

POLICY DOCUMENT

NIMDTA LEAVE PACK

1. Introduction

Departmental Circulars and legislation requirements, such as Industrial Relations (No. 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, govern the granting of special leave for various purposes and NIMDTA shall make available special leave arrangements, with pay, to staff required to be absent from duty for various purposes including essential civic and public duties.

2. Purpose

NIMDTA recognises the requirement for fairness and consistency when considering requests for special leave and the purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for staff and managers in dealing with these requests and for decision making. It also outlines how the leave should be recorded on the HRPTS Portal.

Types of Special Leave are detailed below:

3. Urgent Domestic Distress

Urgent Domestic Distress is available to staff that have, for example, a spouse, partner, child, parent/guardian, or someone for whom they have direct live-in caring responsibilities who is suffering from an illness or condition which has been diagnosed as either critical, in the short term, or terminal. Urgent Domestic Distress is designed to enable staff to cope with unplanned and unforeseen demands on the individual and entitlement will range from one half day up to 18 days per year. Staff wishing to be granted leave due to Urgent Domestic Distress should ensure that their manager is advised promptly of any domestic difficulties he/she is experiencing. The period of leave should be agreed with the manager or Director at the time of the first request for leave if possible. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Urgent Domestic Distress.

Managers should look at each individual case and take account of all prevailing circumstances, e.g. prognosis of illness, other family support, emotional condition of member of staff, changes which could be made to current working arrangements etc., and make a judgement as to what will best meet the needs of both the organisation and member of staff. Each situation will be considered, and both manager and member of staff should attempt to reach agreement. This should ensure that the needs of the individual are treated sympathetically and that the business/operational requirements of the directorate/section are not compromised or disadvantaged. Managers should contact the HR Department, BSO for advice if unsure about his/her reasons for rejection.

4. Compassionate Leave

Compassionate Leave is available to those staff who suffer the death of a relative or partner. Whilst it is difficult to assess how the death of someone close to us will affect each of us, this policy is to help ensure that staff are treated with sympathy and consistency at difficult times. The table below sets out a list of the maximum number of days available to staff:

Nature of relationship	Maximum number of days
Spouse	Six
Partner	Six
Child	Six
Parent/Guardian	Six
Direct Live-in Caring Responsibilities	Three
Sibling	Three
Grandparent/Grandchild	One
Uncle/Aunt	One
Cousin	One
Nephew/Niece	One
Father/Mother/Brother/Sister/Son/ Daughter of Spouse/Partner	Two

An employee who intends to make use of Compassionate Leave should ensure that their Manager or Director is advised of the situation as soon as is practicable. This should then be recorded on HRPTS as Compassionate Leave on the employee's return to work.

5. Leave for attendance at funerals

In the event of the death of a close friend or a particular relationship not covered under Compassionate Leave provisions, staff may be given time off work to attend funerals, subject to the needs of the service. This time should not exceed 2.5 hours away from the office for local funerals. Where funerals require a substantial part of that time being taken up with travelling, staff will need to discuss this with their manager and agree a reasonable time allocation. Staff may be given no more than 4 hours off for non-local funeral attendance and can take further time off through flexi-time or annual leave arrangements. Attendance at a funeral should be agreed and recorded offline by line managers.

In the event of the death of a colleague or member of a colleague's immediate family, managers will ensure that there is sufficient departmental representation at the funeral and the time available as per the entitlement outlined above. Colleagues may insert commiserations on a personal basis into local newspapers, however, not normally on behalf of NIMDTA.

6. Carer's Leave

Carer's Leave is short-term leave, with pay, to facilitate staff who have caring responsibilities to manage emergency, unplanned, short-term problems. The needs covered include:

- Illness of a child, close relative or partner (immediate family or dependants);
- Breakdown of normal care arrangements wherein no or very short notice has been given;

Carer's Leave is not appropriate when people have been given notice that their current, normal caring arrangements are going to be interrupted. It is also not suitable for those carers who wish to accompany children or adults to hospital appointments which have been planned or to be with them after planned (elective) operations and holiday leave should be used for these events.

Entitlement is up to a maximum of 12 days per annum, however, no single episode should exceed three days. Staff wishing to take Carer's Leave should ensure that their immediate line manager is advised promptly of any difficulties they are experiencing in their care arrangements and that they wish to make application to take time off under this particular policy. The period of leave must be agreed at the initial stages with the manager at the time of the first notification of the difficulty.

Carer's Leave should be recorded on HRPTS as Carer's Leave (not SHSCT) by the line manager or by the employee on their return to work.

Please Note: Carer's Leave must be agreed with line manager when the need arises. It cannot be requested after a period of leave has been taken.

7. Unpaid Leave

It should be noted that staff who avail of unpaid leave will result in a proportionate reduction in their annual leave entitlement. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Unpaid Leave. If the period of unpaid leave is for more than 3 months, this is an employment break. Please refer to the Career Break policy for further information.

8. Attendance at job interviews

Staff applying for jobs within the HSC will be granted time off with pay to attend for interview subject to the needs of the service. Attendance at HSC job interviews should be agreed with the employee's line manager and recorded offline by the line manager.

9. Attendance at Medical/Dental Appointment

Staff will be granted up to a maximum of 2 hours to attend a medical or dental appointment. Where possible, appointments should be scheduled for the start or end of the working day to minimise disruption. This should be recorded on HRPTS as Medical and Dental Appointment to a maximum of 2 hours.

10. Other types of leave available

Other types of leave available to employees are detailed below.

- 10.1 Absence from duty following confirmed contact with a notifiable disease. This should be recorded on HRPTS as sick leave by the employee's manager.

- 10.2 Reserve forces- as per DHSSPS circular HSC (GEN) 1/2016, the HSC is committed to granting additional paid leave of three weeks per year to Reservists specifically for professional development and training which includes attendance at annual camp, normally 14 days and up to a further 7 days in year for professional development and training (pro-rata for part-time employees). This equates to an aggregate of 21 days or three weeks paid leave. If Annual camp requires more than 14 days for example to allow for travel, this will be taken from the aggregate of 21 days.

Additional unpaid leave of up to 3 days will be granted for short periods of training provided adequate notice is given and where such training cannot be undertaken in off-duty time.

Please refer to DHSSPS Circular HSC (GEN) 1/2016 for further details.

This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Reserve/Cadet training

Service in other voluntary organisations including cadet forces, RNLI, Mountain Rescue service may be considered.

- 10.3 Attendance at meetings of the Patient and Client Council - up to 3 days paid leave. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Public Service Duties paid. Further paid/unpaid leave may be granted at the discretion of your Manager.
- 10.4 Magisterial duties - up to 10 days special leave on the understanding that any fees or payments will be paid to NIMDTA. No travel expenses subsistence allowance will be paid by NIMDTA. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Public Service Duties paid.
- 10.5 Engagement in trade union activities which will be in accordance with a facilities agreement. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Trade Union Duties.
- 10.6 Membership of Board of Governors, Government funded organisations or District Policing Partnerships: up to 10 days paid leave in any year subject to the exigencies of the service, subject to an understanding that the employee will pass any fees or payments (minus tax) received for the attendance to the NIMDTA. Further leave may be granted subject to the needs of the service by the Chief Executive/Director. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Public Service Duties (paid or unpaid). The first 10 days should be applied for as paid and any days over this should be recorded as unpaid. Whether it is recorded as paid or unpaid will be dictated by the number of days that have been approved by your line manager.

- 10.7 Attendance at court as medical/dental witnesses are governed by the relevant team and conditions of service. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Jury Service/Witness.
- 10.8 Marriage Leave / Civil Partnerships: 3 days special leave with pay for marriage. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Marriage Leave.
- 10.9 Jury Service: employees who are called for jury service will be granted leave with pay on the basis that they are required to pass any court fees, apart from travelling expenses, to the BSO. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Jury Service/Witness.
- 10.10 Court witness: an employee who attends court as a witness with the consent of NIMDTA or on foot of a subpoena or witness summons or other legal obligation, will be granted leave with pay on the basis that the employee is required to pass any court fees, apart from travelling expenses, to NIMDTA. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Jury Service/Witness. It should be noted that an employee will not be entitled to time off for attendance at court if such appearance is personally instigated.
- 10.11 Parliamentary assembly candidate; This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Public Service Duties paid.
- 10.12 Employees who serve as a member of the NI Assembly can avail of a Employment Break or a reduction of 20% of normal working hours. This should be requested on HRPTS by the employee as a contractual change for either an employment break or change in hours.
- 10.13 Employees who are officially standing as a candidate at an Assembly/Council/Parliamentary Election will be granted up to four weeks special leave without pay to facilitate their candidature. This should be recorded on HRPTS by the employee as Public Service Duties Unpaid.
- 10.14 International sporting event:-paid leave may be available to staff representing their country in an international sporting event. If the employee is assisting a team at an international sporting event (for example as a coach/physiotherapist), paid leave may be available if they are not already paid for their involvement. In either case, the employee should discuss their request with their Director who in turn should seek advice from Human Resources, BSO. Once a decision has been made, if appropriate, the employee should apply for leave for 'International Sport Event' on HRPTS.

11. Review Date

This policy will be reviewed in 2020.

This policy has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Equality Commission guidance states that the purpose of screening is to identify those policies which are likely to

have a significant impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to these.

Appendix

The table below summaries the main types of special leave covered in this policy and how they should be recorded on HRPTS. This should be read in conjunction with the details provided in this policy.

Type of Special Leave	Recorded on HRPTS	Allowance
Urgent Domestic Distress	Urgent Domestic Distress	One half day to 18 days per annum
Compassionate Leave	Compassionate Leave	Dependent on nature of relationship
Leave for attendance at funerals	Recorded Offline	Maximum 2.5 hours for local funeral Maximum 4 hours for non-local funerals
Carer's leave	Carer's leave (not SHSCT)	Maximum 12 days per annum. No single episode more than 3 days.
Unpaid leave for less than 3 months (If more than 3 months, it is an employment break)	Unpaid leave	Line Manager's discretion.
Attendance at job interviews	Recorded Offline	Line Manager's discretion
Attendance at Medical/Dental appointment	Medical and Dental Apt	Maximum 2 hours