

# **A Guide to Flexible Working Arrangements at Wandsworth – Supporting Work Life Balance**

**A companion to the separate guide entitled  
“Provisions for Employees with Caring Responsibilities”**

Head of Corporate Services  
Town Hall Wandsworth High Street  
London SW18 2PU

May 2007



## Contents

	Page No.
Section	
Introduction	1
Flexible Working Hours	2
Annualised Hours	5
Term-Time Working	7
Career Breaks	9
Job Share and Part-Time Working	10
Home Working	13
Paid and Unpaid Special Leave	14
Application Form for Extended Leave	16

# Introduction

In 1997 I wrote an introduction to the first edition of this booklet. Since then there have been a number of important national changes taking place and inevitably they have had an impact on us, locally.

One of the most notable of these changes has been the widening in the scope of the appeal of flexibility. It is now seen, understandably, that employees may ask their employer for some form of flexible working for any of a variety of reasons. These range from caring responsibilities through to a desire to travel, to study or to adopt a different lifestyle.

This Council has, in fact, had a very long established "menu" of flexible working provisions. And these have recently been reviewed. One of the key triggers for this review was the introduction of new parental rights under the Employment Act 2002. Indeed, so important did we see these as being, that we have devoted a whole booklet to them. And some of the contents of the first edition of this booklet were transferred to that new publication. It is entitled: "Provisions for Employees with Caring Responsibilities" and is available on the Wandsworth intranet.

Looking back at what I wrote previously, I explained that one of the reasons for the introduction of the original booklet related to the Council's membership of Opportunity Now. You may know that this is a national organisation which draws its membership from employers of all sizes in every sector of the economy. Its mission is to increase the quality and quantity of women's participation in the workforce.

However, I also commented that whilst this mission would remain a key focus for the Council's interest in flexible working, it was our intention to ensure that men also had access to flexible working arrangements. Moreover, it was recognised that there was an increasing need to deliver Council services in flexible, non-traditional ways in order to meet service users needs.

Whilst these reasons remain totally valid, I want to reiterate the point: that there is, generally, an increasingly wide national debate about working flexibly - and for a whole range of reasons. In response I should say that this Council is firmly supportive of such moves provided that requests are always examined against the yardstick of service needs. This aspect is critical. As you will know, Wandsworth is judged to be a four star rated authority under the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) process. Councillors, managers and staff are all rightly proud of this external acknowledgement of our ability to Deliver Excellence. So naturally we must weigh requests very carefully indeed seeking to offer as much scope as we possibly can to help our colleagues meet their own needs and aspirations whilst ensuring that there is sufficient availability of staff at all required times to deliver services effectively and to foster and develop team work and its contribution to promoting our ethos for quality services.

I hope that you will find the contents of this booklet helpful and clear. However, if, at any time, you have any queries or comments, please contact your departmental personnel officer in the first instance. In addition I would also always be interested to receive comments from colleagues about our provisions.

**P.R. Ward**  
Head of Corporate Services

May 2007

# Flexible Working Hours

This guide is to help you understand and benefit from the scheme operated by the Council. It contains an explanation of the scheme and its rules. It applies to office-based staff – both full and part-time. It does not apply to school based staff nor to certain other staff where the operational nature of their work makes it inappropriate (e.g. small service or reception points).

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of a Flexible Working Hours (FWH) Scheme is to permit you, within certain limits, to fix your own working hours according to personal requirements (in consultation and agreement with your supervisor or manager). Ultimately, your supervisor or manager has the right reserved in this scheme to determine the extent to which you may vary your starting or finishing times or take "FWH leave", where this is necessary to maintain the Council's services and after due consideration being given to your circumstances.

Approval to participate in this scheme does not place any contractual obligation on the Council for your employment to be under this system. In addition, the Council in allowing this facility retains the right to withdraw the scheme with due notice.

## 2. Eligibility

Where, in principle, the nature of the job permits participation, permission must be obtained from the employing department who will consider applications according to service needs and after due consideration being given to your circumstances.

## 3. How the Scheme Works

Under the scheme, a working day will be composed of two types of time, referred to as "Core Time" and "Flexible Hours" (outside this core time). The working day begins at 08.00 and ends at 19.00; this is called the "Band Width" and it cannot be varied without the specific authority of the Director. You may work more or less than your standard working day† as long as you complete the required hours each accounting period (4 weeks) and the work of your section is covered. You can still arrange to work a "normal day" for example by working 09.00 to 17.00 (09.00 to 17.12 for those working a 36 hour week) with an hour for lunch.

## 4. Standard Core Time

"Core Time" is a period of time when you are required to be at work. For mornings this is between 10.00 and 12.00 and for afternoons between 14.00 and 16.00. If, for any reason you wish to be away from work for any part of these periods you must have the permission of your immediate supervisor. If, for any reason you are unable to be at work for any part of these periods you must explain the reason to your supervisor.

## 5. Start and Finish Times

You may arrive at work at any time between 08.00 and 10.00 and you may leave at any time between 16.00 and 19.00, subject to the agreement of your supervisor according to service needs. But it should be noted that core time for part-time staff will be set by managers in cases where their contractual working hours start or end within a standard core time period.

## 6. Signing In and Out

You must "sign in" when starting work and "sign out" when finishing work. In addition, you must maintain a FWH daily record sheet (see appendix) available for inspection by your supervisor at all times.

† A standard working day is your contractual weekly hours divided by 5.

**7. Lunch Breaks**

You may take a lunch break between 12.00 and 14.00 of any length between 45 minutes and the full 2 hours. You are required to take a minimum of 45 minutes unless your standard working day is 6 hours or less. The arrangement of lunch breaks should take into account any needs for service cover.

**8. Credit and Debit Balances**

You must adjust your working hours so that you work the time required under your contract of employment. The "accounting period" for FWH is 4 weeks and this means, for a 35 hour week, that you must work 140 hours in each 4 week period (144 hours for a 36 hour week).

You may build up a balance, either debit or credit, of up to one standard working day which will be carried forward automatically from one 4 week period into the next. Any excess of credit balance over one standard working day at the end of a 4 week period will be lost. Only in very exceptional circumstances may your Head of Service authorise a credit over one standard working day to be carried forward into the next accounting period. Any debit balance must be cleared by the end of the next settlement period. In unavoidable circumstances, e.g. sickness, it may be necessary for debits in excess of one standard working day to be brought forward. If so, they must be cleared within the next accounting period following your return to work by working the required hours within that accounting period. Excessive debits will not be credited by loss of pay or by reduction of annual leave entitlement unless there are exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances must be approved by a Chief Officer.

**9. FWH Leave**

The prior consent of your supervisor is required for FWH leave. You must complete the FWH leave application form, and give reasonable notice. You may not take more than two half days or one full day off in any one 4 week accounting period.

Staff taking a half day off in the morning should start work between 12.30 and 14.00. A half day taken off in the afternoon must not start before 12.30 or after 14.00.

**10. Overtime**

Overtime working must be authorised in advance and may only be worked before 09.00 and after 17.00 for those working a 35 hour working week and before 9.00 and after 17.12 for those working a 36 hour working week. Additional hours worked over and above contractual weekly hours by part-timers and not qualifying for payment at overtime rates, shall be recorded separately. Overtime must be noted on the separate column of the FWH additional hours. Overtime/additional hours cannot be credited as flexi-time. Also credit hours accumulated on the FWH system cannot be treated as overtime.

**11. Absences**

If you go home sick after working part of the day, sufficient time will be added to the record of time worked to give a total of the hours that you would have been due to work for that day.

Doctors' and hospital appointments for ante-natal care shall be credited up to the standard hours that the employee would have been due to work subject to an appointment card being produced and no deduction of hours will be made (refer to Chapter 1, paragraph 1.4 of the "Provisions for Employees with Caring Responsibilities").

- 12.** Whenever possible, routine medical and dental appointments must be arranged outside of core time. Where this does not occur the period of absence will be recorded as sickness unless the employee makes up the time lost. If recorded as sickness, it shall be credited to give a total of the hours that you would have been due to work. Employees who have a medical appointment arising from a disability should discuss with their manager whether any further adjustment may need consideration.

**13. Different Working Arrangements**

Special working arrangements may be approved by a Director and the Head of Corporate Services where a pattern of work has to be undertaken by staff which cannot comply reasonably with the requirements of the standard FWH scheme. This provision will be available to individuals affected by personal special circumstances as well as to groups of staff with special work requirements.

**14. Changes to Scheme**

Any proposed variations to the scheme shall be subject of Staff Side consultation.

**15. Employees' Disciplinary Code**

Under no circumstances may you "sign in" or "sign out" on behalf of another member of staff or falsify an entry on: (i) the FWH daily record sheet; and/or (ii) the signing in book. To do so would be a major offence under the Employees' Disciplinary Code. An excess of debit hours over the permitted limit or failure to "sign in" or "sign out" at the beginning or end of the working day may also result in disciplinary action.

**16. Withdrawal of the Scheme**

A Director or Chief Officer is authorised to withdraw the FWH facility from an individual member of staff or group of staff as a disciplinary measure or for service needs. In the case of a disciplinary reason, withdrawal of the facility shall be immediately after the conclusion of a disciplinary hearing where an offence has been established. The facility may also be withdrawn for a service reason after consultation with the staff affected, in which case 4 weeks notice shall be given in writing. The Council reserves the right to withdraw the FWH scheme in its entirety by giving 4 weeks written notice of its intention to the Staff Side.

# Annualised Hours

The Annualised Hours scheme is based on the principle that you must work a total number of hours over a whole year. Annualised Hours can apply to full or part-time employees and can offer some flexibility for you to be able to vary your hours of work throughout the year, for example by working different hours during term-time to those during school holidays. The scheme can also be used to assist managers in arranging your working hours where there are seasonal variations or other peaks and troughs of work during the course of the year. A key feature of this scheme is a specified guaranteed number of paid hours for the year.

Managers will be required to assess carefully posts which are suitable for annualised hours working arrangements.

## How this scheme works

Once a post has been identified as suitable for annualised hours, the following contractual considerations will need to be addressed:

1. Employment on annualised hours will be based on a requirement to work a total number of contracted hours in the year. In a case where the Council's standard working week for a full-time employee is 36 hours, then the total number of hours in a year for a full time member of staff would be  $36 \times 365/7$ , i.e. 1877 hours. To give an example, a job may require more hours per week to be worked from April to September because the days are longer than those from October to March. Consequently arrangements could be made to work for 40 hours per week for the 6 months summer period, balanced by 32 hours per week for the 6 months winter period. These hours could be subject to additional changes by prior agreement between the employee and the manager to meet work requirements or to assist the employee to meet personal commitments.
2. An agreed pattern of working over the year and payment for this must be settled with the line manager. Payment will usually be arranged in equal monthly instalments over the year. Departmental Personnel Officers will be able to assist with the calculations of hours to be worked and payments to be made. The actual hours of attendance must be recorded on a daily basis. Employees will provide their manager with regular updated statements of actual hours worked against annual hours on a weekly or monthly basis as agreed in order to monitor the position and to ensure that no large imbalances are occurring.
3. Time taken for breaks shall not be counted towards the total number of hours worked. The timing and length of such breaks should be arranged at the outset of the new arrangements bearing in mind that if a continuous period of more than six hours is worked then a break of at least 20 minutes must be taken.
4. Annual leave, bank and public holidays, extra statutory days and the Christmas concessionary day will be credited against the total number of hours to be worked, at the standard number of hours for the day (e.g. 7.20 for a 36 hour week). Absence due to sickness will be counted against the total number of hours for the year at the level of the number of hours which were due to have been worked on the day(s) in question. Time taken for approved training courses will also be credited.
5. Where an employee leaves the Council's employment and there is an imbalance between the numbers of hours worked and the number of annual hours due to be worked up to the last day of service, appropriate adjustments will be made to the final salary payment. Alternatively, paid time off may be agreed where there is a credit. In cases where there is a large difference in hours due to be worked between different periods of the year, e.g. between summer and winter, then consideration should be given to agreeing a longer notice period of, say 2 months in order to allow time for adjustments to working hours to be made to reduce any imbalances which may occur.

## **Withdrawal of the scheme**

A Director is authorised to withdraw this facility from an individual member of staff or group of staff. In the case of a disciplinary reason, withdrawal of the facility shall take immediate effect after the conclusion of a disciplinary hearing where an offence has been found. The facility may also be withdrawn for a service reason after consultation with the staff affected, in which case 4 weeks' notice shall normally be given in writing. The Council reserves the right to withdraw this scheme in its entirety.



# Term-Time working

This provision is available for employees both full-time and part-time. A term-time working arrangement generally does not require you to work during the school holidays.

Term-time working can be an important option to help you e.g. if you have school age children. It may also be valuable to your manager in, for example, school-related work where there are troughs during the holiday period. It overcomes the problem for you, as the parent, of securing suitable childcare in the school holidays.

If you wish to apply for term-time working your post needs to be identified and approved by management in discussion with departmental personnel officers as appropriate, with due consideration being given to the provision of cover by other staff during the school holidays.

## How this scheme works

1. Subject to the agreement of management, you will work for a fixed period, usually 38 weeks in each academic year, and timed to coincide with school terms, the dates to be agreed in advance. In some circumstances an employee may be required to work some additional hours at the beginning and/or end of terms.
2. The contract of employment continues throughout the year.
3. Salaries will be paid monthly, averaged over 12 months. The calculation of payment for "term-time-only" working reflects the number of working days involved as a percentage of the number of working days an "all-year" employee works. An example of the calculation is attached.
4. You will be entitled to the full range of conditions of service and benefits. However, annual leave and bank holidays are taken into account in calculation of annual pay and are not allocated as particular days but are deemed to be taken during school holidays.
5. Normal sickness procedures apply.

## Calculation of Payment for Term-Time only staff

Pay will be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{No. of working days term-time only (a)}}{\text{No. of working days all-year-round (b)}} \times \text{all year round salary}$$

### An Example

In this example, the person is graded SO1 with over 5 years' service and has an annual leave entitlement of 31 days (if employed on a full-time all-year round basis).

Say: the employee works for 38 weeks, or 190 working days. This is (a) in the above formula. To calculate the annual pay, this needs to be compared with the number of working days a full-time all-year person of the same grade would be contracted to work, (b) in the above formula.

If all year: The number of working days for a full-time member of staff will be:-

<b>260</b>	52 weeks at 5 days a week
less <b>31</b>	days annual leave (c)
less <b>11</b>	8 bank holidays, 2 extra-statutory days and 1 Christmas/concessionary day

**218** this is (b) in the formula above

Hence the percentage of a full-time salary to which this employee is entitled will be:-

$$\frac{190 \text{ (a)}}{218 \text{ (b)}} = 87.2\%$$

Annual leave and bank holidays are notionally allocated during school holidays with any remaining days technically being unpaid leave. However in practice there is no need to distinguish between different days during the holiday period.

**Individual calculations.** The percentage of a full time salary to which a term-time only employee is entitled will need to be calculated on an individual basis by inserting the planned number of days worked (a) and the appropriate annual leave (c) into the formula given above. Subsequent changes in days worked can be reflected in time-off-in-lieu/additional time worked or in additional payment at plain time.

Note: It is possible to maintain the all year salary by increasing the number of hours worked during term time subject to management approval.

## Career Breaks

It should be noted that a Career Break is not an extended period of unpaid leave from work. In the present climate of change in local government, including competitive review of its service, the Council is not able to guarantee a return as a right. It will, however, offer a right to an ex-member of staff to be considered as a normal internal candidate for any job vacancy for which they wish to apply. This right is subject to the following steps being included.

### How the Scheme Works

1. To be eligible the employee shall have 12 months' continuous service.
2. Prior to leaving the Council's service any member of staff seeking a Career Break must give two months' notification in writing of their intentions to their employing department.
3. The member of staff will then resign from the Council's service and in that letter of resignation say that 'the reason for their resignation is to take a career break as approved by the employing Director'. The department will subsequently confirm the position concerning the career break in a letter acknowledging the resignation.
4. The intention to exercise the option to return to work must be notified to the Council within three years of the date of resignation provided no permanent paid employment has intervened.
5. Once the employee has decided they want to return, they should write to the employing Director as soon as possible in order to elucidate their plans. For this, the maximum notice will be of help to departments: 4-6 months would be ideal. It should be borne in mind that, depending on circumstances, some time may elapse before the employee sees a suitable vacancy.
6. As soon as the employing department receives the letter they should arrange for a copy of the Job Vacancy List to be sent on a weekly basis.
7. The opportunity should also be provided for the person to meet with a former manager or colleague in order to be given an update on any service or job changes that may have occurred since they left (e.g. technology, Council policy or procedure etc.). More structured briefings or training sessions should also be considered if there has been very significant change in the period since they resigned.
8. Employees who wish to return will also be offered a meeting with a departmental personnel officer to discuss the scope for assistance with application forms, interviewing skills and updating other relevant work skills.
9. Once a job application has been submitted, the suitability of the candidate will be judged strictly in accordance with the person specification.
10. Where the applicant is unsuccessful feedback shall be offered.
11. Applicants will be offered the opportunity of making as many applications as they wish within the time period of 3 years, from the date of the original resignation, and will be interviewed if they meet the essential criteria in the person specification.

# Job Share and Part-time Working

## Introduction

Wandsworth actively encourages job share and part time working as a way of retaining employees and attracting candidates who do not wish to or are unable to work full-time. Job share/part-time working is likely to be particularly appropriate for employees who wish or need to work on a part-time basis due to family commitments.

Overall, job share and part-time working is a creative way of retaining and recruiting skilled staff and allows employees to lead a more flexible lifestyle. This can result in greater productivity and commitment to the job, lower absenteeism and reductions in staff turnover.

All requests for job sharing and part-time working, whether from current employees or external applicants will be given full and positive consideration, taking into account the needs of the service including effective continuous management and delivery of service.

## Definition

Job Share is usually an alternative to full-time work which involves sharing the duties and hours of an established full-time post between two or more people. The salary of the post and the accompanying principal conditions of service are divided on a pro-rata basis between the job sharers, including pay, sick pay, maternity leave and pension.

## Benefits

Most established full-time posts in the authority have job sharing potential. And in many cases it is also possible to consider employing staff on a part-time basis. Experience of job sharing has also shown that there is increased flexibility in carrying out duties while at the same time the job sharers may bring extra and different skills and knowledge which may complement and reinforce one another. Time away from work can be arranged to minimise the impact of the absence and continuity is generally increased when turnover is experienced since at least part of the job will continue to operate unaffected.

## Position where a Full-time Employee requests job share

As a full-time employee you may make a request to work on a part-time job-sharing basis. Requests will be considered on their merits and not be unreasonably refused. If this is acceptable to the manager arrangements will be made to advertise the remaining job share vacancy. Where it is not possible to arrange the work on a job share basis or, alternatively, where the request is agreed but it has not proved possible to fill the remaining job share vacancy, then the manager will explore alternative options with the departmental personnel officer and the employee. These could include part-time working or being placed on the Job Share Register held in Central Personnel. This contains a record of all those existing employees who had expressed a desire to Job-Share or move to part-time working.

## Job Sharing Arrangements

- (a) **Allocation of duties** – Your manager will need to decide how the job could be shared. For example, both job sharers may be jointly responsible for each activity or they may undertake particular tasks. In the latter case, the level of duties and responsibilities in respect of each portion of the 'post' should be broadly equivalent.
- (b) **Working Patterns** – Job sharers usually operate on the basis of one of the following time splits:
  - (i) split day – one job sharer works each morning every week while the other works each afternoon.
  - (ii) split week – one job sharer works the first part of the week while the other works the second part.
  - (iii) alternate weeks – one job sharer works one week while the other works the next week.
- (c) **Communication** - The need for regular communication between the sharers will also need to be considered. This is important to exchange information about plans, progress, problems, etc. Additionally a message book and the use of clear file notes updating the other

sharer may be required. It is essential that your manager is satisfied that suitable provisions can be made.

The degree of repetition in the job is a possible factor to consider when deciding on the type of split. The more repetitive the work, the more beneficial it may be to break it up. It may be more appropriate to arrange for split-day working but this has to be balanced against the resulting increase in handover periods and travelling time.

It is also important to consider that the flexibility of potential job sharers will vary. For example, people with extensive family responsibilities may find it difficult to work an alternate week arrangement.

### Position where one Job Sharer leaves

If you enter into a job-share and your partner leaves, and you do not want to take on the job on a full-time basis, the vacant part of the job will be advertised. If after two attempts no appointment has been made, your manager may consider the possibility of reorganising work within the section concerned e.g. creation of a part time post or your redeployment may need to be considered taking into account where possible your current working pattern (hours and days).

### Conditions of Service

The general principle is that job sharers are employed on the same conditions of service as other staff. They are paid pro-rata according to hours worked and receive increments where applicable on the same basis.

Your contract of employment will also state that: you are employed as a job-sharer and you will be required to work on specific days/hours. It should also state that "should the person you share this post with leave the council's service or move to another post internally, you may be required to change your hours of work and/or the way in which you work them, if after the Council has made a reasonable attempt no partner can be found".

Information about some of the key terms and conditions of employment is included below:-

- (a) **Statutory rights.** Job sharers shall have the same rights regarding unfair dismissals and redundancy as full-time staff. This depends on having been employed continuously for the relevant period.

- (b) **Pay.** Job sharers working regularly below full-time normal hours shall receive payment pro-rata to the hours they work. Enhanced overtime rates will not be payable until a full-timer's hours have been worked.
- (c) **Hours.** The hours worked by job sharers shall be an appropriate proportion of a full-timer's. Where flexible working hours are operated the manager should decide whether it will be appropriate for job sharers to take part.
- (d) **Annual Leave.** Job sharers shall be entitled to annual leave on a pro-rata basis.
- (e) **Public and extra-statutory holidays.** Job sharers shall be entitled to public and extra statutory holidays on a pro rata basis. This ensures that all job-sharers receive fair treatment and avoids any disproportionate benefit for those staff who, for example, work Monday to Wednesday rather than Wednesday to Friday since a disproportionate number of Bank Holidays fall on a Monday.
- (f) **Occupational Sick Pay.** Job sharers are automatically covered by the scheme and will be treated on the same basis as full-timers with sickness payments being pro-rata. Whilst there is no length of service requirement for entry into the scheme, the length of the period of payment depends on length of service.
- (g) **Occupational Maternity Pay/Leave.** Job sharers are entitled to occupational maternity pay and leave provisions.
- (h) **Pension.** Job sharers will automatically become members of the Council's Pension Scheme unless an election to opt out is completed. Details of the scheme and entitlements can be obtained from the Pensions Service.
- (i) **Temporary additional duties.** If two job sharers in a full-time post are asked to undertake between them the full duties and responsibilities of a higher graded post then the salary for that post should be divided between them. Where only some of the duties are undertaken by one or other job sharer the manager may consider paying an honorarium.

## **Training and Appraisal**

Training will be available on an individual basis and should be considered carefully when it benefits the service or the employee. Overtime or time off in lieu should be considered where extra hours are involved. Overtime will be paid as plain time until the individual works over the full-time hours of the post. Appraisal will be based on objectives and targets set jointly with the job sharers. However, each job sharer will be appraised as an individual as well as in relation to the effectiveness of the job share arrangement.

## **Further Information**

Managers requiring further information about job share arrangements or who are considering advertising a vacancy on a job share basis should contact their Departmental Personnel Section.

# Home Working

The Council views home working as quite distinct from other forms of flexible working. This is because of the very simple fact that - unlike all the other provisions - it involves remote working, away from the traditional workplace.

As such it relies on a number of features such as information and communications technology, a different approach to managing work, monitoring productivity and performance and maintaining on-going relationships with colleagues. Further, even if it is technically feasible to operate home working, it may be inappropriate for a range of jobs because it reduces the effectiveness and resilience of office-based services and also the availability of staff to contribute to team-working and the development of the Council's ethos of quality services.

It is for these reasons that the Council does not view home working as a favoured method of working and, therefore, adopts a prudent approach to the use of home working. The Council is especially mindful of the critical need to maintain and develop its reputation for delivery of excellent services to Wandsworth residents.

However, at the same time it also recognises that in some cases some degree of home working may be a viable flexible working option. With this in mind, Directors have the authority to consider and grant individual requests for home working having regard to certain ground rules.

The ground rules are intended to be flexible but the following points give a general indication of the approach. If you do wish to request home working, your request will be considered on an individual basis. But in all cases, the decision will need to take careful account of both the business case and personal circumstances involved.

- normally, home working will not be approved as a routine method of working. In other words it will usually be either for a 'one off' situation or with a specific time limit and not agreed on an open ended basis;
- typically the sorts of work for which approval will be given will involve complex tasks (possibly of a project nature) being done to a tight timetable;
- another, and similar, example might be the preparation of a large/urgent committee report;
- in response to difficulties in travelling to work e.g. due to bad weather or other disruption of public transport;
- to help cope with short term (possibly unforeseen) domestic emergencies e.g. sickness of a partner or child or for other urgent care reasons.



# Paid and Unpaid Special Leave – Guidelines

## Guidelines for extended periods of leave.

1. The Council operates a discretionary scheme allowing extended annual leave for a maximum period of three months. Some employees may also take lengthy periods of leave, either paid or unpaid.
2. **Special Unpaid Leave.** If you wish to request extended unpaid leave you may do so under the provisions of the Special Leave guidelines. Up to 2 months may be granted by Directors. Periods in excess of 2 calendar months will need to be the subject of Standing Order 83 approval, for which application should be made, in the first instance to the employing Director and, if supported, then passed to the Head of Corporate Services.
3. You are be required to give the periods of notice detailed at the top of the extended leave application form (attached). However this clause may be waived in exceptional circumstances such as bereavement or the need to make urgent unanticipated arrangements for the care of a relative.
4. If you are considering requesting unpaid leave you should contact the Pensions Section on telephone number 020 8871 6510 to check the pensions implications of taking unpaid leave should it be granted.
5. **Extended Paid Annual Leave** may be granted for a maximum period of three months. The principal conditions of this provision are that you may 'bank' annual leave in order to plan an extended paid absence from work. Applications will be considered by Directors on an individual basis; no less than 10 days paid annual leave shall be taken in each year, the remaining leave being 'banked'. Applications for extended annual leave should normally be submitted at least one year in advance of the date when the accumulated leave is supposed to be taken to enable management to consider the application and the arrangements that would be necessary to maintain service delivery. This provision is not intended to be a facility for the general carrying over of untaken annual leave. The attached application form should be used.
6. **Authorisation.** The authority to approve requests for paid/unpaid leave takes two forms -
  - (a) if delegated powers lie with the Director, recommendation should be made by at least third tier management level and approved by the Director.
  - (b) If the application requires Chairman's Authority, approval needs to be sought from the Director or Deputy/Assistant Director who is responsible for staffing matters and forwarded to the Head of Corporate Services for consideration and authority.
7. If you request extended annual leave a meeting will be arranged with you once the request has been approved. At this meeting an explanation will be given of the implications of not returning on the agreed date (see paras. 8 and 9 below). The meeting should be held with a Personnel Officer or, alternatively, a manager who is familiar with the implications. If you have any questions you should raise them at this meeting.
8. The conditions attached to the granting of extended leave will be carefully explained to you to ensure that you understand and accept them. **Specifically, it is essential that you are aware of the need to return on the agreed date and that should you fail to do so disciplinary action may be taken which could lead to your dismissal.** The exact length of the period of leave approved and the required date of return to work will be confirmed in writing.
9. If you are genuinely unable to return to work on the agreed date you will be expected to demonstrate that you made every possible effort to return on the agreed date and also to communicate with your manager or another more senior manager in the Council. You will be expected to supply documentary evidence (such as medical certificates or written confirmation by an appropriate organisation of any travel delays) about the reasons for your delayed return.



10. Extended leave will not be considered unless the form attached is completed.

Two further sets of existing Council provisions are reproduced below – to provide a comprehensive guide:-

11. **(A) Special Leave with Pay.** Subject to the exigencies of the service up to 3 days special leave with pay may be approved by employing directors in any leave year, regardless of the employee's outstanding annual leave entitlement, for the following reasons –

- (i) **Death of a close relative**, i.e. parent, husband, wife, child of employee – to arrange affairs/funeral of deceased.  
*Up to 2 days*
- (ii) **Funeral of relative**, i.e. parent, husband, wife, child, brother, sister, parent-in-law, son or daughter-in-law, or other person whom the employee maintained or with whom the employee shares the home at time of death or if employee is next of kin.  
*1 day*
- (iii) **Serious illness** of husband, wife, child, other dependant or another person with whom the employee maintained or shared a home – to arrange suitable care and attention of patient and other domestic arrangements for the family.  
*Up to 3 days*
- (iv) **Wedding** of parent, son or daughter – to attend the wedding. (**NOT** for employee's own wedding)  
*1 day*
- (v) **Household removal**  
*1 day*
- (vi) **Court cases/inquests**, attendance as witness. (**NOT** in court cases where employee is the 'offender').  
*As necessary*

Additionally there may be occasions when other urgent private reasons are considered to qualify for special leave. Subject to the maximum of 3 days per leave year mentioned above, this may be allowed at the discretion of the employing chief officer.

12. **(D)** As specified in National Agreements special leave with pay will also apply for the following reasons –

- (i) Service with territorial and auxiliary forces;
- (ii) Jury Service;
- (iii) Attendance at National or Provincial Whitley Council meetings; and
- (iv) Duties consequent upon approved membership of public bodies.

Application for Extended Leave: Paid and Unpaid

Important: This application needs to be seen by your Manager no later than six months prior to the proposed leave (unless you are requesting leave under the extended paid leave scheme which normally requires one year's notice).

Name:	Department:
Post:	Staff No:
Section:	Date of Joining W.B.C:
Annual Leave Entitlement (Days):	
I wish to take leave from:	to:
This would consist of,	(a): (b): (c):
(a) days of current annual leave	
(b) days of 'banked' annual leave which have been approved by my Director under the extended annual leave provisions	
(c) days of unpaid leave	
The total number of working days requested:	
I wish to be granted extended leave for the following purposes:	

I realise that if I am unable to return to work on the agreed date, I must inform my supervisor and submit supporting documents, e.g. a medical certificate.

I accept that the onus is on me to make adequate arrangements to ensure that messages are received by the Council as soon as possible if I am unable to return on the agreed date e.g. by telephone, fax, or e-mail, sending a telegram or relaying a message to a friend or relative who is able to contact the Council. I will send a recorded delivery letter if possible.

I realise that I am required to return to work on ..... at my usual starting time to undertake my normal duties. I am fully aware that if I fail to return to work on the above date at the usual time without justification and without informing the Council of the reasons of my failure to return, my contract with the Council may be terminated, in accordance with the provisions of the Employees' Disciplinary Code.

I have read and discussed the contents of this form and understand its implications.

Signature:	Date:
Authorised:	Date:
Designation:	