

IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

SPECIAL LEAVE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The IS recognises that, on occasion, employees may require special leave to undertake obligations outside of their working life. The use of annual leave or flexible leave may not be appropriate for these events. This policy documents those events which the IS considers suitable for the authorisation of Special Leave.

The IS recognises the requirement for fairness and consistency when considering requests for special leave. All applications for special leave will be considered on an individual basis, having due regard to the IS policy on Equalities.

In authorising special leave, managers will consider the following:

- The circumstances surrounding the request.
- The need to ensure that commitments are minimally disrupted.
- Consistency of application of this policy throughout the IS.

2. SCOPE

This policy is available to all employees of the IS regardless of length of service or contractual status. There are, however, eligibility criteria for carers leave and paternity leave.

This policy covers special leave in the following circumstances;

2.1 Personal and domestic leave for:

- Bereavement
- Time off for Dependents
- Carers Leave
- Leave for Medical Purposes

2.2 Special leave for public duties.

Reasonable time off, some paid and some unpaid is provided for carrying out public duties such as:

- court service

- trade union duties and activities
- military training and service

2.3 Other Special Leave

NB – our policies and leave entitlements on Maternity, Paternity, adoption and parental leave are all contained within our Maternity/Paternity/Shared Parental Leave Policy.

3. PERSONAL AND DOMESTIC CIRCUMSTANCES

3.1 Bereavement

Where a dependant or a family member dies, your Line Manager has discretion to grant paid leave for a maximum of five working days. In exercising discretion your line manager will take account of:

- the circumstances which justify leave to attend the funeral
- the requirement for an employee to make funeral arrangements
- the requirement for an employee to travel over long distances (for travel outside the UK the absence may be part paid and part unpaid)

Where there are special circumstances unpaid leave may be granted for longer periods than five working days and your line manager should judge these cases on their merits.

Where a close friend, work colleague or former colleague dies, your line manager has discretion to grant employee(s) paid leave to attend the funeral.

Requests for Bereavement Leave must be made in writing to your line manager.

4. TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS

A dependant is the partner, child, or parent of the employee or someone who lives with the employee as part of his / her family.

An employee is eligible to take time off during working hours to take necessary actions for the circumstances listed below:

- Illness of a dependant
- Unexpected disruption of arrangements for care of a dependant
- Attending Hospital / Doctor with a dependant
- Incidents involving children at school / nursery

In total, paid leave for time off for dependants will be granted to a maximum of 2 days in each leave year.

Requests for paid time off for dependants must be made in writing to your line manager. It is

recognised that such written requests may on occasion have to be made retrospectively.

5. CARERS LEAVE

In the most serious of circumstances there may be other occasions when carers leave for a dependant is needed. The circumstances may vary but could include:

- Time off while a dependant is in hospital or recovering from treatment /surgery
- Time off for a dependant who is terminally ill.
- Time off for respite care

The circumstances of each application will be considered by your line manager in the first instant.

Up to a maximum of 6 weeks carers leave may be granted in any one leave year in the most serious of circumstances. The maximum amount may be broken down into smaller blocks as long as the cumulative total for the leave year does not exceed six weeks.

6. LEAVE FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES

With regard to:

- Routine Medical Appointments
- GP Appointments
- Hospital Appointments

Employees will be expected to use flexi-time wherever possible. If in exceptional circumstances this is not possible paid leave will be granted subject to appointments being arranged as close as possible to the start or end of the working day.

7. PUBLIC DUTIES

7.1 Public duties and court service

Employees who hold specified public positions or who are called for court service will be granted 'reasonable' time off work to carry out their duties. These include:

- Justices of the Peace
- local authority members
- members of health bodies
- school and college governors
- members of police authorities

- Jury service.

8. TRADE UNIONS

Officials of recognised trade unions are granted a reasonable amount of paid time off to carry out their duties, while union members have rights to reasonable unpaid time off to participate in union activities. Union learning representatives are also entitled to reasonable paid time off.

In all cases, the employees line manager should be consulted with reasonable advance time to ensure business continuity for The Improvement Service and reasonable regard for colleagues.

For officials (for example, shop stewards) appropriate duties must be concerned with:

- negotiations with the employer
- other functions on behalf of employees – terms of employment, discipline etc
- relevant training in, for example, negotiating skills or legislation.

Examples of the sort of activities that might entitle union members to unpaid time off include:

- attending workplace meetings about the outcome of negotiations
- meeting full-time officials
- voting in union elections.

9. OTHER SPECIAL LEAVE

There may be occasions where special leave is appropriate but may not be covered by our special leave policy.

Where such instances arise, a written request should be submitted to the Chief Executive.

10. RECORDING AND MONITORING

It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to keep a record of special leave awarded and to provide Business Support with a summary record on a quarterly basis, for monitoring purposes. Business Support should email line managers on a quarterly basis requesting details of any special leave. This information is saved in the non-transferrable files.

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