

Special (Other) Leave

How do I?

To request special leave in the IBC portal, click [here and search for 'My Leave Requests', and select the type of leave desired from the drop down menu.](#)

If your leave type does not appear in the drop down menu, your Manager will need to create a new absence quota for you. This can be done via 'My Team', selecting the relevant employee and selecting 'Manage Absence Quotas

Introduction

The Council recognises that staff need to balance work responsibilities with their domestic and family life and other public duties. There are also times in life when we face difficult circumstances or need urgent time off for emergencies.

Generally, through our approach to agile working we expect staff to be able to make their own arrangements to manage domestic problems. However, we recognise that there will be occasions that cannot be predicted, leaving individuals with difficulty in achieving the balance between home and work.

The purpose of this Policy is to give practical support to staff to meet these commitments by allowing appropriate time off, as far as operationally possible.

Additional support is also available via the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (username: Westminster, password: Council)

Discretionary paid special leave

Special Leave (also known as compassionate leave) is not an entitlement. However, managers have discretion to approve up to a maximum of 5 days **paid** Special Leave per leave year on the grounds outlined in [here](#).

Extensions to Paid Special Leave

Where more than 5 days paid Special Leave is requested in any one leave year, this will be considered in exceptional circumstances. Each case will be assessed on its merits and authorised by an ELT member.

Additional Paid Special Leave

In addition to paid leave, employees will be entitled to paid Special Leave for public duties they perform. The full list is [here](#).

Jury service, Court and Tribunal attendance

Employees who attend Court as a witness or those called for jury duty will be given leave to attend.

If you are on jury service you can claim loss of earnings from the court – this is reclaimed from the council. You will be compensated for any loss of earnings and adjustments made to salary.

Any other expenses incurred by the employee should be reimbursed by the court, not the council. You should receive an expenses claim form from the court where you can claim loss of earnings, subsistence allowance and travelling expenses.

The loss of earnings form should be submitted via an ESS enquiry for us (payroll support) to complete and return to the employee along with letters for the court and, once completed, the receipt from the court should be sent to us via ESS enquiry so we can make the deduction. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to email payrollsupport@hants.gov.uk or [submit an ESS enquiry](#).

Volunteer Duties

Employees are encouraged to undertake up to 16 hours paid volunteering time every year. Staff must volunteer in Westminster for an organisation or cause which contributes to creating a City for All.

All requests for volunteering time should be agreed with your line manager and must not conflict with other work-related responsibilities.

Your manager will record this outside of SAP.

Unpaid Special Leave

Statutory Unpaid Parental Leave (see [Parental Policy](#))

- Statutory unpaid parental leave will be granted for all employees who have been employed by WCC for more than a year
- A maximum of 4 weeks per annum
- A total of up to 18 weeks unpaid leave can be taken to care for a child under 18 years old that the employee has a legal responsibility to look after
- Parental leave can be taken immediately following maternity, paternity or adoption leave
- Parental leave must be taken in blocks of 1 week, (up to a maximum of 4 weeks a year). Parents of a child with disabilities can take leave in less than 1 week blocks, including if necessary single days
- Employees should give adequate notice (21 days) if they intend to take parental leave. For the parent of a child with disabilities, they must provide as much notice as reasonably possible

Dependants Leave

- Reasonable unpaid leave will be granted for employees to arrange care or provide emergency assistance for a dependant in times of unexpected crisis, such as illness, injury or breakdown of normal care arrangements.

Other Reasons

Where employees require leave for other reasons, they should consider using annual leave. Unpaid leave for up to one month can be granted at the managers' discretion. Where unpaid leave of more than one month is requested, the criteria set out in the [Career Break Policy](#) must be followed.

For the duration of unpaid Special Leave, the employee will remain employed by the council, with the right to maintain unbroken service and the right to return to the same post at the end of the break.

Manager's Responsibilities

When a request for special leave (paid or unpaid) is made, managers will assess on an individual basis:

- the circumstances of the request;
- any outstanding annual leave;
- previous requests for special leave;
- attendance and absence record;
- number of days requested;
- cover arrangements and costs, workloads, impact on others and on the service;
- potential benefits to the Council e.g. avoidance of burnout/ retention of employee, potential increase in skills and experience of employee.
- maintain regular contact with the employee during special leave where necessary;
- ensure that in the event of organisational change, the employees on special leave are included in the consultation process;
- ensure that approval on SAP is in line with the policy, including that it does not exceed the maximum allowances.

Employee's Responsibilities

You should ensure that you discuss your absence with your line manager as soon as possible. It must be agreed whether the time off is with pay (i.e. taken as annual leave or additional paid special leave, without pay, or if the time will be made up.)

Make sure you submit requests for paid or unpaid special leave via ESS under 'My Leave Requests' outlining the dates and reasons in line with this policy. You will be required to continue to make pension contributions for the first 30 days of any unpaid leave.

Summary of Special Leave Allowances

Type of leave	Paid or Unpaid Leave	*Number of days leave per leave year	Approval
Serious Illness or death of close member of family or partner	Paid	Up to 5 days	Manager
Funeral of close member of family or friend	Paid	Up to 1 day	Manager
Revision for a course sponsored by the council	Paid	Up to 5 days	Manager
Examinations	Paid	As required	Manager

Attendance at court as a witness	Paid	As required	Manager
Election work for Westminster City Council	Paid	As required	Manager
Medical Appointments	Paid	As required	Manager
Other Reasons	Unpaid	Up to one month	Manager

* This table is intended as a guide for managers, however additional paid or unpaid leave can be agreed on a case by case basis and if unsure managers should consult with their HR Advisor.

Additional Special Leave Entitlements

Type of leave	Paid or Unpaid	Maximum number of days leave per leave year	Approval
Jury Service*	Paid	As Required	Manager
Public Body Members meetings	Paid Unpaid	Up to 5 days Up to 7 days	Manager
Service in Non Regular Services	Paid Unpaid	10 days training leave Reasonable leave	Manager Manager
Justice of the Peace	Paid Unpaid	Up to 5 days Up to 8 days	Manager
Volunteer Duties	Paid	16 hours	Manager
Parental Leave	Unpaid	4 weeks	Manager
Dependants Leave	Unpaid	Reasonable leave	Manager

* Subject to you submitting an expenses claim form from the Court