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**HUMAN
RESOURCES**

SPECIAL LEAVE



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Royal Greenwich operates a Special Leave Scheme which allows employees time off work for various reasons, subject to certain conditions as outlined below. Employees should use the [Application for Special Leave Form](#) for such requests. The granting of all special leave is in addition to normal annual leave in any period of 12 months.

2. Weather and travel difficulties

- 2.1 As a general rule where working from home is not an option, employees are required to take leave. The exceptions are (a) disabled employees (up to 2 days special leave) or employees unable to attend due to school closures affecting their immediate dependants (up to 2 days) that require supervision.
- 2.2 All other employees and those who have exhausted the two days mentioned at (a) above may seek approval to take annual leave or (where appropriate) flexi-leave for any such absence. Where leave is insufficient or exhausted employees may request permission from their employing department to bring forward annual leave entitlement or request approval for unpaid leave.
- 2.3 Employees who have been able to attend work but have had difficult journeys should seek approval of late arrivals/early departures without loss of normal pay.
- 2.4 The arrangements set out above will only apply where Chief Officers (or those who have this authority delegated to them by Chief Officers) are satisfied that the absence from work is directly related to adverse weather conditions or transport strike and as a consequence employees suffer travelling difficulties. Normal arrangements for reporting absences will apply in all cases.

3. Public Service Leave

- 3.1 Royal Greenwich has authorised the grant of special leave with pay as follows: -
- (a) Up to 18 days' leave per year for an employee who serves as a Justice of the Peace.
 - (b) Up to 12 days' leave per year for an employee who is appointed to serve on a specified public body or non-political organisation (see 3.4 below)
 - (c) Up to 12 days' leave per year to Special Constables.

Any such leave may be taken in days, half days or even hours, as required.

3.2 Any employee requesting release from work for such activities must submit their request to their manager, in due time, in advance providing reasonable notice.

3.3 The granting of paid leave is subject to the exigencies of the service. If an employee is denied paid leave to serve on a public body because the employee has exhausted the maximum amount of paid leave entitlement, they still have the statutory right to request time off for public duties and it must

In such circumstances unpaid leave may be granted on the basis of the following statutory guidance:

‘The amount of time off and the occasions on which it is to be permitted, together with any conditions subject to which the time off may be taken, are those that are reasonable in all the circumstances having regard, in particular, to:

- the amount of time off needed to perform the particular duties;
- the amount of time off already taken;
- the effects of the absence on the employer’

3.4 The statutory right to unpaid time off applies to the following public duties:

- magistrate (or justice of the peace)
- local councillor
- school governor
- member of any statutory tribunal (for example employment tribunal)
- member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment maintained by a local education authority or a further or higher education corporation
- member of a health authority
- member of a school council or board in Scotland
- member of the General Teaching Councils for England and Wales
- member of the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection agency
- member of the prison independent monitoring boards (England or Wales) or a member of the prison visiting committees (Scotland)
- member of Scottish Water or a Water Customer Consultation Panel
- trade union member (for trade union duties).

- Member of the service authority for the National Criminal Intelligence Service or the service authority for the National Crime Squad

3.5 Governing Duties

Reasonable paid time off for governing duties for Royal Greenwich maintained schools will be paid. Time off for governing duties for academies or educational establishments outside of Royal Greenwich will be unpaid. Employees who request such leave must provide evidence that they are required to undertake such work, with dates and times specified. The granting of such leave is subject to the needs of the service and to adequate notification. However, the amount of time off should be agreed between the employee and employer beforehand, and the employer can refuse a request for time off if they think it is unreasonable.

4. **Dependants Leave**

- 4.1 There is a statutory right to reasonable unpaid leave to care for dependants. The Royal Borough of Greenwich Dependants and Compassionate Leave Policy entitle employees to take reasonable time off during working hours to deal with certain types of unexpected or sudden emergencies in relation to their dependants.

Additional emergency leave may be taken in line with the statutory provisions but will not normally be paid. Full details of the Dependant and Compassionate Leave Policy can be located on the HR intranet.

- 4.2 Employees who have been approved to act as foster carers can apply for unpaid leave during the initial setting up phase on recommendation of The Royal Borough of Greenwich Fostering Section.

5. **Jury Service**

- 5.1 The employee must report the receipt of the Summons to their Chief Officer (which may be done via the employee's line manager) as soon as possible after receiving it and produce the Summons for inspection by the Chief Officer/line manager.
- 5.2 Any employee receiving a Summons to serve as a juror will be granted special leave for the purpose unless exemption is secured. If the release of the employee concerned will have serious service implications the Chief Officer may apply to the Court originating the Summons for an exemption.
- 5.3 The employee must forward the Summons to Payroll for completion and certification. The completed Summons will be returned to the employee who must then forward it to the appropriate Court. The employee must inform Payroll of the jurors allowance they have received under the Juror's Allowances Regulations and provide evidence of this from the Court so that

an equivalent amount can be deducted from their pay (please note that travel and subsistence expenses incurred will not be recovered).

6. Service in non-regular forces

- 6.1 Employees who are volunteer members of the Non-Regular Forces may be entitled to two weeks additional paid leave. On receipt of evidence the Chief Officer/Manager may authorise for the additional leave to be added to normal annual leave in any twelve month period. The purpose of the additional leave is to allow employees the opportunity to attend summer camp or to undertake training in addition to such attendance. This leave may be taken in days, half days, or even hours as required.
- 6.2 The granting of leave is subject to submission of request being made in due time, in advance, to Chief Officers, and subject also to the exigencies of the service.

7. Court attendance (other than Jury Service)

- 7.1 Any employee requiring time off for Civil Proceedings should request annual leave, flexi-leave (where appropriate) or unpaid leave. Civil Proceedings' refer to any matters heard in the Civil Courts.
- 7.2 Any employee who is required to attend Court as a witness in connection with criminal cases may be granted time off with pay for the duration of their attendance. The employee's attendance at Court must be as a witness on Subpoena or other direction from a Court, or at the request of the Police. 'Criminal Cases' refer to any matters heard before the Magistrates Courts or Crown Courts, or on appeal from those Courts.
- 7.3 The employee must provide documentary evidence of the requirement for attendance as soon as they are able.

8. Medical Dental and IVF Appointments

- 8.1 Please refer to the Managing Attendance Procedure and Maternity Policy for further information on the above.

9. Employees wishing to become donors

- 9.1 For employees wishing to become donors, Managers can authorise leave with pay of up to five days in these cases, with discretion to give consideration to absences in excess of five days in exceptional situations. The granting of leave with pay for this purpose is subject to corroborative medical evidence of attendance.

- 9.2 Chief Officers can authorise leave with pay of up to five days in these cases, with discretion to give consideration to absences in excess of five days in exceptional situations.
- 9.3 The granting of leave with pay for this purpose is subject to corroborative medical evidence of attendance.

10. Leave for charitable work

- 10.1 Employees who undertake voluntary work for recognised charitable organisations may be granted up to 2 days' leave with pay in any period of 12 months where their obligations conflict with working requirements.
- 10.2 Employees who request such leave must provide evidence from the organisation concerned that they are required to undertake such work, with dates and times specified. The granting of such leave is subject to the needs of the service and to adequate notification.

11. Leave for preparation for retirement

- 11.1 Any employee with at least ten years continuous local government service (the last five of which must be with Greenwich) may be granted up to ten days special leave with pay during their last year of service for attendance at suitable courses. The leave may be taken in a block, in days, half days, or as course attendance requires.

12 Religious holidays

- 12.1 Where possible, leave for religious festivals should be accommodated within the existing annual leave or other flexible working arrangements. In exceptional circumstances, unpaid leave can be authorised by the Chief Officer subject to the needs of the Service.

13. Statutory requests for time off for training

- 13.1 Royal Borough of Greenwich has access to a range of internal and external training programmes. Where employees are given permission to attend these programmes paid time off will be granted, unless otherwise agreed with management.
- 13.2 Where employees wish to attend a course or programme not covered above, the law grants employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service with the Royal Borough the right to make a request in relation to time off for study or training and to have their request considered by their employer.

- 13.3 Employees who wish to submit a request in relation to study or training should do so in writing. Requests may not be submitted more than once every 12 months and must be sent to the Manager. The request must cover:
- That it is an application to make a statutory request in relation to study or training;
 - The date of the application;
 - Whether or not the employee has made a previous application in relation to study or training, and if so, when and how the last application was submitted;
 - The subject matter of the proposed study or training;
 - Where and when the proposed study or training would take place;
 - Who (if anyone) would provide or supervise the study or training;
 - To what qualification (if any) the study or training would lead; and
 - How the employee thinks the proposed study or training would improve his or her effectiveness in the service and the performance of the service.
- 13.4 Where a valid request has been submitted, the Manager will, where appropriate, arrange a meeting with him/her to discuss the request as soon as practicable. The meeting will normally take place no later than 28 days after the date on which the request was submitted. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the request, its appropriateness to the employee's job and the needs of the organisation and any possible alternative arrangements that might meet the employee's training needs. A decision will be given to the employee in writing within 14 days of the meeting.
- 13.5 If an employee's request in relation to study or training is refused, the employee will have the right to appeal against this decision. Any appeal should be submitted within 14 days of the decision to refuse the request. The appeal notice must be in writing and must include the grounds on which the employee wishes to base the appeal.
- 13.6 The Royal Borough of Greenwich is not obliged by law to pay an employee for any time off granted for study or training under the right to make a request in relation to study or training (nor pay for the cost of the programme). Therefore, any time off for training agreed will be unpaid. Employees will be expected to use annual leave, other flexible working arrangements or in exceptional circumstances unpaid leave.
- 13.7 Each request will be dealt with individually, taking into account the nature of the employee's request and any likely effects of granting it, e.g. any effects on the employee's work or on the employee's colleagues. Agreeing to one employee's request will not set a precedent or create a right for other employees to have their requests in relation to study or training granted. If, following a valid request in relation to study or training, the Manager thinks that additional information is required before giving proper consideration to the request, they can ask the employee to provide further information.

13.8 Although the Royal Borough of Greenwich encourages employees to undertake courses of study or training that is relevant to their employment, it will not always be possible to grant requests in relation to study or training. The circumstances in which the RBG may have to refuse a request include where:

- The proposed study or training would not improve the employee's effectiveness at work, or the performance of the service itself;
- The cost to Royal Borough of Greenwich of granting time off for training would be too great;
- Granting the employee's request would have a detrimental effect on the Royal Borough of Greenwich ability to meet customer demand;
- The School would be unable satisfactorily to cover the employee's absences on training;
- There would be a detrimental impact on quality or performance; or
- There are planned structural changes in the service area.

13.9 A written response must be sent to the employee within 14 days of the meeting, which must provide an explanation where the request has been refused and grant the right of appeal. A Chief Officer must hear the appeal within another 14 days and communicate the outcome in writing to the employee within a further 14 days.

13.10 The Manager and the employee may, if they wish, agree to extend any of the time periods specified above. In this case, the Manager must record the agreement in writing and send a copy to the employee

14. Further information

14.1 Further information and advice can be obtained from HR Professional Services.