

This document forms part of the Collective Agreement with effective date of changes being 1 December 2025

Leave & Time Off

December 2025

People and Culture

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1 Purpose Statement

1.1 This policy provides details on the following provision for leave and time off:

- Annual Leave Entitlement
- Buying Additional Annual Leave
- Selling Annual Leave
- Annual Leave Year
- Annual Leave Year Carry Over
- Bank Holidays
- Career Breaks
- Carers Leave
- Christmas and New Year Working Arrangements
- Compassionate Leave
- Disability Leave
- Election Duties
- Jury Service
- Medical Appointments
- Public Duties/Volunteering
- Reservists
- Study Leave
- Unpaid Leave
- Adverse weather conditions

2 Who the policy applies to

- 2.1 This policy applies to all colleagues of BCP Council including the Chief Executive, Chief Officers, Youth Workers, Craftworkers, Soulbury Officers and colleagues in support roles in maintained schools where BCP Council is the employer.
- 2.2 The annual leave provisions do not apply to centrally employed teachers or teaching colleagues within schools. Other leave entitlement supports the separate national agreements for teachers.

3 This policy replaces

- 3.1 Following the 2025 Collective Agreement on Pay and Reward, this policy replaces any national, local agreements and contractual arrangements that have been reached prior to the implementation date of this policy.

4 Approval process

- 4.1 The terms of this policy have been agreed in conjunction with the 2025 Collective Agreement on Pay and Reward which has been subject to approval by Corporate Management Board and the recognised trade unions.

5 Links to Council Strategies

- 5.1 This policy supports the [People and Culture Strategy](#).
- 5.2 During the preparation of this policy document consideration has been given to the following key council strategies:
- [Corporate Strategy](#)
 - [Health Safety and Welfare Policy](#)
 - [Wellbeing Charter](#)
 - [Equality & Diversity Policy](#)

6 The Policy

6.1 Annual Leave Entitlement

New starters to BCP Council, with no prior continuous service, will be entitled to 28 days leave per annum. After two years of continuous service, a 31-day entitlement per annum will be awarded.

New starters to BCP with continuous service of at least two years will be entitled to 31 days from day one of their employment.

Annual leave entitlement will be pro-rated for part time colleagues.

Annual leave entitlement will be expressed in hours and can be taken as such (not available to term time only colleagues).

All annual leave must be booked in advance of the holiday. The normal notice for requests to take annual leave is a minimum of 1 week for each week of leave requested. Only in exceptional circumstances should it be agreed on the day or after.

All colleagues are required to take at least 20 days annual leave plus bank holidays each year (or pro-rated for part time colleagues) - to meet statutory requirements under the Working Time Regulations (except within statutory sick leave, maternity, paternity and adoption and shared parental leave provisions).

The annual leave entitlement of those leaving or joining the council will be pro-rated to their completed service during the leave year.

Annual leave will only be paid to those colleagues leaving BCP council.

Upon leaving BCP council, any leave taken more than the allowance will be deducted from final salary.

6.2 Buying Additional Annual Leave (not available for colleagues on term time only contracts)

Additional annual leave up to a maximum of ten days (pro rata for part time workers) may be purchased and deducted monthly from payroll.

Applications can be submitted at any time. The subsequent deduction from gross pay will be made over the remaining period of the leave year, depending on when the application is submitted and approved.

Approval of any additional annual leave purchase is not guaranteed and will always be subject to the operational requirements of the service, which must remain a priority.

Purchasing annual leave will reduce your pensionable pay and so will impact upon the amount of pension you receive on retirement.

6.3 Selling Annual Leave (not available for colleagues on term time only contracts)

Up to five days annual leave may be sold within the annual leave year (Pro rata for part time workers) and can be sold in hours of up to no more than the standard working week for that individual.

Applications to sell annual leave must be made between April and June. Applications will be subject to Director approval and will be subject the service's budget position and any financial constraints that may apply.

Annual leave is sold back at the colleague's hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours sold and does not include any additional salary supplements awarded and is subject to tax and National Insurance deductions.

In the event of the termination of the colleague's employment prior to the end of the leave year, there may be a requirement to pay back all or part of the lump sum if the annual leave allowance has been exceeded.

Approval of requests will be on an individual basis and will be valid for the current leave year. A new application can be submitted for any subsequent years.

Pensionable pay will not be affected when selling annual leave.

Additional annual leave cannot be bought and sold during the same leave year.

6.4 Annual Leave Year

The annual leave year will run from April to March.

6.5 Annual Leave Year Carry Forward

Colleagues may request up to five days leave to be carried forward (pro rata for part time colleagues) to the next leave year. Leave greater than this amount will only be permitted for those who have been unable to take their leave due to long term sickness or maternity/adoption/ or prolonged periods of shared parental leave.

In circumstances where leave has not been taken due to long term sickness, a maximum of 4 weeks leave can be carried over which must be used within 18 months. The 18-month period would be calculated from the end of the leave year in which the leave was accrued.

6.6 Bank Holidays

All colleagues are entitled to the following eight public holidays in addition to any other day designated from time to time by the Government:

- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- May Day
- May Spring Public Holiday
- August Public Holiday

Bank / public holiday entitlement will be pro-rated for part time colleagues.

Part time colleagues or colleagues who are full time but working compressed weeks (37 hours in less than 5 days), who do not work on the day that a bank holiday falls, will be entitled to pro-rata amount of the bank holidays added to their leave entitlement.

6.7 Career Breaks

Requests for an unpaid career break of between 6 and 24 months may be made from any colleague who has more than two years' service with BCP Council subject to no alternative paid work being undertaken during that time.

Annual leave will not accrue during a career break period.

6.7.1 Sick Pay: There will be no right to sick leave and sick pay during the inclusive period of a career break.

6.7.2 Pension: Both colleague and employer pension contributions to the pension scheme will cease during the career break. Unpaid leave is treated as suspended membership and will not count as pensionable service. On returning to work colleagues may be entitled to pay additional pension contributions subject to the rules of the pension scheme.

6.7.3 Salary increments: The duration of the career break would not be included when calculating incremental salary progression. The colleague's length of service for the purposes of incremental salary progression would be paused at the commencement of a career break and the calculation restarted on their returning to work after their career break.

6.7.4 Career Grade Progression: Progression through a career grade will be subject to a management assessment of the colleague's experience and competency within the role against agreed criteria rather than being a consequence of their accrued length of service. An assessment for progression would be arranged at an appropriate point following the colleague's return to work date. Transferable skills and experience gained during a career break may however be considered as part of that assessment.

6.7.5 KIT Days: To maintain skills and workplace knowledge, the colleague in discussion with their manager, may agree up to a maximum of ten paid keeping in touch (KIT)/training days in a 24-month period (pro rata where the break is of a shorter duration). If a career break is taken after a period of family leave (eg maternity leave) a total combined would be ten paid days

6.7.6 Returning to work: The council will endeavour to facilitate the return of the colleague on a career break to the post which they occupied prior to the period of leave, or to a post that is similar in terms of duties and skills and on terms and conditions no less favourable than those which applied before the career break. There is no guarantee that this will be possible, but managers will be encouraged to backfill the post on a temporary fixed term basis during the period of the career break to allow the individual to return to their substantive post where possible.

Should the colleague wish to return to work earlier than the agreed date, they must give notice (in writing) of one month.

Failure to return to work on specified dates or failure to fulfil other requirements of the policy can result in the termination of employment by the council.

If the colleague decides not to return to work at the end of a career break, they must give their line manager written notice in line with their contract of employment before the end of the absence period.

6.7.7 Filling the Vacancy: The vacant post will normally be covered by a secondment opportunity in the first instance or as a fixed term appointment if this is not successful.

6.8 Carers Leave

Up to three days paid leave and a further 2 days unpaid per year for a carer who looks after (unpaid) a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, mental health problem or addiction and who cannot cope without that support. Leave may be taken in hours or full days.

Evidence is not required from the applicant when considering applications for carer's leave.

6.9 Christmas and New Year Working Arrangements

Colleagues wishing to take time off over Christmas and New year will be required to use annual leave or accrued leave.

6.10 Compassionate Leave

Managers may approve up to five days paid leave for a colleague who has suffered a bereavement or requires leave for compassionate purposes. There is also statutory bereavement provision of two weeks leave for parents who lose a child under the age of 18.

6.11 Disability Leave

The effect of a disability depends on the individual and their circumstances. To accommodate this requires some flexibility, so colleagues may take reasonable paid time off as a reasonable adjustment, for things typically like treatment, rehabilitation or assessment related to their disability. This time off is considered separate to any absences because of ill health relating to their disability, which will be managed in accordance with the Absence policy and any relevant medical advice.

6.12 Election Duties

One day's paid leave for colleagues working as Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks at a BCP Council polling station on election day.

This provision excludes election duties to be worked for other Councils for which annual leave or accrued hours must be used, subject to the usual booking arrangements.

No other paid leave provision is given to colleagues wishing to volunteer to undertake other election duties including but not restricted to canvassing, postal ballot counts, and ballot counts, etc. Annual leave may be used subject to usual booking arrangements.

6.13 Jury Service

Time off to attend Jury Service will be granted unless in exceptional circumstances, the colleagues' absence is felt to cause harm to the service (People and Culture advice should be sought). In this event, the colleague can ask for a delay from the court but can only delay once in a 12-month period.

Colleagues must notify their manager as soon as possible that they have been summoned, when they will need time off and if possible, how much. If they are not needed at court, they should return to work.

Salary will be reduced up to a maximum sum of allowances paid by the Court for loss of earnings.

6.14 Medical/Dental/IVF Appointments & Elective surgery

All appointments should be made in the colleague's own time using either annual leave or accrued leave where possible and with agreement from their manager for the hours to be worked back at another time. Where this is not possible, paid leave will be given.

Reasonable paid time off for appointments will be provided to those with disability related conditions, pregnancy, or maternity related illness (antenatal appts are covered separately under the Maternity and Family Friendly policy), those undergoing IVF treatment or those attending gender identity clinics.

In respect of elective surgery, colleagues will only qualify for sick pay if they provide evidence from their GP that they meet the criteria for having such treatment on the NHS (though treatment may be provided privately) i.e. that it is necessary for physical or psychological reasons.

In all other cases of elective surgery, colleagues will be required to take annual or flexi leave or unpaid leave if this is agreed

6.15 Public Duties/Volunteering

Colleagues may request up to one paid day per year and up to a further two paid days subject to the demands of the service, for either one of the public duties outlined below or a volunteering assignment authorised through the Community Action Network.

- Magistrate (also known as a justice of the peace)
- School governor
- Member of any statutory tribunal (for example an employment tribunal)
- Member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment
- Member of a health authority
- Member of the Environment Agency
- Member of the prison independent monitoring boards.

For further information on volunteering, please visit:

[Community Action Group - Interested in volunteering](#)

6.16 Reservists

Up to five paid days leave per annum and a further five unpaid days if required, may be requested for members of the reserve armed forces (reservists) to undertake training.

6.17 Study Leave

Reasonable time off may be requested to support study or exams relevant to the role or organisational development. Managers are encouraged to agree and document this through a Learning Agreement at the start of the study period.

6.18 Unpaid Leave

Unpaid leave may be requested in exceptional circumstances but only where annual leave entitlement has been exhausted.

Unpaid leave will not be authorised as an alternative to sick absence.

Refer to statutory rights to unpaid leave under other family friendly provision.

6.19 Adverse weather conditions

If adverse weather conditions prevent colleagues from safely travelling to their place of work, and where remote working is not a viable option, the absence must be recorded as either annual leave, accrued hours (where applicable), or unpaid leave.

Colleagues are expected to notify their line manager as the earliest opportunity and agree on the appropriate method of recording any absence for this reason.

7 How to use this policy

- 7.1 Leave and time off requests requiring a formal application process must be made on the relevant council form/IT system. Refer to the relevant intranet page for further information.

8 Roles and responsibilities

- 8.1 Managers are required to give fair and reasonable consideration to requests for time off and will provide colleagues with a prompt response to their request.

9 Enforcement and sanctions

- 9.1 Non-compliance/abuse of this policy may result in disciplinary action.