



Draft Sickness Absence Policy - UNISON Update Spring 2012

As you are probably aware UNISON, alongside the other trade unions, is currently in negotiation with the City of Edinburgh Council about a new sickness absence procedure – Managing Attendance at Work. UNISON believes in a fair scheme that doesn't penalise the genuinely ill and one that looks at the causes (e.g. stress) rather than just punishing the symptoms. Excellent workers could be sacked for minimal sickness. The main differences are:

- ❖ Lower trigger levels - for going into formal procedures
- ❖ Shorter timescales – formal 'stages' can be accelerated leading to a quicker dismissal
- ❖ Links to PRD – genuine illness could mean losing your pay increment.

WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS?

UNISON wants to keep members informed of the process so far...

1. For the first time ever we sent a copy of the draft procedure out to members and this provided an opportunity for feedback directly to the branch or through local stewards.
2. Stewards will have been consulting with members.
3. The draft Policy is on the Branch website. It is the best place to find out the latest developments.
www.unison-edinburgh.org.uk
4. AGM booklet was sent out to every member for an opportunity to feedback to the branch or to local stewards.

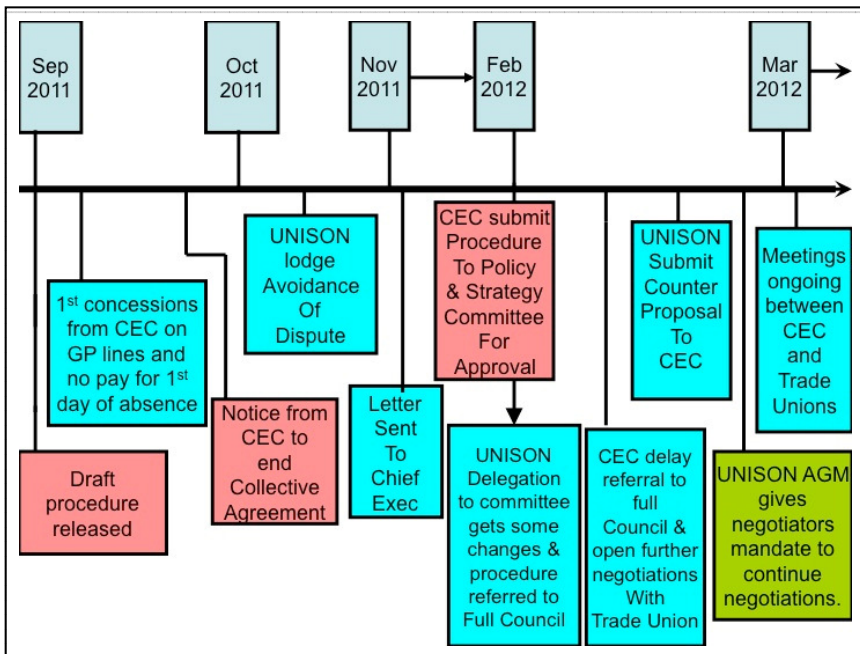
5. At the UNISON Branch AGM on 22 February, members had the opportunity to voice their concerns. There were two motions on the agenda regarding the new Sickness Absence Procedure.

6. We have instigated a campaign group to raise awareness amongst members and prepare for any campaigning on the issue if required.

7. We want you to help us – Join the Campaign, (please see full details on the back page).

SO WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR?

Below is a brief timeline showing the major events so far:



NEGOTIATION LATEST

- Having looked at the sickness absence procedures of other local authorities, the council has made it clear it is determined to change our 15 year old procedure.
- Following the debate at the AGM, our counter proposals have been modified and will be used to generate discussion around several key points of contention.
- One of the major areas of debate is around the trigger levels. These will continue to be a major source of discussion throughout the negotiation.
- There will also be a focus on the use of discretion, supportive policies, awareness raising/training and having a collective responsibility in relation to attendance at work.
- Following our counter proposals, the employer has now issued the TU side with a revised draft proposal. It has taken up some points, but there is still a lot of work to be done.



WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

- Speak to your local shop steward – if you don't have one then consider becoming one - or be a named contact for your workplace
- Read the proposed procedure on the Orb – be aware of what is being proposed!



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