



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Standby and On Call Policy

Document Control and Overview

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Document Approvals

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Document Distribution

Name	Job Title
All employees of Cherwell District Council.	

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1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all employees of Cherwell District Council. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, or interns.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 It is the Council's intention to ensure that all staff who are on a standby or on-call rota receive fair and equitable compensation for inconvenience caused. It also seeks to ensure that staff receive payment in line with the level of inconvenience.

3 Eligibility for payment

- 3.1 The only staff eligible to receive a standby or on-call payment are those dealing with emergencies relating to out-of-hours services that are either statutory Council requirements or are essential to the delivery of Council services; this policy excludes officers who have an all-inclusive payment clause in their terms and conditions of employment.
- 3.2 Only one member of staff per service will receive a standby or on-call payment at any given time: except in exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement.
- 3.3 For the purpose of this policy, out of hours does not include office opening hours i.e., 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday to Friday.
- 3.4 Standby and on call periods under this policy do not meet the legal definition of working time because the Council does not impose restrictions that significantly limit the employee's ability to manage their free time.
- 3.5 The Assistant Director / Head of Service will determine the rota to be used in providing an out of hours service, and which positions / staff should be included in the rota. As hours may vary per service area, an hourly rather than weekly rate will be used.
- 3.6 Managers must ensure that standby and on call arrangements are risk assessed for fatigue, in line with the Council's health and safety duties.
- 3.7 This policy needs to be used in conjunction with the Council's Flexi Scheme Policy.

4 Standby allowance

- 4.1 Standby arrangements will require the employee to remain contactable, outside of normal working hours, for a stated period (in accordance with an agreed rota). Eligibility for standby as opposed to on call requires an employee to be available to attend a site or incident if required and within a

reasonable time period and therefore the employee is required to remain fit to attend work.

- 4.2 The standby rate is reviewed annually in line with the cost-of-living award.
- 4.3 Should an employee be called to attend an incident rather than being able to deal with this over the telephone, overtime will be paid in accordance with the Council's current overtime rates.
- 4.4 Double time will be paid for any hours an employee is required to be on standby during bank holidays. There is no enhanced rate for weekends.
- 4.5 The standby rate is £3.15 per hour (as at 1 April 2026).

5 On-Call allowance

- 5.1 On-call arrangements will require the employee to remain contactable, outside of normal working hours, for a stated period (in accordance with an agreed rota). On call means that the Council does not require the employee to attend a site or incident as a result of any phone calls or contact. Queries can be dealt with via telephone or other remote communication. Even though the employee is not required to attend work whilst on-call they should remain in a fit state as if they were attending work.
- 5.2 The on-call rate is reviewed annually in-line with the cost-of-living award and recognises the difference in both the volume of queries but also the fact that the employee's home life balance is less disrupted as call outs are never required. The allowance covers all work undertaken in dealing with queries and overtime does not apply to anyone undertaking on call duties.
- 5.3 Double time will be paid for any hours an employee is required to be on-call during bank holidays. There is no enhanced rate for weekends.
- 5.4 The on-call rate is £2.05 per hour (as at 1 April 2026).

6 Status and review of rates

- 6.1 Should the needs of the service change then the Assistant Director / Head of Service has the right to review out of hours arrangements which may result in a change in the rota, and possibly the withdrawal of the out of hours service and the related entitlement to any related allowance. Standby and on call allowances attract normal deductions, including pensions where employees are in scheme membership.
- 6.2 Rates for on-call and standby will be reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with the pay award.