



For better
mental health

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Sheffield Mind

Leave and Absence Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

This absence policy explains:

- what we expect from managers and employees when handling absence

We welcome the continued involvement of employees in implementing this policy.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Sheffield Mind's absence policy is based on the following principles:

1. As a responsible employer we undertake to provide payments to employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness – see appendix 3 in the Sickness Absence Policy
2. Regular, punctual attendance is an implied term of every employee's contract of employment - we ask each employee to take responsibility for achieving and maintaining good attendance.
3. We will support employees who have genuine grounds for absence for whatever reason. This support includes:

- 'special leave' for necessary absences not caused by sickness which could be paid carers leave, compassionate leave, parental leave etc.
- a flexible approach to the taking of annual leave (whilst taking service needs into account)
- access to counsellors where necessary
- rehabilitation programmes in cases of long-term sickness absence.

FAMILY EMERGENCY

In many cases you have a legal right to take time off work to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on you. You won't be penalised by Sheffield Mind for taking the time off, providing your reasons for taking it are genuine.

Who counts as depending on me?

Your husband, wife or partner, child or parent, or someone living with you as part of your family can all be considered as depending on you. Others who rely solely on you for help in an emergency may also qualify.

What counts as an emergency?

An emergency is when someone who depends on you:

- is ill and needs your help
- is involved in an accident or assaulted
- needs you to arrange their longer term care
- needs you to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care, such as a childminder or nurse failing to turn up



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- goes into labour

You can also take time off if a dependant dies and you need to make funeral arrangements or attend the funeral.

What if I know in advance that the problem is going to arise?

The legal right only covers emergencies. If you know beforehand that you're going to need time off, you may be able to arrange this with your employer by taking another form of leave. If it's your child that's involved, you may be entitled to a period of parental leave.

How much time can I take off?

As long as it takes to deal with the immediate emergency. For example, if your child falls ill you can take enough time off to deal with their initial needs, such as taking them to the doctor and arranging for their care. But you'll need to make other arrangements if you want to stay off work longer to care for them yourself.

Will I be paid?

Paid leave **may** be given, **at Sheffield Mind's discretion**, up to a maximum of 5 days for any one instance and up to a maximum of 10 days in any 12 month period.

How much notice do I have to give my employer?

You must tell your Line Manager as soon as possible why you are away from work and how long you expect to be off. If you return to work before you've had the chance to contact your Manager, you must still tell them why you were absent.

Any request for compassionate leave should be made to your Line Manager.

HOLIDAYS

The holiday year runs from 1 April to 31 March and full time staff are entitled to 25 days paid holiday a year. This increases to 30 days on completion of 5 years service. The additional 5 days will be due in the leave year following the employees 5th anniversary. All employees are also entitled to 8 days statutory bank holidays per year. If you work part-time you will be entitled to holidays pro rata.

Religious holidays may be taken as part of your annual leave entitlement, by prior agreement with your line manager. Such leave will not be unreasonably withheld.

If your employment starts in the course of a holiday year, your entitlement will be calculated on a pro rata basis.

If you should leave before taking your holiday, outstanding holiday due at the point of leaving will be paid.. Deductions from final salary will be made in respect of holidays taken in excess of entitlement on termination of employment.



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Where holiday has not been taken by the end of the current year, up to 5 days or more may be carried forward to the next holiday year, with the agreement of the Manager. Pro rata for part time employees. Any holiday not used in a holiday year or approved to carry forward will be lost.

All holidays should be arranged with the prior approval of your Line Manager and with any relevant work colleagues. Normally 3 weeks notice will be required for periods of leave of more than a week. One weeks notice is required for lesser periods.

TIME OFF IN LIEU (TOIL)

Sheffield Mind is committed to supporting staff in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. As part of this commitment, if you work more than your contracted hours per week, and you have agreed the need for this with your Line Manager, then you will be able to take TOIL for those additional hours.

TOIL must normally be taken within one month of working the additional hours otherwise in exceptional circumstances taken as convenient with the agreement of your Line Manager.

All leave must be agreed with your Line Manager prior to you taking it.

EXTENDED LEAVE

Sheffield Mind recognises that staff may need to take extended periods of leave to accommodate their personal circumstances.

Normally, extended leave will be defined as leave of more than two weeks at a time.

Extended periods of **unpaid** leave may be granted, depending on your individual needs and circumstances.

All reasonable and feasible requests for extended leave will be considered.
All leave must be agreed with your Line Manager prior to you taking it.

All new and existing staff should be made aware of this policy on commencement of their employment. It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that all staff who report to them are aware of and adhere to the policy framework within which Sheffield Mind operates and to keep them abreast of updated and new policies as soon as practicable.

Policy agreed by Directors on 3rd March 2009

Policy due to be reviewed on March 2011