

Weston in Gordano Parish Council

Sickness Management Policy

1. Purpose of the Policy

The Parish Council aims to deliver effective and reliable services. This can only be achieved where sickness absence is managed fairly and consistently, while balancing the needs of the Clerk with the operational requirements of the Council.

The Council recognises that there will be occasions where the Clerk may be absent due to sickness or ill health. This policy is designed to ensure that such absences are managed sensitively and proportionately, taking into account individual circumstances and the fact that the Clerk works independently and primarily from home.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the Clerk as the sole employee of Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council and covers both short-term and long-term sickness absence.

3. Reporting Sickness Absence

If the Clerk is unable to work due to sickness, they must notify the Chair of the Parish Council, or in the Chair's absence, a nominated councillor, as soon as reasonably practicable and ideally on the first day of absence.

Notification may be by telephone or email and should include:

- a brief description of the illness; and
- an indication of the likely duration of the absence, if known.

If the sickness absence is likely to last longer than originally indicated, the Clerk should keep the Chair (or nominated councillor) reasonably informed of progress and expected return to work.

4. Certification of Sickness

- For sickness absences of up to seven calendar days, the Clerk may self-certify.
- For absences of more than seven consecutive calendar days, a medical certificate (fit note) must be provided.
- Where sickness continues, further fit notes must be submitted to cover the ongoing period of absence.

5. Sick Pay

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid in accordance with statutory requirements. Any contractual sick pay entitlement will be as set out in the Clerk's contract of employment.

Entitlement to sick pay is subject to compliance with the reporting and certification requirements of this policy.

6. Contact During Sickness Absence

Reasonable and proportionate contact will be maintained during periods of sickness absence in order to:

- provide appropriate support;
- discuss progress and anticipated return-to-work timescales; and
- ensure the continuity of essential Council business.

Any contact will be handled sensitively and with regard to the Clerk's health and wellbeing.

7. Return to Work

Following a period of sickness absence, particularly after longer or repeated absences, an informal return-to-

work discussion may take place with the Chair (or nominated councillor). This discussion may cover:

- confirmation that the Clerk is fit to return to work;
- whether any ongoing health issues remain; and
- whether temporary adjustments or flexibility are required to support the return to work.

8. Review of Sickness Absence

Sickness absence may be reviewed where patterns of absence give rise to reasonable concern. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- repeated absences occurring in three consecutive months;
- four or more periods of sickness absence within any six-month period;
- a pattern of frequent intermittent absence over a longer period; or
- a continuous long-term sickness absence.

These indicators do not automatically result in formal action but may prompt a discussion with the Clerk to understand any underlying issues and to consider appropriate support or next steps.

9. Long-Term Sickness and Medical Advice

Where sickness absence becomes long-term, or where there are reasonable concerns regarding the Clerk's ability to return to work, the Council will seek to support the Clerk wherever possible.

Where appropriate, the Council may seek **independent medical advice**, at no cost to the employee, to help inform:

- supportive measures;
- reasonable adjustments; or
- decisions relating to ongoing employment.

Any such action will be undertaken sensitively and in line with the Equality Act 2010.

10. Probationary Period

The Clerk is subject to a probationary period as set out in their contract of employment. The Council recognises that some sickness absence may occur during this time; however, prolonged or frequent sickness absence during the probationary period may result in an extension of the probationary period or, in exceptional circumstances, termination of employment, following appropriate discussion and consideration of individual circumstances.

11. Confidentiality

All information relating to sickness absence will be treated confidentially and handled in accordance with data protection legislation. Information will only be shared where necessary and appropriate.

Version number	Purpose/change	Author	Date
0.1	Initial draft	LS	Jan 2026
0.2	Approved	LS	Jan 2026
0.3			