and intervention
- an employee has had 3 occurrences of absence within a rolling year
- an employee has absences totalling 8 working days in a rolling year (pro-rated for part-time employees and employees working non- standard working patterns)
- the absence has been identified as work-related
- the pattern of absence causes concern
- the absence is long term (21 calendar days and above)
- unauthorised absence

6. What is the procedure for monitoring Short Term or Persistent absence?

Attendance Support meetings will be arranged when the points in question 5 above had been met. There will be a **staged approach**:

- **Stage 1** –when an employee reaches a trigger level;
- **Stage 2** – i when there has been further absence, during the 12 month review period, following discussion at Stage 1;
- **Stage 3** –where there is further absence, during the 6 month review period, which continues to reach the trigger levels and/or absence continues to cause concern following discussion at Stage 2;
- **Stage 4** – a Capability Hearing will be arranged where absence continues to cause concern within the 12 month review period, following Stage 3, further action under the procedure may lead to dismissal

7. What can I expect at an Attendance Support meeting?

You will be invited to attend an **Attendance Support meeting** with your Line Manager and an HR Case Adviser **may** also be in attendance. The purpose of the meeting is to support you to remain at work and identify if there are any underlying medical conditions. This will be an opportunity for your Line Manager to:

- discuss and explore the absence
- highlight areas of concern
- discuss the likelihood of further absence
- offer support
- explore reasonable adjustments
- inform you that failure to achieve a sustained improvement may result in further action being taken in line with the stages of the procedure
- formally record the outcome

8. What is the Procedure for Managing Long Term absence?

You will be invited to attend an **Initial Long Term meeting** when your absence has or is likely to last over 21 days, however, individual circumstances will be taken into consideration around the appropriateness of this.

9. What can I expect at an Initial Long Term Attendance meeting?

You will be invited to attend an **Initial Long Term Attendance meeting** with your Line Manager and an HR Adviser **may** also be in attendance. This will be an opportunity for your Line Manager to:

- Discuss and explore the background surrounding the absence
- Establish if there are any underlying health conditions
- Explore options of support
- Explore early interventions
- Explore the potential return to work date
- Explore reasonable adjustments that can facilitate a return to work
- Consider occupational health referral
- Provide you with an outcome letter summarising the discussion and any agreed actions
- Where necessary, discuss arrangements for an Ongoing Long Term attendance meeting

10. What is a Capability Hearing?

A **Capability Hearing** for Short Term or Persistent absence or for Long Term absence will be arranged when it has been identified, in the case of short term absence the pattern or absence continues to cause concern or in the case of long term absence a return to work is unlikely in the foreseeable future. The outcome of the Hearing could result in dismissal. The format of the Hearing is detailed within the Policy under section 5.21.5.

11. Can I be accompanied to meetings?

Yes, you have the right to be accompanied by a companion/employee representative as outlined in section 5.11.2 of the Attendance Management policy.

12. What if I do not agree with the outcome of the Capability Hearing?

You have the right of appeal within 14 calendar days of the outcome where the outcome is dismissal or an alternative to dismissal only.

13. Where can I seek additional information and support from?

If you have any further queries you can speak to your Line Manager in the first instance. You can also address any queries to your local HR Adviser:

Wellbeing and Attendance Improvement Adviser			
Name	Job Title	Email	Ext No
Shona Diack	Wellbeing and Attendance Improvement Adviser	shona.diack@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	3463

HR Advisers			
Name	Job Title	Email	Ext No
Susan Hamilton	HR Adviser	susan.hamilton@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	5628
Nikki Edgar	HR Adviser	nikki.edgar@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	5647
Lorna McLaughlin	HR Adviser	lorna.mclaughlin@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	3243
Susie Andrews	HR Adviser	susie.andrews@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	5608
Natalie Moyes	HR Adviser	natalie.moyes@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	3172
Anne Marie Cunningham	Team leader HR Operations	annemarie_cunningham@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	5535
HR Business Partners			
Name	Job Title	Email	Ext No
Lesley Milligan	HR Business Partner	lesley.milligan@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	3429
Caroline Smith	HR Business Partner	caroline.smith@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	3434
Alison Nisbet	Acting HR Business Partner	alison.nisbet@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	3252
Lisa MacGregor	Team Leader Organisational Development	lisa.macgregor@eastdunbarton.gov.uk	3429

Your Trade Union representatives are also available for support.