**Absence Management Policy FAQs**

**Reporting Absence**

1. ***Is it acceptable for me to text my manager when I am unwell or do I have to phone in?***

When you are unwell and feel unable to attend work you are required to report your absence by making contact your manager before 9.30am on the first day of absence. If you are unable to do this in a phone call (perhaps because you have been ill in the night and need to sleep), then you may text or email your manager to inform them of your absence. However, such an text/email ***MUST*** then be followed up before the end of the working day by making contact with your Team Manager in order to provide information regarding;

* *the nature of your illness*
* *how long you anticipate you may be away from work (and if unknown, when you will contact your manager again with an update)*
* *whether, and when, you expect to see a doctor*
* *any piece of work that may need to be covered by a colleague in your absence*

If your Team manager is not in work or is unavailable, please ask to speak with another member of the Staff Leadership Team. For further information, please refer to Section 3 of the Policy.

1. ***My usual working hours are 9am to 5pm on a Monday, Tuesday and Friday. Do I need to report my absence if I am unwell on a Wednesday when I am not due to come into work?***

[Parish Name] calculates absence totals using the Bradford Score system (See Question 7). This works by focusing upon the number of “***working days lost***” as a consequence of your being unwell. As such, there is no requirement for you to report the day that you are unwell if it happens in your own time.

Once back in work, you will be asked to complete a Self Certificate form which will ask you to state the date that you were ***first unwell***, as well as the date when you were ***last unwell***. However within this block of time, [parish name] will only take account of the number of ***working days*** that have been lost, and will not include days off or weekends in the Bradford Score calculation.

1. ***Whilst I do not usually work on a weekend, I agreed to come in to work to facilitate a workshop on a Saturday which I planned to take back as toil on another occasion. However, I was then unwell on the weekend that I had planned to work. Do I need to include that Saturday as a “working day” on the Self Certificate form?***

Since you would not usually be paid for working that Saturday (ie it is usually a non-working day), you will not need to count it as a working day, and so need not report the date on the Self Certificate form. If however, you work flexible days and you are unable to fulfil all of your stated number of weekly hours on an alternative date that week, then you will need to register this as sickness as will involve a loss of working days for the [Parish]

1. ***Do I need to phone/email to report as being well, if I am feeling better on my day off?***

There is no obligation to contact the office if it is a day when you are not in work.

Once you have reported in as being sick, your team manager may well assume that you continue to be unwell until you let them know otherwise. This is usually done when completing the Self Certification form. Please note that, should you be absent for an extended period without keeping your manager informed of how you are getting on, then your absence may be recorded as ‘unauthorised’.

Whilst you are not obliged to call in as being fit to return to work, it can helpful for your colleagues/ team manager to have an indication about when you are expected to be back in work so that they can plan accordingly. Therefore it is recommended that you touch base with your team on a regular basis.

1. ***I was expecting to be away from work for seven days and reported this to my manager, but I feel better after four days; am I okay to go back to work if I am expected to be off for longer?***

If you do ***not have*** a GP certificate that states a recommended time away from work then you are able to return as soon as you feel well. However should your absence be beyond seven days, then you will have obtained a GP certificate (or ‘*Fit Note’*) which advises of a return date. If you wish to return to work prior to that GP specified return date, then you will need to make contact with your GP and ask for them to confirm that you are now ‘fit’ (by providing you with a revised GP Certificate) before you are able to return.

1. ***I went on holiday and felt unwell on the second day. Am I able to claim this back as sick pay and have my annual leave reinstated to use on another occasion?***

You are only able to reimbursed for annual leave (where planned annual leave is reclassified as sick leave, enabling the annual leave to be taken at a different time) upon production of a medical ‘fit note’ certificate to cover the period of sickness.

**Understanding the Bradford Scores**

1. ***Please can you explain the Bradford Score System?***

The Bradford factor was designed with the following principle in mind: “Short, frequent and unplanned absences are more disruptive than longer absences”. In other words, if a person takes lots of one to two day absences, then it is harder for their team manager to plan around the disruption this causes when compared to a person who has a run of 20 days off sick.

Therefore the number of Spells (S) of absence is weighted higher than the number of Days (D) of absence, using a very simple formula of:

S x S x D = Bradford points score

In this calculation, both the number of days and the number of Spells of absence are calculated over a rolling 12 months. If an absence occurred more than 12 months previously, then is will not be counted in the calculation.

1. ***Is the calculation of the Bradford Score equitable for both full and part-time staff given that the Bradford Score only takes account of “working days”, which will always be less per week for a part-time staff member than it will for a full-time staff member?***

The usual trigger point for an Informal Improvement Plan for a full-time staff member will be a Bradford Score of 150. This is pro rata’d for a part-time staff member such that, for someone that works half time hours (17.5 hours), they would reach the trigger point after a score of just 75 (half that of the full-time staff member).

1. ***How can I find out what my current Bradford Factor score is?***

Your manager will keep track of your days of sickness absence.

***10) I know that the Bradford Score is calculated by looking at the number of days absence in the preceding 12 months. What happens if I am unwell on 10 March 2019, and I was also unwell on 9 March to 12 March 2018? Does the episode in March 2018 disappear (as it started more than 12 months prior to the recent absence on 10 March 2019)?***

The Absence in March 2018 will not drop off entirely as some of the dates will fall within the current rolling year.

The Bradford calculation requires that we count the number of days absent from work using a calculation that is accurate on any specified day, but that will change as and when each day passes. With everyday that goes by, there is the potential for more of days of the historical absence (from 12 months ago) to drop off as they fall out of range for the purposes of the Bradford calculation.

In the example above, whilst the dates of 9 and 10 March 2018 are outside the reaches of the rolling 12 months (ie they are more than 365 days ago) and so will not be counted, the remaining dates of 11 March and 12 March 2018 will still be counted in the Bradford Sore Calculation.

***11) Does the calculation of sick pay periods follow the same rolling year principle as outlined in Question 7, where some episodes will ‘drop off’ as time goes by?***

Sick pay entitlements are calculated by aggregating periods of sickness absence in the immediate 12 month period. This is slightly different to the Bradford score (as described in Question 6 above) as in terms of pay, the 12-month rolling period commence from the ***start date of the final absence***. So, if the first day of individual’s most recent absence is 1 May 2019, then we will look to see what sick pay has been given from the period from 2 May 2018.

**What constitutes Absence**

***12)How many hours do I need to work for it not to be counted as a day of sickness absence?***

This will depend on the number of contracted hours that you would usually work that day. If you work ***50% or more*** of your contracted hours on a specific day, but cannot work the full day due to illness, then this absence will ***not be counted*** for trigger point/Bradford Factor score.

For example: if you would usually work a six-hour day, then you would need to work three hours or more for the absence not to be counted; however, if you would usually work a seven-hour day, then you would need to work 3.5 hours or more for the absence not to be counted.

If you work less than 50% of your contracted hours on a specific day, but cannot work the full day due to illness, you will be considered absent from work due to sickness, and this absence will be counted for trigger point/Bradford score, and recorded on their individual absence log.

***13)I was only off work for half-a-day; do I need to have a return to work interview?***

A return to work interview should be held *every time* you have time off due to illness. In the case of half-days, if you are absent for 50% or more of your working day, then the normal return to work processes will be applied.