



## **SPECIAL LEAVE POLICY**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

This Policy is designed to explain the Company's position regarding leave from work, and to provide information on the differing types of leave that can be taken by employees, when this can be paid but also when employees may request additional time off, in special circumstances, which will be unpaid. The Policy aims to provide consistency of application, where practicable, of the provisions for such time off. Ultimately all leave granted is at management discretion and requires the appropriate approval.

The Policy is intended to be used as a general guide to the approach by the Company in relation to requests by employees for special leave. It is not, however, intended to be an authoritative interpretation of statutory rights and any questions in relation to this Policy should be raised with management.

### **Eligibility**

This Policy will apply to all directly employed staff.

### **Principles and Procedures**

Firstly, the Company reserves the right to refuse a request by an employee to take time off either on a paid or unpaid basis, except to the extent that such a refusal would be inconsistent with an employee's statutory rights.

In order to request leave, employees must first speak with their manager or supervisor or, where this is not possible, if the need to take leave is urgently required, to another designated manager. The request should then be submitted in writing. The manager will consider the request and obtain the necessary approval. If immediate compassionate leave is needed, this can be agreed verbally and then confirmed in writing. Where leave can be planned, it should be confirmed in advance in writing to the employee. In particular, where

leave is to be unpaid, it is important to ensure that the appropriate deductions can be made via Payroll.

It is the responsibility of the employee and his/her manager to agree, as far as possible, how the employee's work will be managed during the period of absence to ensure minimum disruption to the business.

### **Compassionate Leave**

The Company will usually agree to paid time off for the following reasons:-

Death of close relative\* up to 5 days paid leave

Serious illness of close relative\* up to 3 days paid leave

\*defined as spouse, common-law spouse, child, parent, brother, sister and in certain circumstances, grandparent.

Additional unpaid time may be taken following agreement with the Line Manager.

Paid compassionate leave will apply per event.

Please note that compassionate leave must be authorised by the employee's Line Manager.

In some cases, situations may warrant additional compassionate leave and it will be at the Manager's discretion to allow the employee to take leave without pay if the employee does not have any remaining annual leave entitlement. It is important that Managers should administer this policy fairly and consistently within their business area and more widely within the Company.

### **Short Duration Career Breaks**

A short duration career break is a facility the Company provides for an employee who has been employed for a minimum of two years. It is recognised that, in the context of an appropriate work/life balance, there may be occasions where staff may wish to take advantage of short duration career breaks, falling within or indeed outwith the list of acceptable reasons given below. Subject to meeting the demands of the business and recognising the full panoply of leave opportunities already provided by the company, consideration will be given to career breaks of up to four consecutive weeks on an unpaid leave basis. The Company can vary the eligibility rules at its discretion; the date of return will be identified at the outset (although if there is a wish

to return earlier than this date, notification should be provided in writing and as soon as possible); all non-salary/pay related benefits will remain in force for the career break period and there will be a guarantee of returning to the existing position.

The acceptable reasons for requesting a short duration Career Break are:

- To undertake further study;
- To spend time with family, including caring for a sick or terminally ill relative
- To undertake a period of travel;
- To compete in a sport at an internationally recognised level;
- To work abroad for a period in a role other than the employee's usual role e.g. for a charity.

### **Alternative Employment**

Employees taking a Career Break are required to notify the Company with full details of any alternative rewarded work, of any nature, which they contemplate undertaking during the Career Break, and to abide by the requirements of the Company's Confidentiality Agreement and the requirements of the Company, where it considers there is a conflict of interest. If the employee undertakes alternative paid work, without the Company's prior consent, this will be regarded as gross misconduct and the Company reserves the right to terminate their employment without notice.

### **Notice of Return to Work**

The return date will be agreed in writing prior to commencement of the Career Break.

### **Jury Service**

During employment with the Company, staff may be called to serve jury duty. Should work priorities mean that the timing of this request is impractical it may be possible to ask to be recalled at another more convenient time. However, if jury service cannot be re-arranged, the Company will allow the employee to serve when called.

Employees asked to attend for jury service will receive a form from the Court, which must be completed by management prior to jury service commencing. The Company does not provide full pay for staff undertaking jury service. However, to ensure no financial hardship is suffered by the employee, whilst on jury service the employee will be paid as normal by the Company. The employee will, however, be paid attendance allowance by the Court, and must notify the Company of the allowance paid to them, providing evidence, if requested, of the

payment made. The Company will subsequently deduct the amount of the allowance from the employee's salary, or, alternatively, request a cheque payment for the full amount of the allowance.

Should the trial period be extended beyond the normal two weeks requirement, the Company will need to review the situation.

As much advance notice as possible of anticipated absence, in addition to an indication of how long an employee may expect to be "absent", should be given.

### **Health and Domestic Affairs**

Whenever possible personal business meetings, doctor or dentist appointments should be arranged outside normal working hours.

For a short one or two-hour appointment, this can be approved by the line manager (with time being made up) and recorded as authorised absence. However, for hospital treatment/appointments which are to support the well being of the employee in an ongoing treatment/condition, which last for half a day or more (including travel to and from the place of treatment), this should be recorded as sick leave.

### **Territorial Army/Volunteer Reserve Duty**

The maximum allowance for attendance for Territorial Army Training and Volunteer Reserve Duty is ten working days per calendar year. Five days will be paid and five days will be unpaid. Adjustments will be made to the employee's salary accordingly, to reflect such loss of pay and to offset any allowance or similar payments made by the TA. Such leave will only be granted where the business needs are not compromised.

### **Competing in a Major Sporting Event**

In the event that an employee represents their country in a major sporting event they will be entitled to take a maximum of ten days' unpaid leave per year, in order to compete in the event(s). This policy is discretionary and subject to the approval of a senior manager.

### **Public Duties**

Staff who are members of public statutory bodies (e.g. Justice of the Peace, member of a Local Authority or Health Authority, or Statutory Tribunal) are entitled to reasonable unpaid time off to carry out their duties. This may be granted up to a maximum of ten days per year.

Authorisation for such time off should be sought from the employee's line manager.

### **Disciplinary Policy**

Employees should note that if they take leave from work without the appropriate authorisation from their line manager, then this could result in disciplinary action being taken against them. Employees must always ensure they agree leave with their manager as far in advance as possible, but where this is not possible, due to an emergency, they should contact their manager as quickly as possible in order to obtain approval to take such time off work.

### **Conclusions**

This Policy is designed to inform employees of the categories of paid and unpaid leave and the specific provisions under each which may be available to staff. The Company is committed to supporting staff in accordance with such provisions, balanced against the prevailing business needs.

### **Disclaimer**

This Policy does not form any part of an employee's contract of employment and the Company may amend, suspend or withdraw this Policy at any time.