

# Special leave guidance



## Summary

Westminster City Council is dedicated to supporting its employees when circumstances arise, whether borne out of an emergency or otherwise, that requires either time off or a greater level of flexibility in their place of work.

The Westminster Way is at the heart of our decisions and shapes our policies and procedures, especially in recognising that everyone is valued and that everyone is a leader. The following guidance reflects our commitment to our employees to value their needs and health and wellbeing.

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

Should the need arise for an employee to take time off work due to an emergency or because of a domestic crisis the line manager will have full discretion to determine, with the employee, how much paid leave is agreed given the circumstance. There are no longer specified reasons in which special leave can be granted.

As is the Westminster Way, we recognise everyone as a leader and want to empower line managers to apply discretion when dealing with matters concerning their own team members. Providing them with the autonomy to decide on a case by case basis the circumstances that may require emergency / special leave and jointly working towards a solution which supports both the individual and the service area.

To truly be an inclusive organisation we need to not only recognise that everyone's circumstances are different, that one size does not fit all, but also protect the needs of our staff by ensuring that decisions are made on a fair and equitable basis.

## Key Principles

- Time off based on 'special leave' is at the full discretion of the employee's line manager.
- It is expected that should an issue arise that requires an employee to take time off work that this is discussed openly and fully with the employee's line manager so that an appropriate amount of leave is agreed.
- Agile working should be considered where appropriate.
- Time off for specific public duties such as Jury Service, Justice of the Peace, public body meetings are detailed in the chart below.
- This does not affect any statutory right to Dependents Leave/ Carers Leave / Parental Leave and Parental Bereavement Leave.
- There is no requirement to record special leave on IBC.

## What employees can expect from the Council

- Support and understanding that everyone's circumstances are different.
- A fair and balanced approach by management in agreeing what leave will be taken.
- Regular contact from their line manager during their period of leave.
- Consideration of the employee's wellbeing.

## What the Council expects from employees

- That they will speak at the earliest opportunity to their line manager should a need arise for time off.
- That they keep in touch with the line manager, wherever possible, during any period of leave

## Other types of Leave

### 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 must claim loss of earnings from the court, the court will provide a form ahead of you attending court that needs to be sent to IBC so that it can be completed by their payroll team and returned to the employee.

Westminster will continue to pay you whilst you are on Jury service but once you have completed your service you will receive a payment from the court and you are required to provide details of the loss of earnings payment you received to IBC, this amount will then be deducted from your next salary payment.

Any other expenses incurred by the employee whilst on Jury service such as subsistence and travelling expenses will not be deducted from an employee's salary payment.

The loss of earnings form should be submitted via an ESS enquiry by the employee. Payroll then completes it and returns it to the employee along with letters for the court and, once completed, the receipt from the court should be sent again to payroll via ESS enquiry so that the correct amount can be reclaimed by the Council. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to email [payrollsupport@hants.gov.uk](mailto:payrollsupport@hants.gov.uk) or submit an ESS enquiry.

## Justice of the Peace

Time off should be granted for employees who are a magistrate and are required to be in court. It is expected that employees who are magistrates will be given their magistrate rota in advance allowing the time off to be organised.

Please see the guide below:

## Types of leave on IBC- are they paid?

On the IBC dropdown when you go to book leave, there are different options, some which attract pay, and some which don't. See the table below for guidance:

Leave Type	Quota/ Allowance?	Paid	Unpaid
Annual Leave Hours	x	x	
Unpaid Leave			x
Dependent's Leave			x
Compassionate/Emergency		x	
Jury & Witness Service		x ( <a href="#">see details</a> )	
Union Duties		x	
Exam Leave		x	
Medical Appointments		x	
Career Break			x
Banked Leave (all quotas end April 2023)	x	x	
Carers Leave		x	
Isolation Working		x	
Isolation Non-Working		x	

Types of other Leave	Paid or Unpaid Leave	Time Off	Authorised by
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Jury & Witness Services	Paid	As required	Manager
Public Body Members meetings i.e., WCC and non WCC school governor / local Councillor	Paid	Up to 5 days	Manager
	Unpaid	Up to 7 days	Manager
Service in Non-Regular Services (i.e., territorial army)	Paid	10 days training leave	Manager
	Unpaid	Reasonable leave	Manager
Justice of the Peace (Magistrate Duties)	Paid	Up to 5 days	Manager
	Unpaid	Up to 8 days	Manager

## Sources of information and support

- Biborough Health & Wellbeing Hub  
- <https://officesharedservice.sharepoint.com/sites/HealthandWellbeingHub>
- Coping with Bereavement and Grief  
- <https://officesharedservice.sharepoint.com/sites/HealthandWellbeingHub/SitePages/Bereavement%20Support.aspx>
- Employee Assistance Programme  
- <https://officesharedservice.sharepoint.com/sites/HealthandWellbeingHub/SitePages/Employee-assistance-programme.aspx>

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