

The Weald Federation

Of Five Ashes, Frant, Mark Cross and Frant Church of England Primary Schools



With God's love we grow and learn together

With God's love we grown and learn together to inspire every child and adult to flourish within our community. Through our Christian ethos, excellent teaching and shared learning, we aim to encourage everyone to discover who they are in relation to God, the world and others. This is in order to prepare for, and positively contribute to, our ever changing and diverse world.

Attendance Management Policy and Procedure (Staff)

Led by:	Joanna Challis and Jo Warren (EHTs)
Date implemented:	October 2025
Date for next review:	October 2026
Approved by:	FGB
ESCC policy / school	ESCC

Document summary

The County Council believes that it is important to manage sickness absence in a fair, consistent and compassionate way and this policy sets out the agreed approach for doing so. Attendance management is an important part of a manager's role, and all managers should be familiar with the County Council's absence concern points as cause to have a conversation with the employee and understand the reason(s) for absence and relevant support measures that could be put in place to help improve this.

Enquiries

Attendance Management Team, 01273 481300 attendancemanagement@eastsussex.gov.uk

Contents

Policy aims and scope	3
1. Introduction	3
2. What everyone needs to know: absence recording.....	3
3. Disciplinary proceedings.....	4
4. What happens if a sickness absence is over 7 days?	5
5. Return to work.....	5
6. Support measures available	6
7. Occupational Health	6
8. Employee Assistance Programme	7
9. Reasonable Adjustments	7
10. Stress.....	8
Formal process for managing sickness absence	8
11. Which process should be followed?	8
12 The Short Term Procedure	8
Short Term attendance management flowchart	12
13. The Long Term procedure	13
Long Term attendance flowchart.....	17
14. The link between the Long- and Short Term Procedure	18
Glossary	18
Appendix 1: Adjustments are no longer reasonable and medical redeployment guidance	20
Appendix 2: Procedure for Consideration of Continuation of Employment	20
Appendix 3: Procedure for Appeals against Termination of Employment	21

Attendance Management Policy and Procedure

Policy aims and scope

The Attendance Management Policy and Procedure aims to support employees and managers in achieving a healthy and efficient workforce.

It applies to all Council employees. This includes employees who:

- Work on permanent and temporary contracts;
- work within schools where the Governing Body has adopted it;
- have a disability or medical condition which falls within the definitions set out in the Equality Act. However, managers will need to consider any reasonable adjustments to support them.

The policy does not apply to employees who are in their probationary period - the Supported Introduction to Employment Policy should be used for staff in their probationary year.

Note on Language: Use of the word 'Corporate' within this policy and procedure, refers to the Council's corporate departments, and 'Schools' refers to all staff based and employed in schools.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has a responsibility to provide a healthy place to work and equally, employees have a responsibility to look after their own health.
- 1.2. Everyone gets ill from time to time, and most absences of this nature are likely to be a day or two. This means that the majority of staff will only ever be concerned with the first half of this policy, which explains who employees need to talk to when they are unwell and how to report their absence.
- 1.3. Sometimes people are ill more often and have serious health conditions. We want to support all our colleagues and we also need to balance this against the responsibility we have for the services we provide for our community.
- 1.4. Every employee has an important role to play in supporting the provision of services and any long term or frequent absence will make it more difficult to plan and deliver this. The second part of this policy outlines how we deal with these situations fairly and consistently, both for our colleagues and customers.

2. What everyone needs to know: absence recording

Step 1: Informing line manager of sickness

- 2.1. If an employee is not able to work because they are unwell, they must inform their line manager as soon as possible, and within an hour of their normal start time, wherever possible.
- 2.2. To ensure the line manager is clear about the absence the employee will need to let them know:

- The reason they are unwell (if possible)
- How long they expect to be absent from work
- Any work or meetings that will need to be covered

2.3. If the line manager is unavailable, they should contact an appropriate alternative manager.

2.4. In exceptional circumstances, if the employee is unable to call, then somebody else can make the call on their behalf.

Step 2: Telling the absence management provider, GoodShape (Corporate Staff Only)

2.5. Corporate employees are also required to phone [GoodShape](#) on 08454 372 599 or 0207 538 6059. The absence line is open 24 hours a day throughout the year (including weekends and bank holidays)

2.6. On the first call the employee will be asked to complete a registration process.

2.7. Following this discussion, GoodShape will record the absence and notify the employee's line manager. The case will remain 'open' until the absence is concluded.

2.8. If the employee is not well enough to return to work on the day, they told their manager they would be back, they will need to call them again to let them know.

2.9. It is the employee's responsibility to make sure their line manager is up to date regarding their sickness absence and any changes.

Reporting sickness while suspended as part of a disciplinary investigation

2.10. As detailed in the Council's disciplinary policy, it may sometimes be necessary to suspend an employee. If an employee is suspended as part of a disciplinary investigation, they will still be managed under the Attendance Management Procedure, and it is important that any sickness absence is reported so that appropriate support can be put in place. Suspended employees should therefore still report the absence to their line manager (or another appropriate manager) and phone GoodShape as described above.

2.11. Employees who report sickness absence during disciplinary suspension will receive sick pay in line with the entitlements described in the Council's Sickness Absence and Pay document.

3. Disciplinary proceedings

3.1. Employees should note that disciplinary proceedings may be considered by their line manager in the event that they (note that this list is not exhaustive):

- Fail to notify their manager of an absence
- Fail to respond to reasonable communications from their manager during their absence
- Falsify an absence
- Work for another organisation whilst on sick leave from ESCC

4. What happens if a sickness absence is over 7 days?

- 4.1. If an employee needs to be absent from work due to an illness for more than 7 calendar days, they will need to go and see their GP. The GP will provide them with a 'fit note' that states the length of time the employee will be unable to attend work.
- 4.2. When the employee gets the 'fit note' they should phone and let their manager know the details of this. The 'fit note' should then be posted or handed to the line manager as soon as possible in order to prevent any interruption with pay.
- 4.3. For employees in corporate departments (e.g., ASC, CSD, CET) GoodShape must also be notified as per para 2.5 above.
- 4.4. If the employee feels able to return before their 'fit note' expires they can either visit their GP again or ask their manager to complete a risk assessment. A standard risk assessment form is available on the intranet and Webshop. If there is concern regarding a return to work, medical advice should be sought, either from the employees GP or by contacting the Council's Occupational Health Provider.
- 4.5. If the employee does not feel well enough at the end of their 'fit note' they will need to arrange another appointment with their GP, so a further note can be provided. The employee will need to update their manager as soon as possible and send in the additional 'fit note'.
- 4.6. If the employee is sick when they are on annual leave, they should meet with their GP as soon as possible to obtain a 'fit note'. Once the manager has received the 'fit note' the days that are covered by this will then be considered as sickness and the annual leave days will be reinstated.
- 4.7. If an employee is absent due to sickness, they still accrue annual leave in line with statutory regulations.
- 4.8. Sometimes the GP may recommend the employee is fit to work in specific circumstances. In these situations, they should discuss it with their manager as soon as possible to check if they can return on this basis. If this is not possible the employee will continue to be absent from work due to sickness for this period of time.

5. Return to work

- 5.1. After returning to work, the manager and the employee must have a Return to Work conversation. There is a joint responsibility for these meetings to take place.
- 5.2. Return to work conversations should take place within the first day of the employees return; these can be held face to face, by telephone or virtually. At all times the confidential context of these meetings must be considered.
- 5.3. The purpose of the discussion will be to:
 - Welcome the employee back to work
 - Ensure they are well enough to be back
 - Check if there is any support that can be put into place for them

- Feedback on any key pieces of work they may have missed
- Update them on any relevant changes in the workplace

5.4. A Return-to-Work form will be completed and signed by the employee and line manager during the meeting. Please refer to the Managers' Toolkit for video guidance on these meetings, available on the Intranet and Webshop.

6. Support measures available

6.1. Wellbeing should inform part of the on-going conversations between the manager and employee.

6.2. These wellbeing conversations may be taking place already as part of your supervisory relationship. However, you may find it helpful to use the 'Wellness Plan' to record these. The template for this is available on the Attendance Management Toolkit.

6.3. The 'Wellness Plan' can be used by either the manager or employee, to discuss on-going or potential health issues or something that is affecting the employee's wellbeing.

6.4. The wellbeing conversation could cover:

- Any concerns the employee or manager may have, these could be around working conditions e.g., workstation set up or workload concerns or it could be there is something affecting them that is outside of work.
- Developing a wellness plan; identifying any key areas and exploring solutions to address these.

If longer term solutions are agreed, a meeting should be scheduled to review how things are going and to discuss next steps.

7. Occupational Health

7.1. There are times when further medical support and advice is needed. This may be to support a return to work, to understand if there is anything further that can be done to improve attendance at work or to understand when an employee may be fit to return.

7.2. In these types of circumstances, a referral will be made to the County Council's Occupational Health provider. If a referral is needed, this should be discussed between the manager and the employee, where possible. Managers may ask specific questions to Occupational Health that are relevant to the circumstances. In the event an employee is unable to perform their duties due to ill health they are required to be referred to Occupational Health as directed.

7.3. Sometimes further specialist advice is needed, and it is useful to have information from a doctor. The employee will be asked to complete a consent form in this circumstance, and this will allow for their records to be released.

7.4. Strict confidentiality applies to all medical information held by the Occupational Health provider. The referral is treated in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

7.5. The Occupational Health practitioner will ask some questions that relate to the employee's health as part of the referral. These questions will aim to provide:

- Practical advice about fitness for the role

- If appropriate, detail on any personal limitations
- Details of adjustments which may be helpful to support the employee in undertaking their role for management consideration
- Details of how much time may be needed for a return and/or proposals for a phased return to work.

8. Employee Assistance Programme

8.1. There are times when further support on life's events can be helpful. This may be for advice on relationships, legal matters or access to our confidential counselling service. Managers can also seek guidance and coaching on how to hold a difficult conversation, or to seek advice on supporting an employee with a particular health concern. The helpline is available 24/7 365 days per year and more information is available on the intranet/Webshop.

9. Reasonable Adjustments

9.1. Where a manager believes that an employee may have a disability or an on-going medical condition, they will seek advice as appropriate in terms of support that can be put in place for the employee. The Occupational Health service can advise on what these adjustments might be.

9.2. Adjustments might include:

- The reallocation of duties
- The provision of physical aids
- Permitting different patterns of work

9.3. The reasonableness of any adjustments should be assessed as 'reasonable' based on the needs of both the employee and the service. Reasonable Adjustments can be agreed on a long or short term basis however, they should always be subject to review.

Managers must make reasonable adjustments to overcome the barriers to a disabled person caused by features of the working environment and working practices. Equally, you should also consider adjusting features and working practices for members of staff who, whilst not covered under the Equality Act 2010, require an adjustment to prevent a condition developing further. Please refer to the workplace adjustment pages on the Intranet/Webshop and if you require further guidance, please contact your HR Consultant.

Communication Record

If an employee requires ongoing support for a medical condition, it is recommended best practice that the line manager maintains a record of conversations and actions that have taken place. An example of a Communication Log is available to use as part of the Attendance Management toolkit.

10. Stress

- 10.1. When stress hazards are suspected managers may find it helpful to complete the Stress Risk Assessment. When a stress related absence has occurred, this process must be followed. Any actions identified must be implemented monitored and reviewed as necessary. The stress policy, risk assessment form and further guidance relating to it can be found on the Intranet/Webshop.

Formal process for managing sickness absence

11. Which process should be followed?

- 11.1. As noted in paragraph 6, if an employee is absent from work a 'Return to work' conversation should always take place. If the absence is frequent or over 8 days in length, a Health Review Meeting should also take place.
- 11.2. Sickness absence can be managed in two ways, either in the Short Term or the Long Term Procedure. If an employee is absent frequently, or they have one absence over 8 days in length, the Short Term Procedure should be followed. If the absence is 28 calendar days or more, the Long Term Procedure should be followed.
- 11.3. The Short Term procedure handles brief absences, and the Long Term procedure deals with more extended periods of sickness. Both procedures share the same Health Review Meetings which can be connected to manage sickness absence fairly and consistently, please see paragraph 14 for more information.

12 The Short Term Procedure

- 12.1 The Short Term procedure will apply when any of the following absence concern levels are met:

- 3 separate absences in a 6-month period (referred to as the 3:6 rule) on a rolling 6 month basis
- 1 occasion of 8 working days or more continual absence
- The frequency or pattern of absence causes concern for the manager.

- 12.2 When a Short Term absence concern level is met, a Health Review Meeting to discuss the employees' health should be arranged. The Short Term flow chart on Page 11 should be used as a reference guide. Where an employee has not been absent from work due to sickness, but it is clear that their health is affecting their performance at work, reasonable adjustments should be considered. Please refer to workplace adjustments guidance on the intranet/webshop. In the event adjustments are not deemed reasonable please refer to Appendix 1 and seek advice from the Attendance Management Team.

12.3 Short Term: First Health Review Meeting

The First Health Review Meeting is the first stage of the Short Term Attendance Management Procedure. The meeting will normally be initiated by an absence concern level, alerting line managers of the need to meet with their employee to discuss their health and to find out what support can be put in place for them.

12.3 The purpose of this meeting will be to engage in a meaningful discussion with the employee; exploring the reason for their absence(s) and identifying any relevant support mechanisms and may involve:

- Reviewing Occupational Health advice and/or considering whether Occupational Health advice is required
- Considering Reasonable Adjustments
- Discussing the reasons for and impact of their absence history

Guidance on how to hold this meeting can be found in the Managers' Checklists, available on the Intranet/Webshop.

12.4 If reasonable adjustments are identified this should be recorded. The manager should meet with the employee at regular intervals in order to review how effective these adjustments are in line with the employees needs and those of the service. This can be recorded using the Communication Log which can be found on the intranet/Webshop.

12.5 Short Term: Interim Health Review Meeting

If the employee reaches a further absence concern level within 12 months of the First Health Review Meeting taking place, an Interim Health Review Meeting should be scheduled. This meeting is to review the progress of the employee's health and may involve:

- Reviewing Occupational Health advice and/or considering whether Occupational Health advice is required
- Considering any or further Reasonable Adjustments
- Discussing the reasons for and impact of their ongoing absence
- Reviewing the timeline for any treatment/recovery and, depending on the steps already taken, explaining that further absence of concern may lead to a Final Health Review Meeting
- Considering medical redeployment, if appropriate

For more information on the Interim Health Review Meeting, see the Managers' Checklist on the Intranet/Webshop.

12.6 Short Term: Final Health Review Meeting

12.7 If the employee reaches a further absence concern level within 12 months of the Interim Health Review Meeting taking place, a Final Health Review Meeting should be considered. HR advice should always be sought at this point.

12.8 This meeting is to review the progress of the employee's health and may involve:

- Reviewing Occupational Health advice and/or considering whether Occupational Health advice is required
- Considering any or further reasonable adjustments
- Discussing the reasons for and impact of their ongoing absence
- Considering medical redeployment, if appropriate

- Reviewing the history of absence and, depending on the steps already taken, explaining that further absence of concern may lead to a meeting to consider referring to a continuation of employment hearing on the grounds of ill health.

A Final Health Review Meeting should also be considered if an employee meets an absence concern level within 12-months following an Interim Health Review meeting taking place under the Long Term procedure.

For reconvened Final Health Review Meetings see 12.9 - 12.11 below

For more information on the Final Health Review Meeting, see the Managers' Checklist on the Intranet/Webshop.

12.9 Short Term: Reconvening a Final Health Review Meeting

12.10 If the employee reaches a further absence concern level within 12 months of the Final Health Review Meeting taking place, the Final Health Review meeting should be reconvened, which may result in a referral to a continuation of employment hearing.

12.11 The reconvened Final Health Review Meeting is to review the progress of the employee's health and may involve:

- Reviewing Occupational Health advice and/or considering whether Occupational Health advice is required.
- Considering any or further Reasonable Adjustments
- Discussing the reasons for and impact of their ongoing absence
- Considering medical redeployment, if appropriate
- Reviewing the history of absence and, depending on the steps already taken, confirming a decision on whether to refer the case to a continuation of employment hearing on the grounds of ill health.

12.12 Please see the Manager's Checklist for further guidance on referring to a Continuation of Employment Hearing and always seek advice from HR ahead of any decision making.

12.13 Continuation of Employment Hearing: Short Term

The purpose of the formal hearing is to consider all the circumstances and whether any more can be done to support the employee's attendance at work. An outcome from the hearing could be dismissal on the grounds of incapability due to ill health.

12.14 Advice from HR should always be sought prior to any decision regarding the continuation of employment.

12.15 Appendix 2 details the procedure for a Continuation of Employment Hearing.

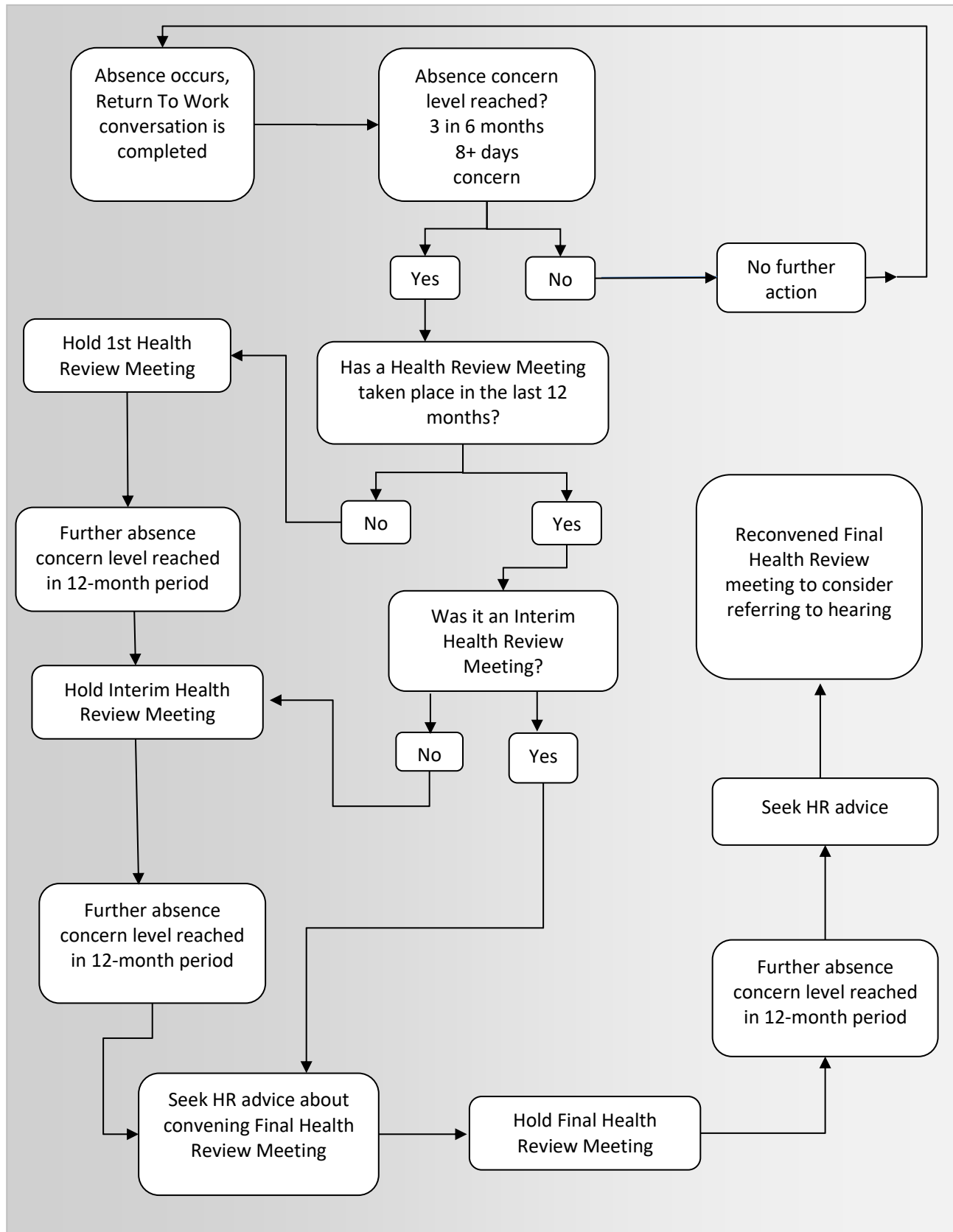
12.16 Right of appeal: Dismissal

12.17 If the hearing concludes in a decision to dismiss, the employee may appeal against the decision. Further detail on this procedure can be found in Appendix 3.

12.18 Right to representation: Short Term

12.19 The employee has a right to be accompanied by a Trade Union official or a current work colleague at an Interim Health Review Meeting onwards, this is the first formal stage of the Short Term procedure.

Short Term attendance management flowchart



13. The Long Term procedure

13.1 the Long Term procedure will apply when the employee has, or is likely to have, 28 or more calendar days of continuous absence. The Long Term flow chart on Page 16 should be used as a reference guide.

13.2 Keeping in touch during a Long Term absence

If an employee is likely to be off sick for longer than one week their manager should contact them to discuss the situation and see how they are.

The type of contact will depend on the circumstances, initially the manager should contact the employee by phone. If this is not possible a letter or email may be appropriate. An informal meeting may follow and can be held somewhere away from the workplace if appropriate. Visits will be pre-arranged.

If an employee is absent due to a reason related to work, a meeting should be held as soon as possible. This allows for an early opportunity to resolve any issues and alleviate any concerns in a timely manner.

The County Council reserves the right to instigate an earlier discussion of an employee's sickness absence record if the situation would benefit from early intervention. Examples might be a work-related injury, an accusation of bullying or harassment, or where there is evidence that the employee is not ill.

13.3 Communication Log

If an employee requires ongoing support for a medical condition, it is recommended best practice that the line manager maintains a record of conversations and actions that have taken place.

An example of a Communication Log is available to use as part of the Attendance Management toolkit.

13.4 First Health Review Meeting – Long Term

If an employee has an absence that exceeds 28 calendar days a First Health Review Meeting should be held by week six of an employee's absence.

The purpose of this meeting will be to engage in a meaningful discussion with the employee; exploring the reason for their absence and identifying any support mechanisms that could aid a return to work. In the event an employee is unable to perform their duties due to ill health they are required to be referred to Occupational Health as directed. For more information on the Health Review Meeting, see the Managers' Checklist on the Intranet/Webshop.

13.3 Interim Health Review Meeting – Long Term

If it appears that the employee looks unlikely to return to work within 28 days of the First Health Review Meeting taking place, an Interim Health Review Meeting should be arranged.

13.4 This meeting is to review the progress of the employee's health and may involve:

- Discussing the reasons for and impact of their ongoing absence
- Reviewing Occupational Health advice and/or considering whether Occupational Health advice is required
- Considering Reasonable Adjustments
- Reviewing the timeline for recovery and, depending on the steps already taken, warning that they are at risk of being referred to a continuation of employment hearing
- Considering medical redeployment
- Considering ill health retirement

For more information on the Interim Health Review Meeting, see the Managers' Checklist on the Intranet.

13.5 An Interim Health Review Meeting should take place before week 15 of the employee's absence.

13.6 If the employee is unlikely to return to work before week 26, or is unlikely to maintain the desired level of attendance in the future, a Final Health Review Meeting should be scheduled and the employee should be warned that a possible outcome of the Final Health Review meeting is that the matter may be referred to a continuation of employment hearing.

13.7 Final Health Review Meeting – Long Term

A Final Health Review Meeting should be arranged when either:

- A return to work is planned
- An employee is unlikely to return to work by week 26 of their absence
- An employee is unlikely to maintain a reasonable level of attendance for the service in the future

13.8 Consideration should also be given to holding a Final Health Review Meeting if an employee reaches an absence concern level within 12-months of an Interim Health Review Meeting under the Long Term procedure, or an Interim or Final Health Review meeting under the Short Term procedure.

13.9 If the employee reaches a further absence concern level in respect of either the Short Term or Long Term procedure within 12 months of an Interim Review Meeting or a Final Health Review meeting taking place, a Final Health Review meeting (or reconvened Final Health Review meeting) should be held, which may result in a referral to a continuation of employment hearing. This meeting is to review the progress of the employee's health and may involve:

- Reviewing Occupational Health advice and/or considering whether Occupational Health advice is required.
- Considering any or further Reasonable Adjustments
- Discussing the reasons for and impact of their ongoing absence

- Considering medical redeployment, if appropriate
- Reviewing the history of absence and, depending on the steps already taken, confirming a decision on whether to refer the case to a continuation of employment hearing on the grounds of ill health.

13.10 Within this meeting consideration should be given as to whether there is a likelihood of a return to work in a reasonable timeframe and maintaining a reasonable level of attendance for the service in the future. Possible outcomes include:

- Agreed return to work plan (within reasonable timescale)
- Ill Health Retirement, if appropriate
- Medical Redeployment, if appropriate
- Mutual termination of employment
- Referral to a Continuation of Employment Hearing on the grounds of ill health

13.11 Please see the Manager's Checklist for further guidance on referring to a Continuation of Employment Hearing and always seek advice from HR ahead of any decision making.

13.12 In exceptional circumstances, the process can be extended to 32 weeks. In very exceptional cases, if the process is extended beyond 32 weeks, a business case would need to be approved by the relevant Assistant Director or Headteacher.

13.13 Continuation of Employment Hearing – Long Term

A Continuation of Employment Hearing will be held to consider the continuation of employment in the following circumstances:

- The employee is not expected to be back at work within 26 weeks of the start of the absence, or is unlikely to maintain a reasonable level of attendance for the service in the future;
- All reasonable measures have been exhausted in order to support them back to work; and
- All reasonable alternative options such as redeployment and ill health retirement have been considered if appropriate.

13.14 The purpose of the Continuation of Employment Hearing is to consider all the information available and whether any more can be done to support the employee's attendance at work. Outcomes from the Hearing can include dismissal on the grounds of incapability due to ill health. (Please refer to Appendix 2 for further guidance).

13.15 Advice from HR should always be sought prior to any decision regarding the continuation of employment.

13.16 In the event employment is not continued, the line manager must ensure they complete the appropriate HR leaver notification form as well as closing the employee's ICT network account, and ensuring the return of any passes or equipment issued to the employee. For more information please see the Leaving page of the Intranet.

13.17 Right to representation – Long Term

The employee has a right to be accompanied by a Trade Union official or a current work colleague at any Long Term Health Review Meetings.

13.18 Return to work following a Long Term period of absence: Support Meetings

When the outcome of a Final Health Review Meeting is that the employee returns to work, Support Meetings should take place at regular intervals. The purpose of the meetings will be to update the employee's Communication Record and will include:

- Reviewing any temporary adjustments to the employee's job
- Identifying any further reasonable support measures

These Support Meetings should continue until the employee is fully rehabilitated back into the role. It is recommended these meetings should be held weekly during the first four weeks of the employee's return to work.

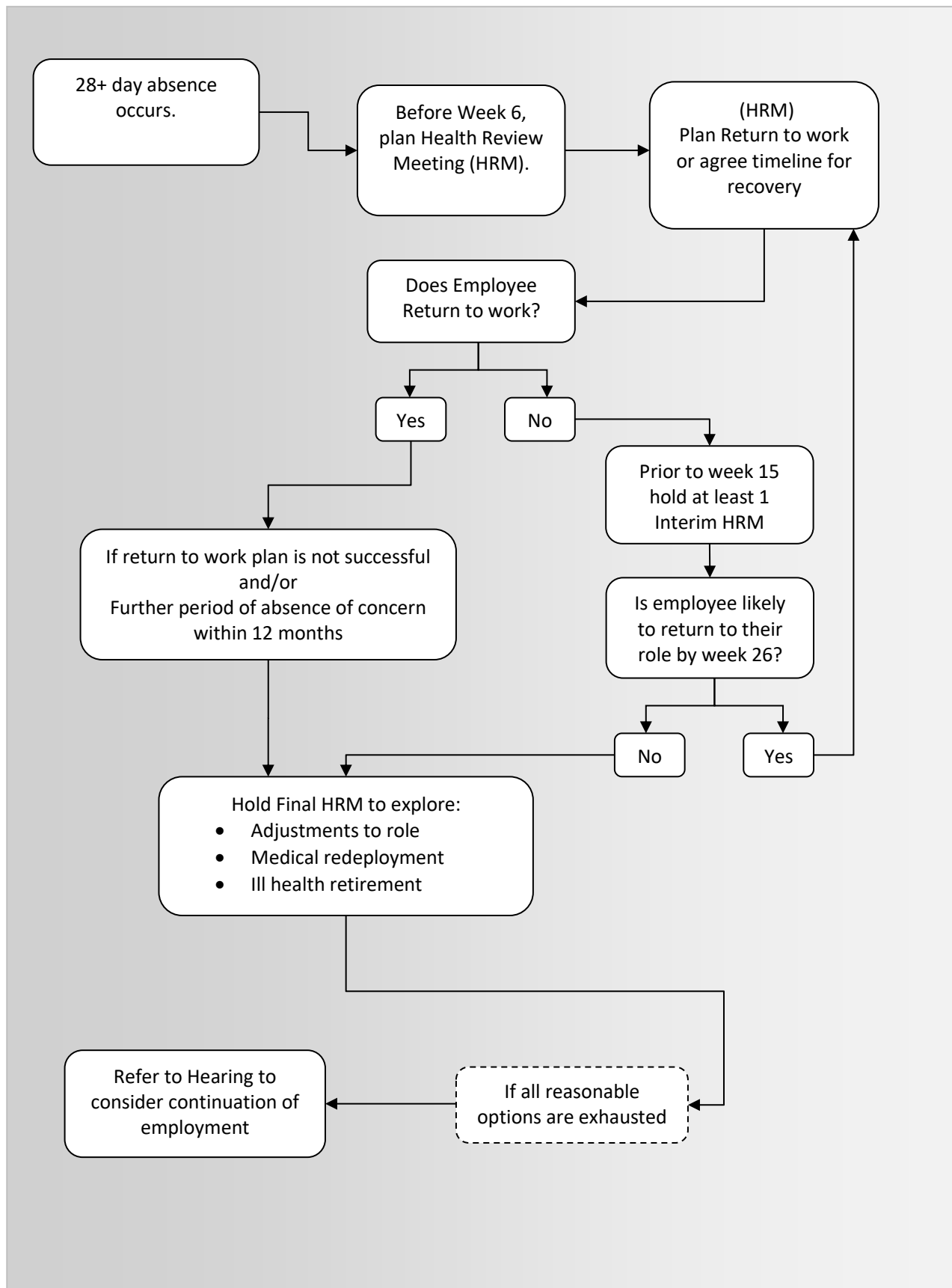
13.19 The expectation is that the log will be signed off by both the manager and the employee no later than week six of an employee's return.

13.20 If there are further concerns following this and the return has not been successful, alternative options may need to be explored which could include:

- Occupational Health Review,
- Contractual reduction in hours,
- Medical redeployment, or:
- If these options are not viable, reconvening the Final Health Review meeting.

Please contact your HR Consultant for further guidance.

Long Term attendance flowchart



14. The link between the Long- and Short Term Procedure

14.1 The purpose of this policy, short or long term, is to support an employee's attendance at work, and this needs to be balanced alongside managing the operational needs of the service. Health Review Meetings take place under both procedures, where the employee's health, wellbeing and support to be at work are discussed. These meetings serve the same purpose, whether they take place under the Short or Long Term procedure. The two procedures can be linked together, and for consistency, phases of the Short Term procedure; be it a First, Interim or Final Health Review Meeting, will correspond to the same phase of the Long Term procedure, and this will also apply the other way around.

For example:

- if an employee had a First Health Review Meeting under the Short Term Procedure and then within 12 months, they had a further spell of Long Term absence, the manager could then invite them to an Interim Health Review Meeting under the Long Term procedure, rather than a First Health Review Meeting, or
- if an employee has a Final Health Review meeting under the Short Term Procedure and then within 12 months, they have a further spell of Long Term absence, the manager could invite them to a Final Health Review Meeting under the Long Term procedure, rather than a First Health Review Meeting.

14.2 By having these two procedures in place and linking them together, the Council aims to effectively manage employee sickness and ensure fairness and consistency in dealing with sickness absence related matters. Whether it is Short Term or Long Term sickness being managed, or a mixture of both, the aim is to be clear and supportive throughout the process and to ensure that both the employee's well-being and the needs of the service are considered.

Glossary

Communication record

If an employee is absent Long Term due to sickness or requires ongoing support for a medical condition, it is best practice that the line manager maintains a record of conversations and actions that have taken place.

An example of a Communication Record is available to use as part of the Attendance Management toolkit.

It is designed to be reviewed and updated at regular intervals in line with the Long Term Attendance Management Procedure or, in certain circumstances, the Short Term Attendance Management Procedure.

The Communication Record acts both as a live action plan to record and monitor any agreements that have taken place and as a historical log of any contact regarding the absence.

Wellness plan

The plan does not need to be linked to any period of absence or medical condition; it is a proactive tool aimed to improve the wellbeing of an individual or team. The action points can be as simple as taking regular lunch breaks away from the desk or it could lead to consideration of a flexible working request.

The Wellness Plan should be regularly reviewed until the action points have been fully explored.

Health Review Meeting

The Health Review Meeting (HRM) is the first formal stage of the Long and Short Term Attendance Management Procedure. The meeting will be initiated when an employee reaches an Absence Concern level, alerting line managers for the need to meet with their employee to discuss their health and to find out what support can be put in place for them.

The purpose of this meeting will be to engage in a meaningful discussion with the employee, exploring the reason for their absence(s) and identifying any relevant support mechanisms.

Final Health Review Meeting

Within this meeting, a decision needs to be made regarding next steps. Possible outcomes include:

- Agreed Return to work plan (within reasonable time scale)
- Ill Health Retirement
- Medical Redeployment
- Mutual Termination of Employment
- Referral to a continuation of employment hearing

Absence Concern Levels

The circumstances that constitute an absence concern level are below.

Short Term:

- 3 separate absences in a 6-month period (referred to as the 3:6 rule) on a rolling 6 month basis
- 1 occasion of 8 working days or more continual absence
- A pattern or the frequency of absence causes concern.

Long Term:

- 28 calendar days of continuous absence

When an absence concern level is met, a Health Review Meeting must always be arranged.

Appendix 1: Adjustments are no longer reasonable and medical redeployment guidance

- 1.1. If an employee is unable to fulfil the duties of their current post due to ill health (on a Long Term or permanent basis) the manager should consider reasonable adjustments in line with the Workplace Adjustments guidance. In the event that the adjustments are not deemed reasonable, a Health Review Meeting should be convened with the employee to review the key duties of the role and to discuss alternative options, these could include redeployment or Ill Health Retirement. Occupational Health advice should be sought at this point.
- 1.2. The Occupational Health advice should be considered and if medical redeployment is recommended, the employee will elect whether or not they wish to be placed on the redeployment register. In the event they do not wish to do this, a Final Health Review Meeting may be convened. The outcome of this may be referral to a continuation of employment hearing. Please refer to your HR Consultant for further guidance.
- 1.3. If the employee agrees to be placed on the redeployment register, a redeployment form is completed with their skills and preferences. From the date the employee submits the form they will have the opportunity to express an interest in posts that are deemed to be a suitable match.
- 1.4. The employee is made aware of all new roles on a weekly basis and a matching process is undertaken. If the employee's skill set is matched to a particular vacancy, then advice must be sought from Occupational Health on the suitability of the post.
- 1.5. Alternative positions will be considered if the employee meets the essential criteria and they are at the same grade, or within a ten percent margin of their current salary. Redeployment can only take place where there is a legitimate vacancy.
- 1.6. The redeployment process is limited for a period of 12 weeks and if the employee has not secured a role during this period a Final Health Review Meeting will be convened. The outcome of this may be referral to a continuation of employment hearing.
- 1.7. For details on redeployment please refer to the Recruitment and Selection toolkit on the Intranet/Webshop.

Appendix 2: Procedure for Consideration of Continuation of Employment

- 1.1. Advice from HR should always be sought prior to any decision regarding the continuation of employment.
- 1.2. In the event of the application of either the Short Term or Long Term Attendance Management Procedures resulting in the manager recommending that consideration should be given to terminating employment, a Senior Manager will present the case to an Assistant Director. In schools the case will be presented to either the Headteacher, or to a panel of Governors (if the Headteacher is the Senior Manager presenting the case). (See the Scheme of Personnel Delegations document)

- 1.3. Appropriate support from the HR Advisory Team will be available to the Chief Officer/Senior Manager or Headteacher/panel of Governors.
- 1.4. The employee may be accompanied by a TU representative or current work colleague.
- 1.5. If termination of employment is to be recommended, the manager informs the employee in writing with details of the arrangements for the hearing including date, time venue, the right to representation and an opportunity to request reasonable adjustments if appropriate.
- 1.6. Conduct of a hearing to consider continuation of employment
The Employee, management and witnesses must exchange documents **not less than 5 working days** before the date of the hearing.
- 1.7. Please refer to 'Model Procedure for a Hearing' document, available on the Intranet and Webshop, for the agreed format of the hearing.

Appendix 3: Procedure for Appeals against Termination of Employment

- 1.1. In the event of an appeal, the dismissing officer presents the management case to a Chief Officer level. To ensure their impartiality, the Chief Officer will not have had prior involvement in the case. If the employee works in a school, a panel of governors will hear the case.
- 1.2. Appropriate HR support will be made available to the dismissing officer and to the Chief Officer.
- 1.3. The employee may bring a Trade Union (TU) representative or current work colleague.
- 1.4. The Appeal Procedure
- 1.5. If an employee exercises their right of appeal, a formal appeal hearing will be convened, within the employee's period of notice, if possible, but in all events within 2 months of receiving the appeal notification.
- 1.6. Both the employee and management side will receive written notice of the appeal date/time and venue. The employee will be notified of the right to bring a TU representative or current work colleague.
- 1.7. The appellant, management and witnesses must exchange documents **not less than 5** working days before the date of the hearing. The documents should be sent to the Chief Officer/appeal panel members simultaneously.
- 1.8. The formal hearing takes place and will normally re-hear the entire case. The dismissing officer presents her/his case and is questioned upon it. The employee then presents their case and is questioned upon it. The employee sums up after the manager. Both parties may call witnesses as part of their presentation.
- 1.9. The Chief Officer/Panel should notify both the employee and the dismissing officer of the decision, in writing, normally within 5 working days of the appeal. (In addition, the Chief Officer/panel may choose to give the decision orally following an adjournment on the day of the appeal, but this must be followed up in writing).
- 1.10. If appeal is not upheld, the decision is final with no further right of appeal within the County Council.