

Leave and Time Off Policy



Version Control

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Purpose	To provide a framework for various types of leave (paid and unpaid) that may be requested by employees.		

This policy links to:

- Corporate Plan
- Walsall Proud
- Annual leave and bank holiday entitlement guidance
- Annual Leave Purchase Scheme
- Code of Conduct
- Organisational Development Strategy
- Workforce Strategy
- Behaviour & Standards Framework
- Flexi time and TOIL Policy
- Family Friendly Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy

This list is not exhaustive.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Walsall Council is PROUD. We are proud of our past, our present and for our future. The council is committed to reducing inequalities and ensuring all potential is maximised and its employment policies, procedures and guidelines are designed to support this vision and deliver the council's priorities.
- 1.2 The council is committed to creating an environment that provides opportunities for all individuals and communities to fulfil their potential. This policy provides a framework in which employees will be supported to deliver the council's priorities in line with the council's expected behaviours and values; professionalism; leadership; accountability; transparency and ethical working.
- 1.3 The council's values and behaviours are at the core of everything the council deliver and through a culture of continuous improvement the council will increase performance, efficiency and champion the design of services to meet the needs of customers. As a digital by design council, employees will be empowered to deliver new ways of thinking and new ways of working, encouraging innovation and creativity in a learning environment. The council is committed to technological investment to deliver transformation in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its services, both internally and externally.
- 1.4 This policy framework promotes the council's strategic priority of internal focus ensuring all council services are customer focused effective, efficient and equitable, and helps embed the behaviours and values expected of all employees as part of the Behaviour and Standards Framework.
- 1.5 This policy details the various types of leave / time off situations (paid and unpaid) available within the council. It enables the council to ensure, where possible, that support is given to employees when balancing the demands of domestic and work responsibilities.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all council employees;
- 2.2 With the exception of;
 - 2.2.1 School-based employees/workers where the governing body has delegated authority and for whom separate arrangements apply.

3.0 Principles

- 3.1 This policy provides a framework for annual leave and time off for;
- Compassionate leave (bereavement leave, funeral leave, parental bereavement leave, serious illness support leave, other special leave, emergency time off for dependents and carer's leave)
 - Career breaks
 - Employee volunteering
 - Personal development
 - Competing in national/international sporting events
 - Public service leave
 - Medical appointments
- 3.2 It is good practice for employees to give as much notice as possible when requesting leave (a minimum of 2 weeks where possible), however, it is recognised that for some types of leave this is not always possible. Service areas may have local procedures which require a specified period of notice to be given due to service needs and / or cover arrangements.
- 3.3 All forms of leave must be discussed and agreed with the employee's line manager. The granting of a request is subject to employee's circumstances, the type of leave and the needs of the service, and should not be unreasonably refused.
- 3.4 Managers should not unduly delay in advising employees that their request has been granted or refused.
- 3.5 In terms of a request for unpaid leave, managers should consider the circumstances carefully and determine whether the request could be considered under an existing leave provision. There is no automatic right for employees to be granted unpaid leave and the needs of the service should be considered before making a decision.
- 3.6 Whenever unpaid leave is granted the manager must inform Payroll, using the unpaid leave form, so that appropriate payroll deductions can be made.
- 3.7 No pension contributions will be made to the Local Government Pension Scheme for any leave which is unpaid. Although, service will be regarded as continuous for employment purposes. On return to work the employee may elect to make additional pension contribution (APC) to cover the 'lost' pension for any authorised unpaid leave. Where an employee elects to pay an APC the cost to the employee will be higher if they make the election later than 30 days after returning to work. For further guidance contact Payroll.
- 3.8 This policy excludes the following, for which separate arrangements apply:
- flexi-time and time off in lieu (TOIL)
 - time off for trade union duties

- sickness absence
- time off for parents (maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave, ordinary parental leave, foster care leave), which are included in the family friendly policy.

3.9 Any abuse of this policy may result in action being taken under the disciplinary policy.

4.0 Accountabilities

4.1 Managers are accountable for the following;

- Applying this policy and procedure consistently, fairly and objectively in accordance with the council's aim and priorities and clearly demonstrate the council's management behaviours and values, seeking further advice and guidance from HR where necessary;
- Taking responsibility for monitoring and managing their employees' attendance and absence;
- To consider all requests for leave and ensure that requests are dealt with consistently, bearing in mind the individual circumstances of the request and in line with business needs;
- To inform the employee of the outcome of their request, and if a request cannot be agreed reasons must be given, and alternative arrangements considered where possible;
- To record leave requests on the employee's leave card and/or HR Information System where applicable.

4.2 Employees are accountable for the following;

- All employees should support the delivery of the council's aim and priorities, clearly demonstrating the council's behaviours and values;
- Actively engage in employment practices and processes in which they are involved and ensure they understand this procedure, seeking further advice and guidance from managers where necessary;
- To submit leave requests to their line manager, giving notice before the requested start of leave wherever possible;
- Comply with the requirements of this policy and procedure.

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Annual Leave

- 5.1.1 All employees have an entitlement to annual leave and bank holidays, which, if the employee is part time, are pro-rata of full time.
- 5.1.2 All requests for annual leave must be submitted to the employee's line manager, and holidays should not be booked until the request has been approved.
- 5.1.3 For employees on NJC terms annual leave entitlement varies according to grade and length of continuous service, as set out below*;

Grade	Annual Leave entitlement (Full Time Equivalent)	Annual leave entitlement after 5 years continuous local government service (Full Time Equivalent)
Grade 1-4	25 days	30 days
Grade 5-6	26 days	31 days
Grade 7-9	28 days	33 days
Grade 10+	29 days	34 days

Part time employees are entitled to pro-rata leave in proportion to the hours worked.

*(this includes an increase to annual leave entitlement from the 1 April 2023 as confirmed in the 2022 NJC pay award)

- 5.1.4 This procedure is underpinned by, and should be read in conjunction with, the annual leave and bank holiday entitlement guidance which offers further advice and support to employees and managers.
- 5.1.5 Employees may purchase up to an additional 20 working days leave within one leave year. More information is available in the annual leave purchase scheme guidance.

5.2 Bereavement Leave

- 5.2.1 The purpose of bereavement leave is to provide assistance to employees who require time off work often at very short notice to deal with bereavements.
- 5.2.2 Bereavement leave will be granted in respect of the following relationships; spouse, partner, parent, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparent and grandchild.
- 5.2.3 The employee will be entitled to paid leave up to a maximum of 4 days, including funeral leave (pro rata for part time employees).
- 5.2.4 Managers may also consider giving bereavement leave to other relationships where the employee can demonstrate a close relationship. For example, where

a step parent has raised the child from infancy and has had a nurturing relationship with the child.

- 5.2.5 In all circumstances where employees have suffered bereavement, including those that do not fit the criteria above, managers should deal sympathetically with any requests for annual, flexi, TOIL or unpaid leave. Managers should also monitor repeat requests and use discretion where appropriate.
- 5.2.6 Managers should make sure employees are aware of the council's confidential counselling service, who may provide bereavement counselling.

5.3 Parental bereavement leave

- 5.3.1 Parental bereavement leave will be granted to parents or primary carers following the death of a child under the age of 18 or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy. Primary carers include adopters, foster parents and guardians as well as close relatives or family friends who have taken responsibility for the child's care in the absence of parents.
- 5.3.2 Parents or primary carers will be entitled to a statutory two weeks' leave, and this will be paid at full pay for all employees (rather than the statutory rate). This is in addition to the bereavement leave in section 5.2.
- 5.3.3 Leave can either be taken in one block of two weeks or in two separate blocks of one week (but not as individual days), and can be taken within a 56 week period from the date of the child's death.
- 5.3.4 Leave can be taken without prior notice in the initial period (within 56 days of the child's death). Where leave is to be taken after the initial 8 week period, a minimum of one weeks' notice should be given, where possible. There is no requirement to provide the council with a copy of the death certificate. However, the employee is required to inform their line manager if exercising their statutory entitlement to take parental bereavement leave.
- 5.3.5 Employees must complete a parental bereavement leave and pay form for Payroll within 28 days of taking leave.

5.4 Funeral Leave

- 5.4.1 If an employee is not entitled to bereavement leave, they may be entitled to a maximum of one day's funeral leave with pay in order to attend the funeral of one of the following relations: mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step children, child of partner, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece and cousin.
- 5.4.2 In cases where the employee has to travel a distance to attend a funeral unpaid leave may be granted.

5.5 Serious illness support leave

5.5.1 Leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances in the event of serious illness where the employee is required to look after a close relative whose illness or injury is potentially life threatening. The employee will need to demonstrate that:

- they have ultimate responsibility for caring for the person
- they will have to administer medical care to the individual beyond the routine administration of non-prescription medication
- there is an emergency and their attendance at hospital is required, for example in the event of an accident.

5.5.2 In such circumstances, the employee may be granted paid time off up to a maximum of 3 days (pro rata for part time employees) in any leave year.

5.5.3 Serious illness support leave will not be granted for the comfort and support role associated with either visiting relatives in hospital or caring for ill children or other dependents, or for accompanying relatives to medical appointments.

5.6 Other special leave

5.6.1 Special leave may be granted to support employees in situations that are not deemed to meet the criteria for serious illness support leave. For example, where an employee requests time off to care for a child with chicken pox.

5.6.2 When granting special leave managers may approve up to a maximum of three days with pay in any leave year on the understanding that the employee will match any time given with their own time, i.e. annual leave, flexi-time, TOIL or unpaid leave. For example, the manager may grant two and a half days of special leave as long as the employee books two and half days of their own time.

5.7 Emergency time off for dependents

5.7.1 An employee is entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off to deal with an emergency (concerning a dependent) in order to take action which is necessary;

- to provide assistance on an occasion when a dependent falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependent who is ill or injured
- when a dependent dies
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependent
- to deal with an incident, which involves a child of the employee and which occurs unexpectedly in a period during which an educational establishment, which the child attends, is responsible for him or her.

- 5.7.2 A dependent for these purposes is a partner, a child, a parent or someone who lives with the employee as part of the family (i.e. not a lodger, boarder, tenant or employee). In the case of ill-health (including mental illness or injury) or where care arrangements break down, it may include someone who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance.
- 5.7.3 Emergency time off is unpaid and generally limited to periods not exceeding two days, to allow employees to deal with the immediate emergency and make necessary longer term arrangements.
- 5.7.4 The employee must notify their manager as soon as possible of their requirement for emergency time off, and give a full explanation of the emergency and its expected duration.
- 5.7.5 If an employee is aware in advance that they will need time off, this will not be regarded as an emergency and should be taken using annual leave, flexi time or TOIL booked in the normal way.

5.8 Carer's leave

Statutory Carer's Leave

- 5.8.1 An employee who is caring for a dependent with long term care needs is entitled to one week's unpaid leave (in a rolling 12 month period) in order to provide or arrange care.
- 5.8.2 A person is defined as a dependent if they:
- are a spouse, civil partner, child or parent of the employee, or;
 - live in the same household as the employee (other than as a boarder, lodger or tenant), or;
 - reasonably rely on the employee to provide or arrange their care.

Long term care need is defined as:

- an illness or injury that requires care for more than three months, or;
 - having a disability under the Equality Act 2020, or;
 - care connected with old age.
- 5.8.3 Requests for leave can be in half or full days, consecutive or non-consecutive days, up to the maximum of one week. A week's leave is determined by reference to the employee's normal working week (contracted hours).

- 5.8.4 The employee should complete the carer's leave application form and submit this to their manager, giving details of the duration of leave requested and confirmation that the employee's relationship to the dependent and their care need meets the defined criteria. The employee must give at least twice the amount of notice than the period of leave requested.
- 5.8.5 The manager can postpone a request for statutory carer's leave if service delivery would be unduly disrupted. However, the manager must explain why the postponement is necessary and, in consultation with the employee, reschedule the leave allowing them to take it within one month of the original request date.

Walsall Extended Carer's Leave

- 5.8.6 In addition to the statutory entitlement above, extended unpaid carer's leave may be granted by the council for up to an additional 51 weeks. The criteria of caring for a dependent with long term care need is the same as 5.8.2.
- 5.8.7 Requests for this leave will normally be for an extended period (weeks / months) to enable long term care of a dependent. Requests should be made using the carer's leave application form.
- 5.8.8 Whilst on extended carer's leave the employee must not undertake paid work, as the employee is still employed by the council. Carer's leave is not considered to be a break in service. There is the expectation that the employee will return to their job in the council at the end of the carer's leave.
- 5.8.9 Annual leave entitlement is pro-rated to the number of full months worked in the employees' leave year either side of the extended carer's leave. Annual leave is accrued during the extended unpaid leave but only at statutory leave entitlement rate (28 days per year inclusive of bank holidays). Leave must be taken before returning to work and cannot be carried forward. If the employee's leave entitlement on their return has reached more than five years' service, they will be entitled to additional annual leave on return.
- 5.8.10 It is good practice for the employee and manager to keep in touch during the period of extended carer's leave. This is particularly important if there are proposals regarding the service, such as a restructure, which might affect the employee's employment. In such circumstances, managers must make all reasonable attempts to contact the employee and keep them advised accordingly. Managers should make sure that employees on carer's leave are invited to meetings and sent appropriate documentation.
- 5.8.11 If the employee wishes to return to work earlier than the date agreed, they should advise their manager accordingly. However, where there are cover arrangements in place, the manager may require one month's notice of an early return. Otherwise, the employee may return early by agreement. Once the employee returns to work the manager must advise Payroll.

5.9 Career break

- 5.9.1 A career break is unpaid leave granted by the council to enable the employee to take time out from employment, for example to study, travel or undertake voluntary work. A career break may be agreed for a period between six to twelve calendar months. No extension past twelve months will be permitted. Following a return to work an employee is required to complete a further two years' service before a further application for a career break will be considered.
- 5.9.2 To apply for a career break the employee must have at least one year's continuous service with Walsall Council. Employees should complete the career break application form and submit this to their manager.
- 5.9.3 Whilst on a career break the employee must not undertake paid work, as the employee is still employed by the council. Any voluntary work must not be a conflict of interest with paid employment as a local government officer, in accordance with the code of conduct. The career break is not considered to be a break in service. There is the expectation that the employee will return to their job in the council at the end of the career break.
- 5.9.4 Annual leave entitlement is pro-rated to the number of full months worked in the employees' leave year either side of the career break. Annual leave is accrued during the unpaid leave but only at statutory leave entitlement rate (28 days per year inclusive of bank holidays). Leave must be taken before returning to work and cannot be carried forward. If the employee's leave entitlement on their return has reached more than five years' service, they will be entitled to additional annual leave on return.
- 5.9.5 It is good practice for the employee and manager to keep in touch during the career break. This is particularly important if there are proposals regarding the service, such as restructure, which might affect the employee's employment. In such circumstances, managers must make all reasonable attempts to contact the employee and keep them advised accordingly. Managers should make sure that employees on a career break are invited to meetings and sent appropriate documentation. However, there may be circumstances whereby the manager is unable to contact the employee, for example, if they are using the career break for travelling. Managers should obtain details of any forwarding addresses or details of nominated persons who can forward any relevant correspondence. Alternatively, managers should ask the employee for relevant email addresses or mobile numbers so emails or text messages can be sent.
- 5.9.6 If the employee wishes to return to work earlier than the date agreed, they should advise their manager accordingly. However, where there are cover arrangements in place, the manager may require one month's notice of an early return. Once the employee returns to work the manager must advise Payroll.
- 5.9.7 When the employee returns to work, they will return to their substantive post on the substantive spinal column point in place at the commencement of the career

break; there is no entitlement to incremental progression during the unpaid leave.

5.10 Employee volunteering leave

5.10.1 Volunteering supports the local community and can aid personal development, providing employees with transferable skills that they can bring back to the council. The council is keen to promote social value across the borough, therefore managers should support employees who wish to volunteer, wherever possible.

5.10.2 Employees may be granted 15 hours paid leave per year to volunteer to support Walsall based voluntary, community or charitable organisations. Employees must ensure that the organisation has valid public liability insurance before undertaking the voluntary activity.

5.10.3 Volunteers for Walsall Council's Independent Visitor Service will be granted paid time off to complete the initial one-off training required to become a volunteer in addition to the 15 hours paid leave mentioned above.

5.10.4 Employees can apply for time off to volunteer via an employee volunteering application form. Employees must provide their manager with the confirmation that they have been selected to volunteer and details of the event/activities the leave is being requested for.

5.10.5 The volunteering activity must not be a conflict of interest with paid employment as a local government officer, in accordance with the code of conduct.

5.10.6 Employees are not eligible to claim from the council expenses incurred in relation to the volunteering.

5.10.7 If a volunteer day falls on a bank holiday managers must allow for that day to be added back to the annual leave entitlement of the individual (pro rata for part time).

5.10.8 Employees should be aware of their total working hours and the need for rest breaks under the working time regulations.

5.11 Personal Development

Course attendance and development

5.11.1 Employees attending mandatory training courses as required by the council (for example, health and safety training) or attending courses as sponsored/supported by the council (for example, NVQ, apprenticeship or those identified via an APC) will be entitled to paid time off.

5.11.2 Employees attending courses which may support the employee's personal development but are not essential for the employee's job, may be granted paid time off at their manager's discretion.

5.11.3 Any other courses are in the employee's own time (annual leave, flexi or TOIL).

Interviews for alternative employment

5.11.4 The council allows reasonable paid time off for employees to attend interviews with other local authorities (or organisation as listed in the redundancy modification order). Employees are required to provide evidence of the interview to the manager for the time off to be granted. The manager has discretion as to the amount of paid time off. For example, an employee attending an interview in the morning will be expected to return to work in the afternoon and vice versa. If the employee is invited to attend a whole-day interview, dependent on the circumstances, the manager may grant half day paid time off. Similarly, if the employee is required to travel some distance to the interview, which may necessitate a full day off, or the interview is in the middle of the day, the manager may grant half day paid time off.

5.11.5 However, an employee who has been formally been given notice of redundancy may by law take reasonable time off with pay to look for another job, including attending job interviews outside of the redundancy modification order. The employee is still required to provide evidence of the interview. This also applies to employees who are seeking training opportunities.

Revision, study and exam leave

5.11.6 Employees are entitled to paid time off for exams/study, where the course is supported or sponsored by the council, as follows:

- one day revision leave per three hour exam, up to a maximum of three days
- half day revision leave per exam of less than three hours, up to a maximum of one and a half days
- paid time off to attend the exam; if the exam is in the morning, the employee will be expected to either attend work in the afternoon or book the time off and vice versa

5.11.7 For courses of study not supported or sponsored by the council, the employee will be required to use their own time.

5.11.8 For employees undertaking continuous assessment programmes, any time off for completion of a final project or dissertation should not exceed three days. Revision leave may be granted during the course for completing other assessed work, in lieu of exams, for up to three days. When attending a course at university/college, study time will only be given during term time.

5.11.9 Time off to retake exams or resubmit portfolios, projects, dissertations, etc is only available in exceptional circumstances.

Qualification courses

- 5.11.10 Where courses at colleges and universities are offered on a day release or part-time day/evening basis, employees should choose the second option and will not be allowed to claim hours for evening attendance.
- 5.11.11 Employees undertaking apprenticeships must spend a minimum of 20% of their employed time undertaking off the job training as set out within the Apprenticeship Funding rules. This is measured over the course of the apprenticeship and not academic year.

Internal courses / development activities

- 5.11.12 Employees can claim 7.24 hours (or a normal working day) for a full day course and 3.42 hours for a half day course. For briefings etc that are typically less than half a day, staff can claim the length of the session.
- 5.11.13 Reasonable time off should be given to support staff undertaking other types of development activities such as e-learning, mentoring, coaching, shadowing and action learning sets.

External short courses and conferences/seminars

- 5.11.14 Employees can claim 7.24 hours for a full day and 3.42 hours for half a day. Travelling time to and from the venue cannot be claimed if this would result in the employee exceeding 7.24 hours.

5.12 Competing in National/International Sporting Events

- 5.12.1 Support is given to employees competing in national/international sporting events where participation in that event brings honour or prestige to the Borough. Those employees who are not in receipt of payment other than expenses from a sporting body are eligible for 5 days paid leave of absence in any rolling 12 month period. In addition, for major events such as Olympic Games or European Championships, an extra 5 days paid leave of absence will be available. Where further absences are required, unpaid leave may be granted subject to the needs of the service.

5.13 Public service leave

Public duties

- 5.13.1 Public duties listed below are covered by legislation and are entitled to reasonable time off to go to meetings or to carry out their duties;
- a magistrate/justice of the peace (see separate entitlement below)
 - a local councillor
 - a school governor

- a member of any statutory tribunal (for example an employment tribunal)
- a member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment
- a member of a health authority
- a member of a school council or board in Scotland
- a member of the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- a member of the prison independent monitoring boards (in Scotland, prison visiting committees)
- a member of Scottish Water or a Water Customer Consultation Panel.

5.13.2 The council defines 'reasonable time off' as the equivalent of one day per month, or 12 days in any 12 month period, which may be taken in blocks if appropriate, subject to the needs of the service and manager approval.

5.13.3 A maximum of 12 days will be paid in a rolling 12 month period, any additional days are subject to the needs of the service and will be unpaid.

Magistrates/Justice of the Peace (JP)

5.13.4 The council is legally required to allow employee who are magistrates and JPs time off to complete their duties. The council will grant paid leave of one day per two weeks, up to a maximum of 26 days per year. Magistrate/JP duty rotas are usually finalised well in advance, therefore the employee should consult their manager with regards to time off giving reasonable notice.

Court witness

5.13.5 If an employee is called to act as a witness in court proceedings, they must be released to attend; not to do so would be illegal. However, checks should be made to determine exactly what the employee has been summonsed for. There may be circumstances, e.g., civil cases and domestic courts, where it is more appropriate for the employee to attend using their own time (i.e. annual leave, flexi or unpaid leave).

Jury service

5.13.6 An employee receiving a summons to serve on a jury must report the fact to their manager, who shall grant them leave of absence, unless the employee has secured an exemption. Absence for attendance due to jury service will be credited up to the employee's normal working hours for the day. Should the employee only be required to attend court for part of a day, it is expected that they attend work for remainder of their normal working hours, where practical.

5.13.7 Jury service is a public duty and is officially unpaid, however employees can claim a loss of earnings allowance from the court. The council will make up pay to full pay from the court allowance.

5.13.8 An employee serving as a juror must claim the allowance for loss of earnings to which they are entitled to by law. The certificate of loss of earnings (issued by the court) must be sent to Payroll for completion prior to commencement of jury service, where possible. Employees should submit the remittance advice slip (issued by the court detailing the allowance amount paid to the employee) to Payroll. The council will then deduct from the employee's full pay an amount equal to the allowance received.

Non-regular forces

5.13.9 Employees who are members of the non-regular forces who attend summer camp should be granted paid leave in addition to their normal annual leave entitlement. The summer camp is usually two weeks in duration.

5.13.10 Non-regular forces employees may be required to undertake training for up to 16 days per year, usually on Saturdays and Sundays. Training is usually arranged on days when the employee would not normally work. However, if this is not possible, it is recommended that paid time off be granted, provided the manager is satisfied that the employee made all reasonable attempts to arrange the training on days they would not normally work.

Reservists

5.13.11 The Volunteer Reserve Forces (reservists) may be mobilised by the Ministry of Defense (MoD) on a voluntary and/or compulsory basis, and may not be released by the MoD for several weeks or even months.

5.13.12 In instances of voluntary mobilisation, the council is required to give its consent before individuals can be released from their employment. An employee wishing to volunteer is required to request permission from their manager in writing, who will seek approval or rejection from the appropriate Director or Executive Director. Applications from employees wishing to volunteer will be considered individually.

5.13.13 Where the call-up is compulsory, the employee should notify their manager. The council cannot refuse permission, to do so would be illegal, however the law does provide some flexibility for employers. Within seven days of the reservist being served with a call-up notice the employer can apply to an adjudication officer for the notice to be deferred or revoked on the basis that the loss of the employee will cause serious harm to the organisation.

5.13.14 The MoD anticipates that individuals will be able to give at least four weeks' notice to their employer, although there may be circumstances where this might not be possible. All reservists who are mobilised on active service are paid directly by the MoD.

Election duties

5.13.15 Some employees act as poll clerks, presiding officers, counting clerks, team leaders, etc, during local, general and European elections and, if required, referenda. Employees who are selected for election duties are entitled to:

- paid time off for the day of the election;
- paid time off to attend training;
- paid time off for collecting ballot boxes prior to the election.

5.14 Medical appointments

Time off for medical appointments

5.14.1 Medical appointments for **doctors, dentists or opticians** etc, should be made outside of normal working hours where possible, or as close to the beginning or end of the working day as to minimise disruption. Any time off for such medical appointments in working hours will be granted where appropriate and subject to service delivery needs, however employees will need to use flexi time, TOIL, annual leave or request unpaid leave.

5.14.2 Where an employee is required to attend **a hospital medical appointment**, then they will be entitled to reasonable paid time off for the appointment. Documentation showing the date / time of the appointment should be submitted at the time the request is made. An employee may be credited up to their normal standard hours so that their accrued time for that day does not exceed their standard working hours.

5.14.3 Where a hospital appointment lasts all day (e.g. for treatment or admittance as a day patient etc) it will be recorded as a medical appointment and credited as a normal working day. This will not be counted as sickness absence, however, any recovery period as a result of hospital/medical treatment or subsequent days in hospital will be counted as sickness absence.

Occupational Health

5.14.4 Employees who have been referred internally for occupational health appointments will be allowed to attend in works time and will not be required to book additional leave.

IVF treatment

5.14.5 Consideration for requests for time off for IVF treatment will be treated as time allowed for a hospital medical appointment. This applies to both male and female employees.

Medical screening

5.14.6 Necessary paid time off will be granted for the purpose of cancer screening whether at the hospital or at the doctors.

Cosmetic surgery

5.14.7 Employees will need to take annual leave, flexi-time, TOIL or request unpaid leave for medical appointments due to cosmetic surgery, unless this is deemed necessary for medical reasons. In such cases the council will require written confirmation from a medically qualified consultant that this is the case, and any related absence will be managed in accordance with the sickness absence policy.