

Time Off Guidance

Introduction

Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees to give their best.

We recognise the importance of helping our employees balance their work and home life. The Council offers flexible working arrangements that enable staff to balance their working life with other priorities, including parental and other caring responsibilities, life-long learning, charity work, leisure activities and other interests. In turn it recognises that staffing levels must at all times remain in line with the demands of our customers and operational requirements.

This guidance outlines the different types of leave available and the scope of each type of leave that are not covered by a relevant policy. Please read this policy in conjunction with other policies available on the portal covering time off.

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Emergency Leave

The Council recognises that employees will from time to time experience emergencies at home, such as a flood, fire or burglary. Emergency leave is intended to allow those who experience genuine domestic emergencies to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with the emergency. This does not apply to planned events such as domestic repairs, refurbishment, building or trades work, installation of appliances, home deliveries, etc.

In the event of a domestic emergency arising, the employee should notify their manager as soon as it is reasonably practicable (either face-to-face if the employee is at work or otherwise by telephone), explaining the nature of the emergency and how much time off work the employee thinks they will need.

Unpaid time off under emergency leave is intended to be for the employee to deal with domestic emergencies. Once the immediate emergency has been taken care of, the employee is expected to return to work or, if further time off is necessary, to arrange to take it as paid or unpaid leave, subject to the agreement of their line manager.

Study Leave

Where training is work related, each Line Manager is authorised to allow three days paid leave of absence in a leave year for the purpose of revision for examinations.

In addition, staff will be allowed paid leave of absence for the day(s) of the examination(s).

Time Off for Religious Observance

Employees whose religious duties are not covered by weekends and current statutory bank holidays may need time away from work. The Council where possible, will allow annual leave to be taken when an important religious occasion is to be celebrated provided that reasonable notice is given.

Where possible time off for prayer will be accommodated under the flexi-time scheme, this should be discussed and agreed as soon as reasonably practical.

Time Off for Elections

Subject to business need the Council employees will be given paid time off on the day of an election to assist partner councils to undertake election duties. Any other time outside of the day of the election (e.g. count postal votes, canvassing) must be taken as annual leave or flexi.

This must be agreed with your line manager in advance. Time taken will need to be recorded on Business World.

Volunteering

The Council will allow employees to take two days per annum additional paid leave for volunteering. This must be agreed with your line manager in advance. Time taken will need to be recorded on Business World.

Jury Service

Employees who are summoned for Jury Service will continue to receive their normal salary whilst they are sitting on a Jury Panel and away from the business.

Career Break/Sabbatical

It may be possible, subject to business needs and personal circumstances, for employees to be permitted to take a period of unpaid leave from the business. For more information please speak to your HR Business Partner and Line Manager.

Trade Union Duties & Activities

Employees who are representatives of GMB or Unison are entitled to time off for the purposes of carrying out certain functions including duties concerned with collective bargaining. They are also entitled to time off for duties relating to consultation on collective redundancies or a TUPE transfer.

The entitlement is to a reasonable amount of paid time off.

Extended Personal Leave

In special circumstances, the Council may grant up to six weeks' **unpaid** leave in addition to an employee's normal holiday entitlement to enable the employee to attend to pressing personal needs.

The policy is operated at the entire discretion of the Council and may be modified or withdrawn at any time.

The policy applies only to staff with at least 12 months' continuous service. The Council reserves the right to refuse an application for extended personal leave.

All employees taking extended leave for personal reasons will be given a letter and asked to sign it confirming their agreement to return no later than a specified date. An employee may return at an earlier date than that specified in the letter by giving the Council a minimum of 1 weeks' notice.

The Council reserves the right to discipline (including dismiss) anyone who fails to return by the agreed date without an acceptable reason.

Anyone who abuses this scheme will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Fertility Treatment

Unpaid special leave for up to a maximum of three days per leave year, in any twelve-month period, will be permitted depending on the individual circumstances. This may be for NHS or private treatment and an appointment card must be produced.

Voluntary Surgery

The Council would encourage employees to be open about voluntary surgery and would treat the information in the strictest confidence. Time off for any voluntary surgery, e.g. cosmetic, should be taken from the employee's leave entitlement, made up with the agreement of the line manager or via the flexi time scheme. However paid time off may be granted in certain circumstances e.g. reconstructive surgery. This should be agreed in advance of any treatment that will require time off.

The Recording of Time Off

Any time off must be correctly recorded and approved within Business World. Any queries relating to this, please speak to your manager or HR Support who will be pleased to help.

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