



**EMPLOYEE  
FRIENDLY  
CARER POLICIES**



**partnership**  
information network  
*for the service by the service*

## **CARER POLICIES**

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# **NHS HIGHLAND**

## **CARER POLICIES**

### **Introduction**

This document represents the NHS Highland policy and guidelines based on the values and principles found within the Scottish Partnership Forum Partnership Information Network Board (PIN) Board report into Employee Friendly Policies.

This policy encompasses the following categories: carer leave, compassionate/bereavement leave, special leave and elder care.

It can be difficult to balance working life with these responsibilities at home. It is more cost effective to retain employees with caring responsibilities by recognising and supporting their domestic needs and responsibilities as family members and carers, rather than losing them to other organisations and having to train new staff.

### **General Statement**

NHS Highland recognises that from time to time, its employees will encounter situations of urgent and unforeseen need in relation to domestic, personal and family matters. NHS Highland aims to support them positively and actively in such circumstances by granting, subject to the needs of the service, leave of absence to cope with their particular circumstance.

### **General Principles**

Management decisions on the granting of paid or unpaid leave, will be taken on the basis of the particular needs and circumstances of each applicant and in each case, but NHS Highland expects that its staff will receive fair and reasonable consideration in accordance with the NHS Highland Equal Opportunities Policy.

Each employee of NHS Highland is responsible for organising their affairs to meet normal and reasonably anticipated contingencies.

### **Authority to Grant Leave Under This Policy**

Management shall decide to which level authority to grant leave under this policy shall be delegated. In most circumstances this will be the employee's immediate manager.

### **Application**

With most cases, employees will be unlikely to know in advance when they will require to take leave under this policy. Employees should therefore personally contact their immediate manager at the earliest opportunity to advise of the need for leave under this policy.

The employee should discuss the situation with the manager and the number of days leave which may be required. The manager will then agree with the employee the number of days they can take. The manager will ensure the completion of the standard application form as

soon as possible (See Appendix 1)

There is a responsibility on the employee to keep in contact with the relevant manager throughout the period of leave to advise of any changes in circumstances.

The aim of this policy is not to be prescriptive to managers in the number of days allowed but where there is clear disagreement between the manager and the employee, it will initially be referred to Personnel Departments for guidance in the first instance.

## **Recording**

All leave granted within this policy shall be recorded within the department's normal absence recording systems and payroll returns. Application of this policy will be monitored by the Area Partnership Forum to ensure fair and reasonable allocation.

## **Leave Categories**

Carer

Compassionate

Special Leave

## **Elder Care Policy Statement**

Staff are often faced with responsibilities for taking care of elderly family members or dependants and it can be difficult to balance working life with these responsibilities at home.

Recognising the needs of staff who care for elderly dependants is particularly important because people working in healthcare are often expected to do more than other family members do when it comes to caring for a relative. Changes in Scottish society, such as an ageing population mean that more employees will require flexibility in paid and unpaid carer leave arrangements and their working patterns so that they can meet their domestic/caring responsibilities. Whilst flexible working and part time working can help staff fulfil their care commitments, workplace day centre's or elder care now need similar consideration to nurseries as our population ages.

# 1. CARER LEAVE POLICY

## 1.1. Introduction

Work and home life can cause conflicting pressures. Many employees are responsible for caring for a relative or a child. The idea behind carer leave is to encourage flexible working practice so that employees can balance their home and work commitments.

The purpose of this policy is to allow for a compassionate response to the sudden and immediate need to provide care. This could be in the case of a sick child, close relative or dependent. It could be that normal arrangements have broken down thus leaving the employee without proper carer arrangements. The policy is open to all employees within NHS Highland.

## 1.2. Types of Carer Leave:

### 1.2.1. Short Term

Carer leave will normally be for the short term. Employees will be entitled to, up to 5 consecutive working days, paid leave in each circumstance, where an employee faces an unexpected crisis as detailed above. In particular cases of difficulty the period may be extended by a further 5 days. It should be left to the discretion of the manager whether these days are paid or unpaid. There should be no requirement that the approved number of days be taken in one block.

### 1.2.1. Longer Term

In the cases of longer term carer leave where the employee is the sole carer or where daily attendance is called for on an extended basis, then the employer should consider other options. These options should try to ensure that the employee will be able to fulfil their carer responsibilities. This can encompass ideas like longer term carer breaks from work (normally unpaid), different work patterns (i.e. reduced hours/days) or a different shift pattern. Where longer-term carer leave is sought discussions should take place with the relevant manager and the Personnel Department.

## 2. COMPASSIONATE LEAVE POLICY

### 2.1. Introduction

Compassionate Leave is in place to help employees when in circumstances such as death, serious illness or acute need of a family member, dependent, close friend, and colleague for example. NHS Highland endeavours to respond to employee's needs at these times and this policy is open to all employees.

### 2.2. Leave

Employees will be entitled to, up to 5 working days, paid leave in each circumstance. In particular cases of hardship or difficulty, the period may be extended by a further 5 days. It is left to the discretion of the manager as to whether these extra days are paid or unpaid. In addition to this, annual leave and unpaid leave can also be utilised at this stage to reflect exceptional circumstances.

In considering the amount of leave, the manager should take into account the specific circumstances e.g. the relationship between employee and relative or friend; where the employee has responsibility for the estate of a deceased relative or friend; the availability of other relatives or friends and the distance of the deceased from place of employment.

Further information can be obtained from the personnel department if required.

### **3. SPECIAL LEAVE POLICY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

Special Leave can be defined as arrangements granted when staff need to be absent from work in circumstances not covered by sick leave, annual leave, compassionate leave, maternity leave, parental leave or flexible working arrangements. Special leave is a short-term solution to help employees balance the demands of work and home responsibilities. The policy is open to all employees within NHS Highland. See below the paragraph on policy framework.

#### **3.2. Leave**

Special leave will normally be short term and employees will be entitled up to 5 working days paid leave in each circumstance where an example of special leave arises. In cases of exceptional difficulty then the leave can be extended by a further 5 days. It is up to the discretion of the manager as to whether the further period of special leave is paid or unpaid. Annual leave and unpaid leave can be utilised at this point.

In exceptional circumstances an employee may be facing longer-term difficulties. If this does arise then NHS Highland may consider other options to enable the employee to meet their domestic responsibilities. This may include a longer period of unpaid leave, reduced hours or a different shift pattern. However discussion with their manager and Personnel Department should occur before any decision of this nature is decided.

#### **3.3. Policy Framework**

This type of leave can be used when circumstances do not fit under parental or bereavement type policies. Domestic emergencies can fit under this heading as can Reserve or Cadet forces, mountain rescue duties, civic and public duties, adverse weather, IVF etc. The leave can take the form of paid leave or unpaid leave according to individual circumstances.

**Employee Friendly Policies**  
 Parental/Paternity/Carer/Special/Compassionate  
Leave Application Form / Recording Form



**PART 1** (to be completed by employee)

Name .....	Staff Pay No .....
Job Title .....	Dept/Ward .....
Work Location .....	Section .....

<b>Type of Leave</b>	Carer Leave	Compassionate Leave
Special Leave	Paternity Leave	Parental Leave

Reason for Leave

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<b>Number of days required</b>	(a) Paid .....
<b>Date/s:</b>	(b) Unpaid .....

..... Employee's Signature	..... Date
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**PART 2** (to be completed by Manager)

Manager's Name .....	Job Title .....
Dept/Ward .....	Section .....

<b>Number of days agreed</b>	(a) Paid .....
<b>Date/s:</b>	(b) Unpaid .....

Replacement arrangements and costs (where applicable)

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Comments (include reason why not granted/deferred where appropriate)

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..... Manager's Signature	..... Date
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**\*Manager to record on Pay Return and pass copy to : Employee / Personal File**

NB. COPY TO EMPLOYEE / ORIGINAL TO PERSONAL FILE