

Warwickshire County Council

Standby / Call out Framework – April 2013

Introduction

It is recognised that some services may need to provide cover at times when normal office services are not available. This may be to meet legal or statutory responsibilities. In order to do this, services may operate a standby / call out arrangement. The nature of this arrangement will be dependant upon the requirements of the service, but generally the following parameters will apply:

- The member of staff will be providing this service from their home address, not on-site or from premises provided by the Authority.
- The requirement to “standby” means that a member of staff is required to be available to take and deal with phone calls for a pre-designated period of time whilst at home.
- The requirement to be “called out” means that staff may be required, either directly as a result of a phone call whilst on standby or by being called out by a third party, to attend a work site, service users home or other site across the County to carry out work.

In most cases in order to be available to be called out employees will be on standby first. However there may be situations where an employee is not on formal standby, and is on a “list” of employees to be called out (for example to respond to security alarms as a key-holder). In these situations the employee may not formally be on standby (and receiving a payment) and can decline to attend the call-out if it is not convenient, in which case the call out would pass to the next person on the list.

Methodology

In order to ensure payment for working standby / call out is fair and consistent across the Authority, whilst recognising different levels of requirement to make decisions, frequency of time on standby and the extent to which a standby period results in a requirement to attend a call-out, a matrix is attached showing the three levels of standby allowance paid. These amounts are set dependant upon the criteria defined below. In order to ascertain which level of payment should be made the rules and definitions below will be applied to the job, to ensure a fair payment consistent with other similar roles in the organisation.

Standby Allowance

(Note; In accordance with the Councils agreed approach to the Phase 2 Pay and Conditions Review, levels of standby payment (or other equivalent arrangements) in place for existing employees (as at 1st August 2010) will be maintained until 31st March 2013

Frequency Definitions

The vertical axis of the matrix defines how often the standby period is undertaken. This is to recognise the extent to which being on standby is a disruption to an employee’s home life.

The frequency periods are defined as either whole or part weeks and the frequency of these, for example a week once a quarter or every two months, or single days within a week / fortnight. The part week definitions may be particularly useful when standby is only required over weekends for example.

Responsibility Definitions

The responsibility definitions aim to differentiate between different activities whilst on standby. This is to recognise that for some standby arrangements the person on standby is only “referring” calls forward to another service or agency, or responding as a signpost to people using the service, whilst other people are having to make service critical decisions which require more information gathering, co-ordination of responses and a more lengthy disruption to the employees private time.

For example if someone is required to attend on site to allow other services access (such as plumbing / flooding or broken glass emergencies) these would be categorised as a **low level decision** as actions required are likely to be covered by procedures

A systems failure for ICT staff which can be fixed remotely but which would need lengthy investigation and repair may be categorised as a **major decision**.

Someone who may frequently have to leave home to attend to a social work crisis such as a domestic incident and in so doing has to decide on issues such as the removal of a child into care would be a **critical decision**.

These examples are for guidance only and the table below should be used by managers to attempt to differentiate between the types of work done on standby and the appropriate rate of recompense.

Decision Making -7 Frequency & Decision making level Frequency ♦	Low level decision making / passing on request for service to appropriate provider	Major decision / co-ordination required but not required to attend on site OR Required to attend on site but not make major decisions	Critical decision making needed more often than not requiring attendance on site
Less than once every three months for a week OR Less than one evening / weekend per month	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2
Between three months and a month for a week at a time OR an evening / weekend between a month and a fortnight	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
A week at a time every month or more frequently OR an evening / weekend more than once a fortnight	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3

Payment Parameters

The payment parameters are designed to recognise a link between the levels of decisions being made whilst on standby and the rate of pay. In most cases it is likely that the types of decisions being made whilst on standby are at the same level as those which would be made during the day, and therefore there is a need to recompense for this at the appropriate rate.

It is important therefore that managers who have responsibility for operating standby rosters consider who are the right employees to be on the roster, and is the work undertaken and any decisions which may need to be made during an out of hours period being made at the right level.

The period of payment will be the number of hours from when “normal” office operations cease and the person on standby becomes responsible for taking calls and any subsequent decision making. This will be different for every service and every roster. An example is given below of a roster where an employee is on call for a week, and the service offered is 24 hours 7 days a week. The standard office contact hours for the service in this example are 8.30 am to 6.00 pm.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
	Standby	Standby	Standby	Standby	Standby	Standby	Standby
	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00
	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30			8.30
Work	Work	Work	Work	Work			Work
8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30	8.30			8.30
18.00	18.00	18.00	18.00	18.00			6.00
Standby	Standby	Standby	Standby	Standby			
18.00	18.00	18.00	18.00	18.00			
24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	
6 hours	14.5 hours	14.5 hours	14.5 hours	14.5 hours	24 hours	24 hours	8.5 hours

The total standby hours worked therefore are 120.5 in the standby week.

Not all standby rosters require a 24 hour service, and some may cease at midnight or 10pm for example. In these instances the parameter of the standard working week should still be applied, so if the service is offered until 9pm and call out is until 12.00pm, the standby period is only the intervening three hours.

Standby Payment Rates

Once the number of standby hours and the level at which payment is to be made by using the matrix are established, the standby payment is calculated using the below percentages applied to the correct number of hours at the level rate.

Level 1 standby = 10% of the 'hourly rate'.

Level 2 standby = 12.5% of the 'hourly rate'

Level 3 standby = 15% of the 'hourly rate'

Calculation of the 'hourly rate'

Where a group of employees are engaged on an all year round fixed pattern standby rota and are performing the same duties whilst on standby, the calculation of a monthly standby payment will be based on the average salary / hourly rate of the officers on the rota rather than the individual employee rate. This method of calculation will also be used for defining 'sessional' standby rates (using the same formula) where these are more appropriate.

The average salary / hourly rate will be determined as an average of the midpoint SCP of the substantive job evaluated grade of all officers engaged on each specific standby rota. This will generate a single payment rate which will then be applied to all staff performing common duties and responsibilities within that rota.

So as a worked example, if the average salary / hourly rate equated to spinal column point 17 and the standby rota covered a period of 120.5 hours the standby payment will be as follows;

Level 1 will be £ 8.63 x 10% = 0.86 pence x 120.5 = £ 103.63

Level 2 will be £ 8.63 x 12.5% = 1.07 pence x 120.5 = £ 129.99

Level 3 will be £ 8.63 x 15% = 1.29 pence x 120.5 = £ 155.99

Annual Review

In order to maintain consistency with the original method of calculation, the determined standby rates will be linked to any annual cost of living increases awarded at a national level and applied locally by the County Council.

In addition, either as a result of any substantial changes to the operation of the rota, or as a minimum, in April of each year, the Head of Service responsible for the service in which the rota operates will, in conjunction with the relevant HR Business Partner, be required to undertake a review of the operation of the Standby rota.

This review will need to;

- a) assess the standby periods and duties performed in order to confirm the payment is within the correct category, ensuring it reflects genuine service needs; the expected standby has been worked and the payments remain relevant.
- b) consider any / all changes made to the number and grade of employees deployed on the rota and their continued relevance to the tasks and duties required to be performed.

Should the above review lead to any changes to the calculation of the standby payment which indicates a variance of 10% or more, the payment shall be amended accordingly with effect of the first day of the month thereafter.

Arrangements When on Leave

If you are contracted to be on Standby you will continue to receive the agreed Standby payments in your monthly salary until advised otherwise. This payment will continue to be made whilst absent from the Standby duty due to sickness absence, maternity, paternity and adoption leave.

No Standby payment will be made whilst on a period of unpaid leave, including strike action. However, the payment will continue to be paid whilst on annual leave. Please note that the granting of annual leave whilst on the Standby rota will be subject to the normal operational needs and the appropriate manager's approval.

Bank Holidays

When on Standby on a Bank Holiday, the standard office contact hours for the service can be claimed. Reimbursement for these hours will be at plain time plus time off in lieu.

Claiming Time for Call Outs

(a) When on Standby

A Call out could entail physically going on site or the place of work. Alternatively, it could entail remaining at home and dealing with the work issue, for example, over the telephone or via email. On these occasions a Call Out payment equivalent to the overtime rate of 1.5 during the week and Saturdays, and 2 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

(b) Call-out not involving standby

There may be some staff who are required, on occasions, to attend site on a call-out basis where no standby payment is made. In these instances a member of staff may be one of a “pool” of people on call out roster (for example as a key-holder or to attend alarms, and the person can decline to attend if it is not convenient, the callout would then move to the next person on the list and so on.

In these instances a call-out payment will be made equivalent to the correct overtime rate (i.e. 1.5 during the week and on Saturday and 2 on Sunday and Bank Holiday, but with a minimum call out of two hours.