

Staff Briefing

Guidance on Annual Leave provisions during Covid-19



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Introduction

We appreciate the efforts of our workforce during these unprecedented times. We would like to thank those of you who have volunteered to change roles, or taken on different duties, to help make sure we're able to continue to deliver essential services and support the most vulnerable across the city.

During times like this it's vitally important that we, as an employer, maintain our duty of care to you - our employees. Whilst we have essential services that we must continue to deliver - we cannot deliver them without an able and effective workforce.

This briefing outlines the approach we are taking in relation to annual leave provisions during Covid-19.

Annual leave provision during Covid-19

The government has recently made an amendment to the Working Time Regulations 1998 to include The Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

This change allows an employee to carry forward up to 20 days annual leave **where they have been unable to take annual leave due to the current situation and the demands of the role they undertake.**

Where this is the case, the council has agreed that staff who may not be able to take annual leave in 2020, due to the Coronavirus situation, can carry forward up to 20 days (or pro-rata equivalent), in to the next two year leave periods in both 2021 and 2022.

Many of you are not currently in roles where the demands of your job will prevent you from taking your planned annual leave. It is therefore anticipated that there will not be a need for many staff to arrange to carry forward their annual leave.

Staff health and wellbeing

As part of our duty of care and our health and safety commitment to you, it is important to understand that whether you are delivering essential services on the front line, or working from home, everyone needs to take a break from an extended delivery of service.

This is key to making sure you maintain good health and wellbeing. Taking annual leave from the workplace is the best way to do this in these unprecedented times. This is particularly important for any of you who have been experiencing stress, work related or otherwise, due to the current crisis. This also includes those who have been unable to

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undertake meaningful work and are at home – it is important for you to know that you will not be called upon by your manager to assist whilst taking your leave.

The proportionate use of annual leave across the calendar year can be a health and safety and wellbeing concern for you. This is even more relevant at the current time when our workforce are facing the current crisis. The fact that we cannot take a planned trip away does not mean that we cannot take our annual leave. We are therefore encouraging employees to adhere to our conditions of service, and use a proportionate amount of leave entitlement during this period.

While at this time no employee will be forced to take annual leave that was booked prior to the crisis, and managers can be flexible in responding to requests to change leave - it is important to recognise that any request to change annual leave will need to be considered within the operational needs of the Service and the conditions of service.

The following key principles outline the approach we are taking in relation to annual leave provisions during Covid-19.

Key Principles

- We will aim to honour **any leave which was approved** before Covid-19.
- **New leave requests** will be considered and approved by line managers, this is important to make sure that employees are not working for protracted periods without a break.
- We are **all responsible for managing our annual leave entitlement** therefore employees and managers should discuss and agree leave to be taken during this period as usual.
- We would **expect that employees will continue to take annual leave**. This provides employees the opportunity to take a break from work.
- As always we **will take a balanced and fair approach**. We will consider employees circumstances against service delivery requirements. If due to the current situation employees wish to cancel or amend annual leave this should be discussed and agreed with line management.
- Please be mindful that **when the normal delivery of our services resume**, we will need to manage annual leave requests in line with our operational requirements and in line with the conditions of service.
- Given the fluid circumstances we find ourselves in responding to the Covid-19 situation, we will **keep these arrangements under review**.