

CHR013 Leave of Absence Policy

Leave of Absence Policy

Introduction

The organisation recognises that employees will need to take time off work for a number of reasons.

The organisation actively encourages openness and honesty relating to the reasons for employee requests for leave of absence, and takes a personal interest in employees lives and in supporting work life balance.

Please see our separate policies for the following types of leave:

Holidays	Sickness	Maternity leave
Paternity Leave	Adoption Leave	Parental Leave
Shared Parental Leave	Carers Leave	Dependents Leave

This document sets out the organisations policy on time off for other reasons not listed above, and how to make a request. Part 1 includes absences due to bereavement and serious family illness, while Part 2 covers other reasons for leave that we may support.

Part 1 – Bereavement and serious family illness

Compassionate leave

Compassionate leave is available to all staff regardless of length of service. It is intended to assist staff in the event of bereavement or serious illness of a close family relative.

A close relative will include spouse, partner, parents, grandparents, brother, sister or child. The organisation will also consider applications for leave in the case of individuals treated as close relatives but not included above.

The amount of leave needed will vary depending on the circumstances of each individual case. Individuals will be eligible, at the discretion of the Director, for up to 5 days paid compassionate leave in any year, a year being a rolling 12-month period. Any further leave required will be unpaid.

The Director will agree to the number of days paid, giving consideration to the circumstances of each application (eg travel to attend a funeral, caring for a terminally ill relative).

Parental Bereavement Leave

Statutory parental bereavement leave is available from your first day of employment if your child dies before the age of 18, or you experience a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy. You are eligible if you are a birth or adoptive parent. Others who may be eligible include partners, intended parents in surrogacy arrangements, guardians, foster parents and others who have had day-to-day responsibility for the child.

Up to two weeks' parental bereavement leave can be taken for each child who dies or is stillborn. Leave can be taken as one period of two weeks or as two separate one-week periods and can be taken at any time within 56 weeks of the death. This allows you some

flexibility to take the leave when you need it, rather than necessarily taking it immediately following your loss.

We appreciate that dealing with formal procedures may be extremely difficult at this time. If you wish to take parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days following the death, you do not need to give advance notice but should let the IMS Manager know by the time you would normally start work, or as soon as reasonably practicable. If you wish to take the leave later, you should normally give at least one week's notice. We will explain any further information we need from you and help you with the necessary arrangements.

Parental bereavement leave is a statutory right, but entitlement to **Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay** depends on meeting separate eligibility requirements, including length of service and minimum earnings. Your employment continues during parental bereavement leave and, except for pay, you will continue to benefit from your normal contractual terms and conditions.

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

If your child's mother or other primary carer dies, you may have a statutory right to Statutory Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave from your first day of employment. This right can apply following birth, adoption (including overseas adoption) or where a parental order is involved, provided you meet the eligibility requirements and will have main responsibility for caring for the child.

Eligible employees can take one continuous period of up to 52 weeks' leave. The amount of leave available will depend on when the bereavement occurs in relation to the child's birth, placement for adoption or entry into Great Britain for adoption. The leave is unpaid.

We appreciate that, particularly in the immediate aftermath of a bereavement, dealing with formal procedures may be extremely difficult. If you need to take this leave, please tell the IMS Manager as soon as you reasonably can. Where leave starts within eight weeks of the bereavement, you can initially notify us verbally. Different statutory notice requirements apply if leave starts later, or if you need to change your leave or return date, and we will explain these to you and help you with the necessary arrangements.

Your employment continues during bereaved partner's paternity leave and, except for pay, you will normally continue to benefit from your usual terms and conditions. Statutory annual leave will continue to accrue and there are statutory rights concerning your return to work. We will discuss your individual circumstances with you and do what we reasonably can to support you both during your leave and when you are ready to return to work.

Part 2 - Leave of absence for other reasons

Fertility treatment

It is the policy of the organisation to grant up to two days' leave in any one year for an employee to undergo fertility treatment. If the employee requires time off beyond the permitted number of days, the employee may be allowed to take time off out of his/her annual holiday entitlement for this purpose.

In order to qualify for time off under this policy, the employee must have a minimum of 6 months' continuous service.

Time off for fertility treatment will be unpaid.

Any employee who wishes to take advantage of this policy must support their request for time off with an appointment card. They should also:

- try to arrange appointments at times that will cause the minimum amount of inconvenience to the organisation;
- give as much notice as possible of the days on which time off is required.

Any information provided will be maintained in strict confidence.

Time off for public duties

Where an employee holds a public office or public position, it is the organisation's policy to grant a reasonable amount of time off work so that the employee can perform the duties associated with that position. The employee will not be required to make up for any such time off by working additional hours at another time.

Where, however, the amount of time off that the employee requires for public duties becomes excessive, or begins to cause operational difficulties for the organisation, the organisation has the right to refuse the employee further time off in the immediate future. Alternatively, the employee may be permitted to take time off out of his/her annual holiday entitlement for this purpose.

Employees should provide written notification of any dates on which they wish to take time off work for public duties, stating the expected length of their absence. This notification should be provided as far in advance as possible.

Time off for public duties will normally be unpaid. Agency workers do not qualify for time off for public duties.

Jury service

All employees have the right to time off to attend Jury Service if summoned.

Please inform us before accepting a summons for Jury Service. We may ask you to request to defer if your attendance would cause serious operational issues for the business. A jury summons can only be deferred once in a 12-month period.

Jury Service is treated as unpaid leave. The Courts can pay for loss of earnings, travel costs and a subsistence rate during jury service.

Other Reasons

The organisation recognises that there are other reasons why employees may need to take time off, for example for personal health & welfare purposes to attend appointments such as doctor, dentist, optician, medical screening or hospital. There may also be occasions such as exams, a graduation ceremony, urgent domestic business (eg burglary), leave for religious festivals, interviews, etc.

A reasonable amount of time off will be permitted in any one year (rolling 12-month period). This will usually be unpaid, however, up to 3 occasions may be authorised with pay, at the discretion of the Director. All other occasions will be unpaid.

Employees are asked to:

- try to arrange appointments at times that will cause the minimum amount of inconvenience to the organisation
- give as much notice as possible of the days on which time off is required.

Request Procedure

An employee who needs to take time off for any of the above reasons should complete the leave of absence request form and submit it to the IMS Manager, at the earliest opportunity.

Fair treatment

The organisation will treat all requests fairly in accordance with the policy. All employees will be entitled to a reasonable amount of time off and each request will be considered on a case by case basis, taking account of individual circumstances and absence history, and consideration of equalities issues. Use of discretion will not set future precedents.

If an employee believes that they are not being treated fairly in relation to their request for leave of absence they should raise the matter through the grievance procedure.

Monitoring

The amount of time off will be monitored by management, taking into consideration equality issues. Where appropriate, and at the discretion of the Director, review meetings will be held to discuss unusual patterns or high levels of absence. This would normally be for cases of more than 3 leave of absences within a 12 month rolling period. Sickness absence will also be reviewed alongside leave of absence. Special circumstances and equality issues will be taken into account.

The purpose of the review meetings will be supportive with the aim of identifying measures of support for the employee's personal circumstances. This could include discussions regarding temporary or permanent flexible working / variations to contract.

In rare and exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to initiate disciplinary or capability measures where absence is significant and alternative measures cannot be identified.

Review

This procedure will be periodically reviewed and made available to all staff (on the Works Canteen Noticeboard and via the QR code link displayed in the Canteen). Any amendment to it will be notified to employees by memo / noticeboards.

Leave of Absence Request Form



Name				Date	
Reason for request (please include as much detail as possible)					
From (Day / Time)		To (Day / Time)		Total days / Time	
Employee signature				Date	
Approval				Yes ☐	No ☐
Comments					
Manager's signature				Date	

Leave of Absence Request Form



Name				Date	
Reason for request (please include as much detail as possible)					
From (Day / Time)		To (Day / Time)		Total days / Time	
Employee signature				Date	
Approval				Yes ☐	No ☐
Comments					
Manager's signature				Date	