

## Human Resources

# Special Leave Policy

Updated: May 2016

## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Part-time workers.....	1
Application and authorisation.....	1
Weekends, public and privilege holidays .....	2
Reckonable service .....	2
Pay.....	2

## Introduction

To help you balance working life with your interests and responsibilities outside of work, your Line Manager will consider requests for special leave, which may be paid or unpaid depending on the nature of the request. You do not have to have exhausted your annual leave allowance before applying for special leave and applications may be made retrospectively.

## Part-time workers

If you do not work five days a week, special leave will be considered only for days on which you were due to work. Where there are fixed allowances, special leave will be limited in proportion to the hours/days worked. However, where regular commitments fall on a working day (e.g. Magisterial, School Governor, Council duties etc.) and this cannot be avoided; additional special leave may be granted up to the limit for full-time staff.

## Application and authorisation

To request a period of special leave, whether paid or unpaid, enter the details directly into SOP using the “Leave of Absence” function in Employee Self Service. Your request will be

routed to your line manager for consideration. Your Line Manager (who will refer to your Head of Business Area if necessary) has the authority to approve paid special leave in the Manager Self Service (MSS) module in SOP within the specified limits.

If your special leave exceeds the specified limits, your Head of Business Area will make a decision.

## **Weekends, public and privilege holidays**

Saturdays not due to be worked, Sundays, public and privilege holidays during a period of special leave are not counted as special leave, nor do they count towards the limits on the number of days which may be taken (but you will not be paid for them). For example, if you take unpaid special leave on a Friday and the following Monday you will be regarded as having taken two days leave, but will not be paid for four days.

## **Reckonable service**

Paid special leave counts for pension, annual leave and performance pay awards.

Unpaid special leave does not count for pension purposes except when it is taken for training with the Reserve Forces, or where it forms part of unpaid statutory maternity leave or other statutory time off.

Annual leave does not accrue during periods of unpaid special leave (except during statutory maternity leave or other statutory time off) although annual leave will not be recalculated for the first ten working days absence on unpaid special leave. If you take more than ten working days as unpaid special leave in your annual leave year (whether they are consecutive or separate days) you should send your leave slip to SSCL for a recalculation of entitlement.

If you are on unpaid special leave you are eligible for performance pay awards as long as you have been paid by the Department for at least 13 weeks in a 12-month reporting year. Awards will be stored for up to six years and paid from the date of your return to duty.

## **Pay**

### **Pay allowances**

Allowances are not payable during unpaid leave.

### **Pay deductions**

Voluntary deductions will be suspended during unpaid leave, and you should make alternative arrangements to continue contributions if required. Compulsory deductions will

cease if your earnings fall below the protected earnings rate (specified by HMRC or, in the case of attachment of earnings orders, the court responsible). It is your responsibility to contact any parties to whom regular deductions are sent and to make alternative arrangements where necessary.

### **Advances of pay**

If you have an advance of salary, you must continue with your repayments during a period of unpaid leave. It is your responsibility to make suitable repayment arrangements with the responsible unit e.g. Relocation Expenses Section in respect of an advance of salary for housing, or SSCL in respect of an advance of salary for the purchase of a season ticket/bicycle.

### **Outstanding imprest (advance of expenses)**

If you have an outstanding imprest you should contact the responsible unit to arrange repayment before starting a period of unpaid leave.

### **Payment of fees**

You should neither claim nor accept any fees for any day on which you have received paid leave. You may, however, apply for unpaid special leave with the result that, in addition to retaining any travel or subsistence allowance received from the organisation, you may retain any compensation for loss of earnings or other sums payable.