

Over Haddon Parish Council – Long-Term Sickness Cover Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the procedure the Parish Council will follow to ensure that essential services continue during periods when an employee is absent due to long-term sickness. It provides a fair and consistent framework for covering duties while supporting the employee's recovery and return to work.

2. Definition of Long-Term Sickness

For the purposes of this policy, "long-term sickness" is defined as continuous absence of four weeks or more due to illness or injury, supported by medical certificates (Fit Notes).

3. Principles

- The Council will make reasonable efforts to maintain services and operations.
- Cover arrangements will be fair, proportionate, and cost-effective.
- The Council will comply with employment law, health and safety regulations, and its duty of care.
- The Council will support the employee's recovery and return to work, and keep them informed about cover arrangements.

4. Notification and Communication

- The Chair will maintain regular, sensitive contact with the absent employee, in line with the Sickness Absence Policy.
- The Council will be updated in confidential session on the likely duration of absence and any operational implications.

5. Assessing Cover Needs

Once long-term sickness is identified, the Council will assess:

- Which duties are essential for continuity of service.
- Which tasks can be temporarily suspended or reduced.
- Whether cover is best achieved by redistributing duties, temporary increase in hours for other staff (if any), engaging temporary cover, or seeking external support.

6. Approval of Cover Arrangements

- Any proposed cover arrangements will be considered and approved by the Council (or delegated Staffing Committee) to ensure transparency and cost control.
- Financial implications, including any costs or contractor fees, will be reviewed and approved before commitments are made.

7. Handover and Information

Where possible, the absent employee will assist with a handover, subject to their health. If

not possible, existing records and procedures will be used to support continuity.

8. Monitoring and Review

Cover arrangements will be reviewed regularly (usually monthly) and adjusted as needed. When the employee is ready to return, a return-to-work plan will be developed in line with the Sickness Absence Policy.

9. Confidentiality

Details of the employee's medical condition will remain confidential. Only information necessary for operational planning will be shared with councillors or cover staff.

Adoption and Review

This policy was adopted by Over Haddon Parish Council on 10 October 2025 and will be reviewed every two years.