



## QUEEN'S PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### **SICKNESS/ABSENCE POLICY**

Queen's Park Community Council (QPCC) is committed to the care and well-being of its employees.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all members of staff have access to information relating to sickness and absence and are aware of the steps that they must follow when absent from work.

By managing sickness and absence, QPCC aims to provide a high quality service to the public.

This policy covers:

- Sickness leave
- Unauthorised absence and lateness
- Annual leave
- Compassionate leave
- Family support/emergency leave
- Time off in lieu (TOIL)
- Dentist/Doctor/Hospital appointments
- Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Parental leave

### **SICKNESS LEAVE**

QPCC recognises that there will be occasions when staff are unable to attend work due to sickness. The Council provides a sick pay scheme for its employees in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) Terms and Conditions. Details of sick pay are included in the employee's contract.

### **Notification of absence due to sickness**

If an employee is unable to attend work due to sickness, they must inform their Line Manager, giving the reason, the likely duration and expected date of return. This must be as soon as practical on the first day of absence, or within 1 hour of starting their shift, so that service levels can be maintained. Only in exceptional circumstances will QPCC accept notification of absence from a third party. Regular contact must be maintained with the Line Manager during a period of absence.

## **Short-term Self-Certificated Sickness**

For absence of seven days or less employees are required to complete the self-certification documentation which is available from the Line Manager. For all absences which exceed a seven day period, a medical Statement of Fitness for work is required.

Employees who are frequently absent could be suffering from poor health which may require medical investigation through Occupational Health (as this may indicate work stress or lack of capability).

All sickness absence will be recorded. QPCC will investigate and assess whether further action is necessary if periods of absence due to short-term self-certificated sickness reach unacceptable levels, or if patterns emerge.

## **Long-term Absence**

Long-term absence occurs when an employee suffers from a prolonged illness, injury or disability that means that they will be away from work for an extended period. This type of absence refers to sickness over a period of more than two calendar weeks. QPCC takes a sympathetic view about genuine ill health problems and will provide a supportive approach to employees in these circumstances.

Employees who are absent from work due to sickness are expected to maintain regular contact with their Line Manager. This is to ensure that QPCC is able to offer maximum support and that adequate steps are in place to prepare for their return to work. The following options may be considered for the employee's return to work:

- Lighter duties
- Flexible working
- Provision of specialist equipment
- Alternative work

## **Return to work interview**

Where an employee has return from any period of sickness, a return to work interview will be conducted.

## **Medical information**

In cases where an employee's absence reaches excessive levels or there is a lack of information about the circumstances of the sickness absence, the Council may request medical information about their condition from their GP.

Any expenses incurred i.e. paying for an examination or Medical Certificate will be covered by the Council.

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE and LATENESS**

Unauthorised absence occurs when an employee fails to attend work and has not made arrangements with their Line Manager. Where an employee has returned from any period of unauthorised absence, a return to work interview will be conducted.

The employee will be expected to take an unauthorised absence from their annual leave entitlement. Unauthorised absence may result in disciplinary action.

There may be occasions when it is unavoidable to be late for work. The employee should contact their Line Manager to explain the reason for the delay. The employee will be expected to make up any time lost at work due to lateness.

## **ANNUAL LEAVE**

Details of annual leave are included in an employee's contract.

It should be noted that all requests for annual leave are at the discretion of the Line Manager with consideration of the operational requirements of QPCC, including staffing provision for events in the Council calendar and Council/Committee meetings.

## **COMPASSIONATE LEAVE**

Compassionate leave is at the overall discretion of the Director. However, in order to achieve consistency in general paid leave will be granted as follows:

- For the death of a close family relative i.e. spouse, civil partner, father, mother (or equivalent in laws) or son or daughter, up to three days paid leave (reduced pro-rata for part-time working) will be granted.

The Director will consider the individual circumstances, including consideration to whether the individual has to organise funeral arrangements, in which case a further two days will be granted for this purpose.

One day of paid leave will be granted for attendance at the funeral of a close family member.

## **FAMILY SUPPORT/EMERGENCY LEAVE**

Examples of when emergency leave will be appropriate are set out below:

- To provide assistance or make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependent who is ill or injured.
- On the occasion of an unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependent.
- To deal with an incident which involves a child of the employee.

Employees should be aware that for the circumstances listed above, the Council would expect employees to use their annual leave entitlement, subject to the usual approval process, to offset the need to take unpaid leave.

The Director has overall discretion concerning additional leave allowance in exceptional circumstances, giving consideration to the needs of the individual member of staff at the time of the request and the on-going operational efficiency of the council. The right to time off for dependents is contained in s.57A of the Employment Rights Act 1996.

## **TIME OFF IN LIEU (TOIL)**

The standard working week is 37 hours. For employees with a provision in their contract for TOIL to cover duties worked over and above the standard week, a maximum of 10 hours may be carried over from one month to the next. Any hours in addition to this will be removed.

Prior approval from the employee's Line Manager must be obtained before taking TOIL.

### **DENTIST/DOCTOR/HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS**

Employees will be allowed time off work for attending necessary dentist, doctor or hospital out-patient appointments. These appointments should be scheduled either early morning or late afternoon if possible in order to minimize the disruption to the working day. In-patient appointments or procedures taking the whole day will be treated as per sick leave above.

### **MATERNITY/PATERNITY/ADOPTION/PARENTAL LEAVE**

An employee's entitlement to maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave is set out in the relevant legislation.