

# **SPECIAL LEAVE**

## **Guidance Document**

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## **Guidance for Managers**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Sherwood Forest Hospitals (NHS) Foundation Trust is committed to the welfare of its staff and recognises the need for flexibility in balancing the needs of the organisation with personal and family commitments. This guidance aims to help staff balance the needs of family and work responsibilities at times of urgent and unforeseen need, and to provide special leave to cover parental, carer and family emergencies. The guidance covers bereavement leave and carers leave. The guidance applies to all Sherwood Forest Hospitals (NHS) Foundation Trust employees regardless of grade and hours worked, and provide information for Line Managers to grant paid or unpaid leave in the particular circumstances.

### **2. GUIDANCE STATEMENT**

In accordance with the aims and values of the Trust, this guidance seeks to ensure individual circumstances are taken into account when considering special leave.

### **3. BREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Employees who suffer bereavement shall be granted paid leave up to a period of two weeks leave, which may be taken on separate occasions according to individual need. This does not apply to employees who are on annual leave or sick leave.

All requests for bereavement leave will be considered based on individual Circumstances. Considerations to be taken into account when determining the amount of bereavement leave will include;

- the closeness of the relationship
- any formal dependencies
- suddenness and circumstance of death
- support to other family members
- responsibility for funeral arrangements
- date and place for the funeral including whether it is necessary to travel a distance
- impact the bereavement has had on the employee.

In special circumstances Managers may extend the period of leave which can be paid or unpaid. Managers should take advice from Human Resources when considering extending paid or unpaid leave.

Bereavement leave can be used to support a phased return to work. In addition bereavement leave can be taken as a single episode or over a number of episodes.

Managers can support employees by using discretion to agree reduced duties for a period of time to support employees to remain at work. For example a reduction in face to face meeting.

#### **4. Child Bereavement Leave**

Section 23 of Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions outlines the minimum national standard of leave and pay in circumstances where staff, who are parents (including adoptive, legal guardians, fostering to adopt for example), experience the death of a child.

Advice and guidance can be sought from the Operational HR team.

#### **5. Other Special Leave**

Managers may grant emergency domestic leave (Carer's Leave) in response to immediate needs e.g. house burglary, house fire etc. This would not normally be for more than 1 working day. If further time off is needed, annual leave and/or unpaid leave may be agreed with the manager.

Managers will consider leave in any circumstances where, due to urgent and unforeseen events, a compassionate response is necessary e.g. an incident of domestic abuse. Human Resources should be contacted for advice in such circumstances.

It is important in all cases that the Manager acts in a sensitive manner to the genuine urgent needs of the employee and that the employee makes satisfactory arrangements for any circumstances that they could reasonably predict in advance.

Additional information on Carer's Leave can be found in the Trust's Carer's Leave Guidance document.

#### **Employee Assistance Provision (EAP)**

The Trust offers all employees an in house support providing advice and information on how to get help with the caring role.

The Vivup employee assistance provision offers a range of informal and practical support including emotional, counselling and financial support / advice for carers. Vivup can be contacted via the intranet or on 03303 800658 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In addition, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has developed a service for any staff members experiencing acute psychological distress. This service can be accessed via 0808 196 8886 or via [notts.staffsupport@nhs.net](mailto:notts.staffsupport@nhs.net). There is also a 24-hour helpline for individuals who feel they are in mental health crisis; this service can be accessed via 0300 303 0165.