

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

LONG TERM ABSENCE COVER OF SENIOR OFFICERS AND STAFF

Equality

In putting this procedure into practice, no aspect of this procedure will discriminate on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, religion, politics, marital status, disability and/or union membership or any other grounds likely to place anyone at a disadvantage, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is possible that Senior Officers of the Council may, at some point in their employment with Ledbury Town Council, be absent for an extended period due to illness or other reason. This Policy provides information on how best to manage their absence in respect of staffing and cover of their role.

2. SCOPE

This policy and procedure primarily relate to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Council, however, it does provide details on how the Council can manage long term absences of other staff roles within the council.

3. KEY PRINCIPLES

Where a member of staff is absent due to long term absence the Clerk will refer to this policy for details of how to cover the role in conjunction with the Resources Committee, if the absence relates to the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk will refer to this policy in consultation with the Resources Committee in the first instance.

Other policies that are relevant to this policy are training, maternity leave, parental leave, paternity leave, sickness absence and equal opportunities.

4. TYPES OF ABSENCES

This policy applies to:

- Long term sickness absence
- Interrupted absence due to critical care treatment (i.e. radiotherapy, dialysis etc.)
- Maternity/paternity leave

5. TYPES OF COVER

- Fixed term contract - a contractual agreement between an employee and an employer that lasts for a specified period
- Temporary contract (via agency) - an agreement to work for an employer for a specific time
- Intermittent support - fixed-term period, which either involves fulfilling a task or completing a specific number of days' work
- "Act up" – an employee will take on the role of the absent employee whilst still undertaking their role. They are required to undertake this role for six weeks before they will receive an uplift in their salary.
- Secondment - the temporary transfer of an employee to another position or employment

6. WHEN TO USE COVER AND WHAT TYPE OF COVER TO USE

When informed of an employee's long-term absence the Clerk (or Deputy Clerk) should refer to this policy in the first instance and should consider the following:

- What is the nature of the absence? (i.e. maternity, sickness, long-term treatment)
 - Refer to relevant policies for clarification on procedures and statutory requirements
- What is the likely duration of the absence?
 - If there are other policies that provide detail on the length of absence these should be considered to enable a timescale to be established.
 - If the absence is due to long-term sickness or treatment of a medical condition, arrangements should be made for the employee to be seen by Occupational Health and the Sickness Absence Policy should be referred to.
- Can the role be covered by other members of staff whilst still continuing to undertake their own role?
 - Consideration should be given as to whether it would be possible for other staff to cover the role without it affecting their workload
- Can the role be covered via a temporary contract?
 - Depending on the role of the absentee it may be possible to employ an agency worker to cover the role – this is more likely for roles such as administration
- Should the role be covered by a fixed term contract?
 - This is appropriate for maternity, paternity, or parental leave.
- Does the role require a specifically qualified replacement?
 - This is relevant for senior roles such as the Clerk and Deputy Clerk
 - This may be relevant to the role of Groundsman

- Can another member of staff be seconded to this role and their role backfilled for an agreed fixed term?
 - Does another employee have sufficient knowledge of the role to be seconded to this role?
- Will training be required for someone to fill this role?
 - Can another employee be trained to fill this role (it is often easier to ask a member of staff to “act up” and bring someone new in to fill their role than it is to fill a higher position)
- Have other staff received training to enable them to fulfil this role?
 - Does the Council’s training policy take into consideration the need to train staff in other roles within the organisation?
 - Do the Council have a “succession training” programme in place?
- Are there specific agencies that should be approached to fill this role?
 - If the absentee is the Clerk they should consider whether the Deputy Clerk is able to step into the role, with their role being backfilled.
 - Alternatively, Council should consider approaching SLCC to employ a Locum Clerk. This avenue should also be considered if the absentee is the Deputy Clerk.

7. TRAINING & SUCCESSION PROGRAMME

Ledbury Town Council will ensure that they have in place a programme to train staff in multiple roles to ensure continuity of business wherever possible.

Key roles that require additional staff training are:

Town Clerk – Deputy Clerk to cover (or Locum)
 Deputy Clerk – CDO to be considered to cover (or Locum)
 Accounts Clerk – Administrator to be trained
 Community Development Officer – Receptionist to be trained

8. ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Council recognises that the cost of long-term absence does not just relate to the financial cost of replacing staff, it can also have an impact on productivity and the health of those staff being asked to cover absentees. The Council therefore **MUST** ensure funds are available for additional staffing in case of long-term absence and that this policy is implemented without delay to minimise the affect on the day to day running of the Council and health and wellbeing of staff.

The Council’s insurance policy includes Key Person cover of £400 per week up to a maximum of £10,000 per period.

The Council will ensure that there is funding for temporary staff or uplift of an existing employee within their annual budget.

The Council will ensure that funding for staff training is included in its annual budget.

9. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF COVER

All Ledbury Town Council contracts are subject to the Terms and Conditions of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services – National Agreement on Pay & Conditions of Service (referred to as “The Green Book”).

Anyone being employed to cover an employee who is absent long-term will be provided with a temporary contract providing details of their pay and conditions. This will be issued by the Clerk, or the Chairman in their absence.

If an employee is being seconded or acting up it should be made clear to them that at the end of the agreed period they will have the right to return to their substantive post.

Continuous service will continue to accrue during this period.

9. ENSURING EQUALITY OF TREATMENT

This policy must be applied consistently to all irrespective of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, language, disability, religion, belief or non-belief, age, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, parental, marital or civil partnership status.

If you have any equality and diversity concerns in relation to the application of this policy & procedure please contact the Clerk who will, if necessary, ensure the policy/procedure is reviewed accordingly.

10. KEY CONTACTS

In the event of an employee being absent long-term the following contacts may be of assistance:

Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) - <https://www.slcc.co.uk/>
National Association of Local Councils - <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/>
Gwilym Rippon (GR Consultancy) - gwilymrippon@btinternet.com
Hoople Recruitment - <https://www.hoopleltd.co.uk/recruitment/>
Indeed - <https://uk.indeed.com/>

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Review Date:

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