

Annual Leave and Time Off Policy

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| Table of Contents |
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| | | |
|-------------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction..... | 4 |
| 2 | Principles | 4 |
| 3 | Definition of Annual Leave..... | 4 |
| 4 | Annual Leave Entitlement..... | 4 |
| 4.1 | New employees | 4 |
| 4.2 | Existing Employees | 5 |
| 4.3 | Leavers | 5 |
| 4.4 | Part time, job share and compressed hours employees | 5 |
| 5 | Booking Annual Leave | 6 |
| 6 | Annual Leave Record Keeping..... | 6 |
| 7 | Refusal of Annual Leave Requests | 6 |
| 8 | Carry Over Leave | 7 |
| 9 | Purchasing Additional Annual Leave..... | 7 |
| 10 | Borrowing Annual Leave | 7 |
| 11 | Other Types of Leave..... | 7 |
| 11.1 | Compassionate Leave..... | 7 |
| 11.2 | Sick Dependents Leave | 8 |
| 11.3 | Carers Leave..... | 8 |
| 11.4 | Disability Leave..... | 8 |
| 11.5 | Study Leave | 9 |
| 11.6 | Court appearances..... | 9 |
| 11.7 | Medical Appointments and Screening..... | 9 |
| 11.8 | Special Leave..... | 9 |
| 11.9 | Unpaid Special Leave..... | 10 |
| 12 | Other Considerations | 10 |
| 12.1 | Employees on long term sickness..... | 10 |
| 12.2 | Employees on parental leave | 10 |
| 12.3 | Menopause..... | 10 |
| 12.4 | Volunteering..... | 10 |
| 12.5 | Employees on secondment..... | 10 |
| 12.6 | Employees on Sabbatical | 10 |

| | | |
|--------------|---|----|
| 12.7 | Casual Workers and Term-time Contracts | 11 |
| 12.8 | External Disruptions | 11 |
| 12.9 | Industrial Action | 11 |
| 12.10 | Unauthorised Absence | 11 |
| 12.11 | Public Holidays | 11 |
| 13 | Public Duties | 11 |
| 13.1 | Jury Service | 11 |
| 13.2 | Reservists Duties | 12 |
| 13.3 | Other public duties | 12 |
| | Document Control | 13 |

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| Annual Leave and Time off Policy and Procedure |
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy aims to ensure employees are aware of their annual leave entitlement and the options available to them for taking time off in emergency situations. The Council actively encourages employees to take their annual leave to support their wellbeing and maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- 1.2 Employees are expected to take regular breaks from work and to avoid accumulating excessive leave by the end of the leave year. The annual leave year runs from 1st April to 31st March on a twelve (12) month period.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all Council employees, except teachers directly employed by the Council. Teachers and employees working in schools have their own local management and policies to follow.

2 Principles

- 2.1 The following principles set out the Council's commitment to managing annual leave and time off in a fair, consistent and transparent way that supports both employee wellbeing and effective service delivery:
 - Promote a healthy balance between work responsibilities and personal life.
 - Balance employee leave with the need to maintain service delivery and manage peak demand periods fairly.
 - Clearly set out entitlements, processes and approval requirements
 - To provide accessible guidance on all types of leave
 - Ensure accurate recording of leave

3 Definition of Annual Leave

- 3.1 Annual leave is paid time off work that an employee is entitled to take each year. It is a contractual and statutory benefit accrued over time and must be taken in accordance with this policy and operational requirements.

4 Annual Leave Entitlement

4.1 New employees

- 4.1.1 New employees who have previous local government service or an associated employer can count this service towards their annual leave entitlement except where there has been more than one (1) week break covering two consecutive Sundays.

4.1.2 If an employee starts partway through the leave year, their annual leave entitlement will be pro rata from their start date to 31 March, rounded to the nearest half day. The statutory and privilege days will also be pro rata.

4.2 Existing Employees

4.2.1 Employees who reach a length in service milestone will receive an increased annual leave entitlement from the start of the next leave year. For example, if an employee completes five (5) years of service in July, the additional leave will be applied from April of the following leave year.

4.3 Leavers

4.3.1 Employees leaving the Council will receive pro-rated annual leave based on their service during the leave year.

4.3.2 In the event an employee has exceeded their pro rata entitlement, the excess leave will be deducted from their final salary.

4.3.3 All outstanding pro rata annual leave should be taken before an employee's last day of employment. However, in exceptional circumstances, for example service needs, where this is not possible, payment in lieu may be made and must be signed off by the Head of Service.

4.4 Part time, job share and compressed hours employees

4.4.1 The annual leave entitlement including public holidays will be pro rata from the full time equivalent (FTE), rounded to the nearest half an hour for part time and job share employees.

4.4.2 For employees working compressed hours their annual leave entitlement, including public holidays, will be calculated in hours.

4.4.3 Public holiday entitlement for these employees must be considered when calculating leave as follows:

- If a bank or public holiday falls on a day a part-time, shift, or flexible/compressed employee would normally work, the usual working hours for that day should be recorded on the annual leave card and this will be deducted from the leave entitlement.
- If the bank or public holiday falls on a day they would not normally work, this does not need to be recorded on the annual leave card and no leave will be deducted.

4.5 Further information on annual leave entitlements for new employees, leavers, part-time employees, job share arrangements, compressed hours and working on a public holiday can be found [here](#).

5 Booking Annual Leave

- 5.1 Employees must request annual leave through their manager and receive approval before taking time off; failure to do so may mean the absence is treated as unauthorised and could lead to disciplinary action.
- 5.2 Requests should be made at least twice as far in advance of the leave requested. For example, an employee requesting five (5) days leave should provide 10 working days' notice. All requests should also take into account operational needs and provide reasonable notice based on service requirements at the time.
- 5.3 Managers should aim to respond to leave requests within five (5) working days or inform the employee of any delays.
- 5.4 In the event of an emergency or short-notice request, under five (5) days, employees must notify their manager and explain the urgency; approval is at the manager's discretion.
- 5.5 Managers can approve up to three (3) weeks' leave, however, requests exceeding this must be approved by the Head of Service.

6 Annual Leave Record Keeping

- 6.1 Managers are responsible for ensuring that accurate and up to date records of annual leave are maintained for all employees. This includes recording leave entitlement, leave taken, leave carried forward, purchased, borrowed and any payments and calculations relating to annual leave recorded by Human Resources.
- 6.2 Managers must:
 - Ensure all annual leave requests and approvals are properly recorded.
 - Regularly monitor leave balances to encourage employees to take their annual leave and to ensure accuracy.
 - Retain records in line with Council procedures for a minimum of six (6) years
 - Ensure records are complete and sufficient to demonstrate compliance with statutory annual leave and holiday pay requirements.
 - Store and handle records in accordance with data protection requirements.
- 6.3 Failure to maintain accurate records may result in the Council being unable to demonstrate compliance with legal obligations.

7 Refusal of Annual Leave Requests

- 7.1 Managers must consider all leave requests fairly and objectively, taking into account service requirements, staffing levels and existing approved leave within the team. Requests should only be refused where there is a clear and justifiable business reason. Requests can also be reasonably rejected if the notice as outlined in the policy has not been given.
- 7.2 Where a request is declined, managers must:

- Provide a clear explanation for the decision
- Offer alternative dates where possible
- Ensure decisions are fair and consistent across the team

8 Carry Over Leave

- 8.1 Both managers and employees are expected to ensure that annual leave is taken within the relevant leave year, as payment in lieu of untaken leave will not be made.
- 8.2 The carry over of annual leave will only be approved in exceptional circumstances, such as where leave could not be taken due to service or team demands, long term sickness or significant personal circumstances.
- 8.3 A manager may approve up to five (5) days carry over leave (pro-rata for part time employees) and any carry over exceeding this must be approved by the Head of Service.
- 8.4 All requests will be considered on a case by case basis taking into account individual circumstances and service needs and approval is not guaranteed.

9 Purchasing Additional Annual Leave

- 9.1 Employees may purchase up to twenty-six (26) days of additional annual leave (pro-rata part time employees), with payments deducted in instalments through payroll.
- 9.2 Further details are set out in the [Purchasing Additional Annual Leave Policy](#).

10 Borrowing Annual Leave

- 10.1 Employees who are unable to purchase additional annual leave may request to borrow leave from the following leave year, up to a maximum of five (5) days.
- 10.2 Borrowing is limited to two (2) consecutive years. After this, the employee will not be eligible to borrow leave again for a period of two (2) years.
- 10.3 All requests are subject to approval by the Head of Service or Director.

11 Other Types of Leave

11.1 Compassionate Leave

- 11.1.1 Employees are eligible to take up to five (5) paid days of emergency leave related to serious illness or death of a spouse, parent, children, close family member or a person the employee shares a home with. This leave can be taken in days or in hours.
- 11.1.2 An extension beyond five (5) days will be at the discretion of the Head of Service. The extension may be paid or unpaid depending on the circumstances and it will be assessed on a case by case basis. For example, where an employee has lost a very close relative or partner and is heavily involved in funeral arrangements.

11.1.2 Employees should discuss with their manager if they need to take time off during working hours to visit family members who are hospitalised. In these circumstances, the flexitime may apply and managers should refer to the [Flexible Working Policy](#).

11.1.3 An employee will need to submit a [HALO](#) request for approval.

11.2 Sick Dependents Leave

11.2.1 Employees who commenced employment before 1st April 1993 are entitled to up to ten (10) days of sick dependents leave in a rolling twelve (12) month period.

11.2.2 Employees must provide a statement confirming the sickness of the dependent to support the leave request. This requirement applies from the first day of absence.

11.2.3 An employee will need to submit a [HALO](#) request for approval.

11.3 Carers Leave

11.3.1 This is paid leave for employees who have caring responsibilities for someone who is unwell, has a disability or related to old age.

11.3.2 Eligible employees may take up to five (5) days paid carer's leave within a rolling period, which can be taken in full days or part days. This entitlement applies from the first day of employment.

11.3.3 Employees must discuss the request informally with their manager before taking carer's leave. Managers are responsible for ensuring no more than five (5) days' carer's leave is taken within a twelve (12) month rolling period prior to approving the leave.

11.3.4 An employee will need to submit a [HALO](#) request for approval.

11.4 Disability Leave

11.4.1 Employees with a disability or long-term conditions can take up to 5 days of leave within a twelve (12) month rolling period to help manage their condition. A disability under the Equality Act 2010 is a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' or 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

11.4.2 This can be applied when the employee is fit to work but may require additional leave for treatment and/or assessment, which can be taken in full days or hours.

11.4.3 The employee must inform their manager in advance before going on leave. However, in exceptional circumstances leave may be approved retrospectively.

11.4.4 An employee will need to submit a [HALO](#) request for approval.

11.5 Study Leave

11.5.2 Employees can request study leave through their managers to take time off for courses related to the role or career development.

11.5.3 Managers should contact the HR Learning and Development team through HALO for further advice on managing study leave.

11.5.4 An employee will need to submit a [HALO](#) request for approval.

11.6 Court appearances

11.6.2 Employees who are required to attend court or a tribunal as an ordinary witness may be granted paid special leave at the direction of the Head of Service.

11.6.3 Where attendance is required as part of an employee's role as a Special Constable, this must be covered by public duties leave. Further details can be found at section 13.3 of this policy.

11.8.3 Employees required to attend court as a witness for the Council are not required to use any form of leave to attend the hearing.

11.7 Medical Appointments and Screening

11.7.1 Employees with planned appointments that are not for any long-term conditions or disability are encouraged to arrange the appointments outside their working hours, wherever possible. In the event this is not possible, the employee may request to take annual leave or discuss flexitime such as time off in lieu (TOIL) with their manager.

11.7.2 Employees with a disability or long-term condition are entitled to paid time off to attend planned medical appointments, as well as those attending cancer screening appointments. A redacted copy of the appointment confirmation must be provided by the employee to the manager, which should be saved locally.

11.7.3 For antenatal and IVF appointments employees should refer to the [Parental Leave Policy](#) for further information.

11.7.4 An employee will need to submit a [HALO](#) request for approval.

11.8 Special Leave

11.8.1 This type of leave is approved in specific circumstances where an employee needs to take time off work for an emergency or significant life events. Employees must inform their manager as soon as possible when requesting such leave.

11.8.2 There is no automatic entitlement to special leave.

11.8.3 Special leave may be paid or unpaid at the discretion of the Head of Service.

11.8.4 A maximum of five (5) days paid special leave may be granted within a twelve (12) month period. This excludes sick dependant leave, which is up to ten (10) days.

11.8.5 An employee will need to submit a [HALO](#) request for approval.

11.9 Unpaid Special Leave

11.9.1 Employees may request unpaid special leave in exceptional circumstances where annual leave is not appropriate. Leave can be taken in full days or part days. All requests are subject to approval by the Head of Service.

11.9.2 An employee will need to submit a [HALO](#) request for approval.

12 Other Considerations

12.1 Employees on long term sickness

12.1.1 Employees who are currently on long-term sick leave have the opportunity to take their annual leave during sickness. Further information is in the [Sickness Absence Policy](#).

12.2 Employees on parental leave

12.2.1 Annual leave will continue to accrue at the normal rate during any period of parental leave, in line with statutory requirements.

12.2.2 Employees must take any accrued annual leave at their contractual hours before commencing a new working pattern, such as reduced hours on return from parental leave.

12.2.3 Further information on the management of annual leave during parental leave can be found in the [Parental Leave Policy](#).

12.3 Menopause

12.3.1 Employees who are currently going through menopause should refer to the [menopause in the workplace policy](#).

12.4 Volunteering

12.4.1 Requests for time off for volunteering must be via the manager. Further information is in the [Employee Supported Volunteering Policy](#)

12.5 Employees on secondment

12.5.1 During a secondment, annual leave will be managed by the host directorate/organisation in accordance with Haringey Council terms and the secondment agreement. Further information can be found in the [Acting Up, Honorary and Secondment Policy](#).

12.6 Employees on Sabbatical

12.6.1 Annual leave does not accrue during periods of sabbatical leave. Further information can be found in the [Sabbatical Policy](#).

12.7 Casual Workers and Term-time Contracts

12.7.1 For employees on a casual worker contract, annual leave is calculated every three (3) months based on the hours worked and is paid via their salary.

12.7.2 For term time only employees, annual leave is included within their monthly salary.

12.8 External Disruptions

12.8.1 In cases of adverse weather, transport strikes or any other exceptional circumstances affecting travel, employee are responsible for deciding whether it is safe and reasonable to travel to work.

12.8.2 The Council operates a hybrid working model, though this does not apply to all roles. Employees should work from home where possible. If an employee is required to be onsite but experiences unavoidable disruption to their hours, for example late arrival or leaving early due to transport issues, this will be treated as a full working day.

12.9 Industrial Action

12.9.1 Employees participating in industrial action (strike) will not be allowed to take annual leave or any other type of leave for this purpose. The absence from work will be recorded as unpaid.

12.9.2 Annual leave requests from employees not participating in industrial action will be considered in line with normal procedures, taking into account operational requirements.

12.9.3 Managers must keep a record of all employees who attend work, including those working from home or at alternative locations during the strike. They must also clearly communicate any changes for the day, such as adjustments to work locations or access arrangements.

12.10 Unauthorised Absence

12.10.1 Unauthorised absence arises where an employee is absent from work without approval or a reasonable explanation. In such cases, pay may be withheld and managed in line with the [Disciplinary Policy](#).

12.11 Public Holidays

12.11.1 Employees who are required to work on a public holiday will be entitled to take this leave on an alternative date, which must be approved by their manager.

13 Public Duties

13.1 Jury Service

- 13.1.1 Employees who are summoned for jury service must inform their manager and provide a copy of the letter as soon as practically possible. Managers are responsible for keeping copies of the summons and the certificate locally.
- 13.1.2 Employees are paid during Jury service so there is no requirement to submit a certificate of loss of earnings so no salary top up is required.
- 13.1.3 Managers should submit the information on [HALO](#) so that the absence can be logged on the employee record.

13.2 Reservists Duties

- 13.2.1 Employees who are registered reservists (including volunteer and part time reservists) are entitled to up to five (5) days of paid leave in a rolling twelve (12) month period to complete required training.
- 13.2.2 It is the responsibility of employees to inform their manager of any reservist duties and provide their Commanding Officer with details of their employment with the Council. If called up for service, they must notify their manager as soon as possible.
- 13.2.3 Managers are responsible for keeping a copy of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) letter locally.

13.3 Other public duties

- 13.3.1 Employees undertaking public duties may be granted paid time off. This is subject to deduction of any payments or earnings received from the relevant authority, which must be declared to the Council at the end of the duty period. Leave can be taken as full or half days (hourly). If the duties qualify as volunteering, employees may instead claim under the [Employee Supported Volunteering policy](#). Any additional leave beyond the allowance will be unpaid.
- 13.3.2 Those in the following roles, local authority members, health authority members, magistrates/justices of the peace, and special constables are entitled to up to 15 days' paid leave per year. School governors are entitled to up to five (5) days per year.
- 13.3.3 Employees must discuss requests for public duties leave with their manager in advance, providing an estimate of time required and supporting evidence (e.g. confirmation letter outlining the role and commitments). While the Council will aim to accommodate requests, leave may be declined where necessary.

14 Further References

Purchasing Additional Annual Leave Policy
Flexible Working Policy
Parental Leave Policy
Sickness Absence Policy
Menopause in the Workplace
Employee Supported Volunteering Policy
Acting Up, Honorarium and Secondment Policy

Sabbatical Policy
Disciplinary Policy

Document Control

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