



ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY

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1. Purpose and Scope

Ministries Council (MC) promotes a positive and healthy work-life balance and recognises the importance of annual leave in achieving this. This policy, which applies to all employees, aims to provide a fair, consistent and equitable approach to the accrual and taking of annual leave, ensuring that individual needs are balanced with operational requirements.

2. Principles

- 2.1 It is important that employees take regular breaks from their duties through annual leave.
- 2.2 The annual leave year operates from 1 January to 31 December.
- 2.3 All employees are expected to take their annual leave entitlement within the leave year period.
- 2.4 Annual leave is requested through discussion between an employee and their line manager. A record of annual leave taken and remaining should be kept either electronically or in paper format.
- 2.5 Leave is granted subject to operational requirements.
- 2.6 Entitlement to leave is pro-rated for employees on part time and fixed term contracts who leave or join part way through a leave year.
- 2.7 Due to the working pattern of MDS, annual leave entitlement will be calculated in hours and not days.
- 2.8 All employees will be expected to take all outstanding leave before leaving the employment of the MC. Every effort should be made to do this however in exceptional circumstances, payment will be made for leave not taken, up to the equivalent of one week's contracted hours, with the authorisation of the Depute Secretary, Ministries Council. Similarly, where leave has been taken in excess of the entitlement, a pro-rated adjustment will be made and deducted from the final salary payment.

3. Annual Leave Entitlement

- 3.1 All full-time MDS are entitled to 187.5 hours (5 weeks) annual leave in a calendar year. This increases to 225 hours after 5 years continuous service.
- 3.2 All full time MDS are entitled to 9 days public holidays, these are: 1st and 2nd January, Good Friday, Easter Monday, 25th and 26 December and 3 other days as agreed locally (often to



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coincide with local Bank Holidays). If, as may well be the case, especially at Easter and Christmas, staff have to work on a public holiday, they will be able to have another mutually convenient day off in lieu.

- 3.3 All full time Associate Ministers are entitled to 6 weeks (225 hours) annual leave in a calendar year with 5 undefined public holidays that can be taken at a mutually agreeable time during the course of the annual leave year.
- 3.4 Annual Leave entitlement for part-time employees: Annual leave entitlement for part-time employees, which includes entitlement to public holidays, will be proportionate to the number of hours the employee is contracted to work including the increased annual leave hours after 5 years' service. If a public holiday falls on a day a part-time employee normally works, then the employee will be required to record their absence on this day from their annual leave entitlement.
- 3.5 Employees on fixed term contracts will have their pro-rata leave entitlement calculated on the same basis as a new starter. They will additionally receive any public holidays which fall within the period of their contract.

4. Manager Responsibilities

- 4.1 Line managers should communicate to employees as soon as reasonably practicable those periods during which, due to operational requirements, it may not be appropriate to take annual leave i.e. where the team is involved with or responsible for special activities or events; due to peak periods; to ensure sufficient cover etc.
- 4.2 Line managers should proactively review and monitor the annual leave of their team, ensuring that employees are taking their leave due.

5. Carrying Annual Leave Forward

While employees are expected to take their annual leave in the leave year in which they have accrued, employees may, with the agreement of their line manager carry forward a maximum of 37.5 hours annual leave into the next leave year (pro-rated for part-time employees). Where, as a result of extenuating circumstances e.g. maternity leave or long term sick leave, an employee has been unable to take their full leave entitlement, additional carry over of leave will be considered.

6. Absence & Annual Leave

- 6.1 Illness during annual leave: Employees who fall sick either during a period of annual leave or just prior to the leave commencing, will be permitted to reclaim those days lost through illness (or, in the latter case, may reschedule their annual leave for another time once they have recovered) where they have notified us of their absence and that the absence is certified by a medical fit note. This period of absence will then be recorded as sickness absence. Please note that the requirement to provide a medical fit note applies even where the absence is less than 7 days in duration.



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- 6.2 There will not be an entitlement to reclaim a day's leave in respect of a period of sickness absence which falls on a Public Holiday.
- 6.3 Accrual of annual leave during periods of sickness absence: Typically, annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue as normal during periods of sickness absence. In cases of long term sickness absence, where this would result in annual leave being carried into the next leave year, the statutory annual leave amount will only be carried forward into the next annual leave year.
- 6.4 Accrual of annual leave during maternity, adoption and paternity leave: Employees will continue to accrue contractual annual leave entitlement including entitlement to public holidays as normal during the full period of maternity, adoption and paternity leave. For further details please see our other Leave Policies.

7. Calculating Entitlement

The HR team will notify new starts and their line managers of annual leave entitlement at the beginning of a contract.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by HR, The Hub and Ministries Council senior managers to ensure adherence to best practice, and any related legislation. If necessary, the policy will be taken to Ministries Council as part of a consultation process.