

# COLWICH PARISH COUNCIL



## PD119 CHILD CRITICAL ILLNESS LEAVE

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**CHILD CRITICAL ILLNESS LEAVE**

# Child Critical Illness Leave – PD119

## Revision history

**This document was originally written by:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Date</b>
Michael Lennon	Chief Officer	February 2026

**This document version was reviewed by:**

Employment Committee

**This document version was approved by:**

Full Council	March 2026
Chairman of Council	W Plant

**Document Review Schedule:**

Next Mandatory Review by: May 2027

### Revision History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Document ID</b>	<b>Reason for Change</b>	<b>Section(s) Changed</b>
1	03/2026	PD119-01	Initial Issue	NA

# CHILD CRITICAL ILLNESS LEAVE

## CONTENTS

1	BACKGROUND	4
2	PURPOSE	4
3	POLICY STATEMENT	4
4	DEFINITIONS OF “CRITICALLY ILL CHILD”	4
5	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	5
6	PROTECTION FROM UNFAVOURABLE TREATMENT	5
7	ABUSE OF THE POLICY	5
8	REVIEW AND MONITORING	5

## **CHILD CRITICAL ILLNESS LEAVE**

### **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** The “It’s never you” campaign was launched in 2021 by Ceri and Frances Menai-Davis after the loss of their 6-year-old son, Hugh, to a rare cancer after a 10-month fight.
- 1.2** During Hugh’s treatment Ceri and Frances met many parents who were pushed to breaking point, traumatised, exhausted and forced to leave work just to stay by their child’s side.
- 1.3** Unlike neonatal care, or other parental leave policies, there is no statutory right to leave or pay when a child is diagnosed. 70% of parents report depression or anxiety, while most families lose half their income.
- 1.4** The campaign aims to support parents of children with cancer offering mental, emotional and financial help. It is campaigning for the creation of Hugh’s Law to give parents protected leave and pay in times of crisis because “being present shouldn’t cost everything”.

### **2 PURPOSE**

- 2.1** The purpose of the Hugh’s Law campaign is to ensure that parents of critically ill children are not forced out of work and/or into debt when their child requires life-saving treatment.

### **3 POLICY STATEMENT**

- 3.1** Colwich Parish Council (the Council), as detailed in its Dignity and Respect policy (PD019), is committed to creating a working environment where all Councillors, officials, contractors and others who encounter it in the course of its work, are treated with civility, respect and courtesy.
- 3.2** The Council has adopted several policies to assist officials in time of need including those for Maternity (PD111); Paternity (PD112) and Adoption (PD113). The Council has also adopted a Parental Leave policy (PD114) to enshrine the right to take a period of planned time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child’s welfare. The Council has also adopted a Dependents policy (PD115) which permits time off for emergencies such as when a dependent falls ill, gives birth or dies.
- 3.3** These policies are different in nature to the purpose of this policy which is aimed at situations involving critically ill children.

### **4 DEFINITIONS OF “CRITICALLY ILL CHILD”**

- 4.1** This policy uses the same terminology as adopted in California’s “Family Care and Critical Illness” framework.
- 4.2** A critically ill child is one who has a “serious health condition” that involves either:
  - 4.2.1** Life-threatening illness or injury requiring inpatient care.

## CHILD CRITICAL ILLNESS LEAVE

- 4.2.2 Ongoing supervision by specialist clinicians.
- 4.2.3 A sudden onset of a condition requiring immediate medical intervention to prevent significant deterioration or death.
- 4.2.4 A condition that involves inpatient care, continuing treatment, or substantial risk of significant harm if care is interrupted.

### 5 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 To qualify for leave, with pay, the following should apply:
  - 5.1.1 The official is the legal parent, adoptive parent or primary guardian.
  - 5.1.2 The official must not be claiming any other leave entitlement at the same time e.g. Maternity; Paternity; Adoption.
  - 5.1.3 The child must be under 16 and receiving life-saving or urgent hospital treatment.
  - 5.1.4 If the child is in hospital, then the official must be required to be with them.
  - 5.1.5 Hospital admission must last at least 7 consecutive days.
  - 5.1.6 If the child is home based for treatment, then the official must be required to be with them.
  - 5.1.7 The official should provide a doctor's letter confirming their continued presence is clinically required for consent, safeguarding, mental-health stability of the child, or immediate medical decision-making.
  - 5.1.8 Officials are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks leave, paid at their normal rate, in a rolling 12-month period. The leave may be taken either consecutively or in separate blocks, depending on treatment cycles.

### 6 PROTECTION FROM UNFAVOURABLE TREATMENT

- 6.1 Officials will not be treated unfavourably because they have taken, or sought to take, reasonable time off for critical illness care for a child.

### 7 ABUSE OF THE POLICY

- 7.1 An official may be subject to disciplinary action if there are grounds to believe that they have abused the right to time off for critical illness care for a child, for example, by claiming time off for a fictitious emergency.

### 8 REVIEW AND MONITORING

- 8.1 The Council shall monitor the application of this policy and reserves the right to review it at any time, and at least annually.
- 8.2 Responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and development of this policy lies with the Council. Day to day operation is the responsibility of the Chief Officer who is to ensure that it is adhered to.

<b>SIGNED</b>	<i>W<sup>o</sup>Plant</i>
COUNCILLOR WENDY PLANT, PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN	