

## Appendix A

### Proposed key changes to Attendance Policy and Procedure

- The Management of Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure has been renamed the Attendance Policy and Procedure, to reflect the focus on promoting good health and attendance, in addition to managing sickness absence.
- The approach has shifted from short-term and long-term absence management to procedures for managing all absences (regardless of length) and supporting employees to return to and remain in work.
- Prescriptive timeframes and procedures have been removed to allow managers to make appropriate judgements based on the individual circumstances of the absence and the needs of the service.
- Referrals to Occupational Health are now optional rather than mandatory, to enable managers to consider the option with the employee and refer as and when necessary.
- The 8-weekly case review meetings have been removed from the procedure for managing prolonged absence, yet there is greater emphasis on the manager and employee having ongoing, meaningful conversations throughout the absence.
- An absence review meeting has been introduced into the procedure for managing prolonged absence to consider any final options that may facilitate a return to work ahead of an attendance hearing.
- The search period in the redeployment process has been increased to 12 weeks for all employees as standard; previously this was limited to 4 weeks unless the employee had a disability. However, employees with a disability will retain a higher priority status when being considered for alternative roles.
- There has been an amendment to the wording around phased returns. The new procedure reiterates that a phased return should not usually last longer than 4 weeks, as per the current policy, but the wording "unless occupational health advice recommends otherwise" has been removed.
- A new sickness absence trigger has been added for situations where the numerical triggers have not been reached but there is reasonable cause for concern about patterns of absence.
- The wording of the existing trigger level has been revised from "a total of 10 working days (pro rata for part time employees)" to "any absence which amounts to more than 2 of your working weeks" to avoid confusion around pro rata calculations.
- The appeal period for employees who are dismissed at an attendance hearing has been reduced from 10 days to 5 days in line with other HR procedures.

- Example scenarios of where occupational sick pay may be withheld have been added.
- Replace the discretionary extension of sick pay guidance to default to the NJC sick pay provisions. This allows for consideration of extensions to normal sick pay entitlements but does not have the prescriptive approach currently in place. It allows individual circumstances to be considered.
- The carry-over of annual leave during sickness absence has been aligned to the statutory requirements.
- The 'Time Off for Medical Appointments' and 'Manage Sickness Absence and Annual Leave' guides have been incorporated into this policy.
- A revision has been made to how time off for hospital admission is covered so that if an employee is admitted for treatment which leaves them unable to work, the time off will be recorded as sickness absence.
- Highlights that if ill-health retirement is under independent medical consideration but a decision is not forthcoming and a timescale for a recommendation is unknown, the case may proceed to an Attendance Hearing without confirmation of the ill health retirement decision due to no clear timeline for decision and a protracted period of time waiting for this decision.