

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Human Resources

Annual leave and public holidays policy

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General

All employees must use the corporate leave booking system to book annual and privilege leave. If you work a non-standard work pattern you will also have a bank holiday plan in the system. You must book off any bank holiday that falls on a day you are contracted to work. For more information on how to use the corporate leave booking system follow the guidance on MyHub.

- [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs | Annual Leave Additional information \(sscl.com\)](https://sscl.com)

If you want to calculate your leave manually there is also a calculator available on MyHub.

- [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs | Annual Leave Calculators \(sscl.com\)](https://sscl.com)

If you work a non-standard working pattern, for example part-time, compressed hours, shifts, you are entitled to annual leave, bank holidays and privilege leave are pro-rated based on your contracted working week. Further information is available below in [Employees on a non-standard work pattern](#). Calculation examples are also included in [Annex A](#).

Important – If you are on flexitime you need to be aware that what you put on your flexi sheet to credit leave will be different from what debits from your leave balance in the corporate leave booking system. This is because your flexi sheet records the actual times you work, which means when you credit or debit time you use actual hours and minutes. The corporate leave booking system uses decimal hours to calculate entitlement and when booking leave. For example, if you work a compressed working week you will book off 9.25 hours per day, and credit 9 hours 15 minutes on your flexi sheet. There is a decimal conversion table available in [Annex A](#).

Annual leave, public holiday and privilege leave entitlement

Employees who are new to the civil service and who joined on, or after, 25 March 2013

Your annual leave entitlement depends on your contracted hours and your length of continuous service / civil service start date. The table below shows the link between length of service and the annual leave allowance for full-time employees, excluding those with reserved rights. If you are an existing civil servant and you transfer in from another government department, we will use your civil service start date to calculate your leave entitlement, provided that the service is continuous.

The corporate leave booking system will apply the increase automatically at the start of each leave year.

| Year(s) of Continuous Service | Annual Leave Entitlement |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| In first year of service | 25 days / 185 hours |

| Year(s) of Continuous Service | Annual Leave Entitlement |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| In second year of service | 26 days / 192.4 hours |
| In third year of service | 27 days / 199.8 hours |
| In fourth year of service | 28 days / 207.2 hours |
| In fifth year of service | 29 days / 214.6 hours |
| After 5 years' service | 30 days / 222 hours |

Reserved rights (employees in post before 25 March 2013)

If you were a civil servant, in post prior to 25 March 2013, and you have remained continuously employed as a civil servant since that time, you are entitled to 30 days' annual leave, plus 1.5 days additional leave, which replaced privilege leave previously taken at Christmas and Easter. This additional leave can be taken in the same way as annual leave, at any time throughout the year, with approval from your manager. The additional leave is retained as a reserved right and is reflected in your leave entitlement in the corporate leave booking system. Full-time employees will have 31.5 days / 233.1 hours entitlement or 226.8 hours for those London based employees who also have a reserved right to a 36-hour working week.

Annual leave year

Your leave year is personal to you and will be as follows:

- If you are a new employee, a transfer in from another government department, or joined the organisation on, or after, 1 April 1997 your leave year will start from the anniversary of your appointment.
- If you joined the organisation on or before 31 March 1997, your leave year will begin on the first day of the month in which you were born.

In certain circumstances it may be possible for you to have a different leave year, for example to align with your partner's leave year. If you wish to change the date, you must agree this with your manager.

If you have transferred in from another government department and you have not yet reached the maximum leave entitlement of 30 days, you do not need to change your leave year start date to the anniversary of your appointment in the Civil Service. The corporate leave booking system will automatically apply any leave entitlement increase at the start of the leave year in which it is due and pro-rate the entitlement accordingly.

Managers, you are responsible for ensuring that a change in leave year does not advantage employees, including those with fewer than five years' service.

Bank holidays

You are also entitled to 8 bank holidays. This is the equivalent of 59.2 hours / 57.6 (protected 36-hour week) if you work full-time. The calculation method is 8 days x 7.4 / 7.2 standard daily hours.

The bank holiday and privilege leave year runs in line with the calendar year, 1 January to 31 December. If you join part way through the year you are only entitled to the remaining bank holidays in the year, up to 31 December.

If a bank holiday falls within a period of annual leave, it will not count against your annual leave allowance.

The bank holidays in England and Wales are listed below. If you work in Scotland, you are entitled to the 8 Scottish equivalents (the [King's birthday privilege day](#) is typically used to cover St Andrew's Day).

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- May Day Bank holiday
- Late May Bank holiday (Spring Bank holiday)
- Late Summer Bank holiday
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

You can find the dates for the bank holidays on the [gov.uk/bank-holidays website](http://gov.uk/bank-holidays).

When a bank holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday you will be advised of the alternative day to take.

Privilege day (King's birthday)

As a civil servant you are also entitled to a day off in recognition of the King's birthday. The privilege day is equivalent to 7.4 / 7.2 hours (protected 36-hour week) if you work full-time.

You accrue this day on the Friday before the late May bank holiday. If you leave before this date, you are not entitled to the day, and it must not be used in final leave calculations. If you join after this date, you are not entitled to the day until it is accrued in the next calendar year.

Privilege leave takes priority over annual leave and therefore must be used as soon as possible after the date it is accrued unless you're on Scottish bank holidays and you're using this time to cover St Andrew's day.

Managing and applying for leave

You are responsible for following the annual leave policy. You must also use the corporate leave booking system to book all your leave (annual, privilege and bank holiday, if applicable), unless an exemption is agreed. For example, as a reasonable adjustment. You

should give your manager reasonable notice of the day(s) you wish to take, and your manager must authorise requests before the leave is booked / taken.

Your annual leave may be cancelled, or you may be recalled from leave at any time, if required by management to meet unexpected operational needs for example a disease outbreak. If, because of cancelled leave, you are left with untaken leave at the end of your leave year, see [Carrying over leave](#).

If you work a multiple week work pattern or part year you must edit your leave requests to reflect your contracted working hours where necessary. For example, if you work a part year or term time contract you must book off your actual working day and not your average (contrived) hours. Or if you work a 9-day fortnight you may need to edit entries depending on, which week of your work pattern you're booking leave.

Following policy and associated guidance is important as you must make sure that you do not take more leave than you're entitled to as this may be considered internal fraud and may lead to disciplinary action.

Managers, you are responsible for ensuring that employees follow the annual leave policy. You should ensure business needs are considered and can be met when considering and approving requests for annual or additional leave. If a request for leave involves specific considerations, for example, religious belief, managers are encouraged to be flexible wherever possible.

You are responsible for ensuring that employees do not take more annual leave than their allowance.

Accrual of annual, bank holiday and privilege leave

Paid and unpaid special leave

If you are on paid or unpaid special leave over a bank holiday or the privilege day read the [special leave policy](#) for guidance on the impact this may have on your entitlement.

Unauthorised absence

If you have an unauthorised absence, you are not entitled to the bank holidays or the privilege day if they fall during your period of absence. This applies whether the bank holiday / privilege day is a contracted working day or not.

This means you cannot take a day in lieu if you are employed on a standard work pattern (Monday to Friday, 7.4 / 7.2 hours per day). If you are employed on a non-standard work pattern you must deduct the hours for each day you're not entitled to from your bank holiday and / or privilege plan. You must not take this time on a different date.

For example

If your unauthorised absence starts on the Wednesday before the late May bank holiday and you return to work on the Thursday after you are not entitled to the bank holiday or the privilege day.

Career breaks

Whilst you are on a career break your service is not reckonable and you do not accrue annual leave. This means that if you were not on the maximum entitlement when you went on career break your entitlement will be the same when you return. It does not increase whilst you are off, for example, if you were on 27 days you will return on 27 days.

The corporate leave booking system will not recognise that you have been on a career break, and you must submit manual adjustments to:

- reduce your annual leave on your return based on your pro-rated entitlement from your return date to the end of your leave year.
- reduce your leave entitlement to the level you were on before you went on career break if you are not on 30 days. You must do this each year until you reach the maximum entitlement.
- increase your entitlement by 1 day / 7.4 hours when you have accrued the required amount of reckonable service. As this is likely to be part way through a leave year you will need to pro-rate the hours based on the number of calendar days from the date you accrue a year's service to the end of your leave year.

For example

If you work 37 hours and your annual leave year runs from 8 June and your reckonable service increases your entitlement by 1 day on 1 November. Your pro rata entitlement to the end of your leave year is:

7.4 (full-time entitlement to 1 days' leave) \div 365 calendar days \times 219 (days between 1 November anniversary date and 7 June leave year end date) = 4.44 hours (full-time annual leave adjustment). This is pro-rated further if you work part time.

You also do not accrue bank holiday or privilege leave whilst on a career break. You must not use the pro rata hours in your plans that you are not entitled to.

For example

If you work a full-time compressed working week and you return to work on 1 June. You must not use the 7.4 hours in your privilege plan or 37 hours in your bank holiday plan (5 bank holidays 1 January to 31 May \times 7.4 standard daily hours). This would be pro-rated if you worked part time.

Maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave

You continue to accrue annual leave, bank holiday and privilege leave throughout maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave.

For guidance on how to manage leave in the corporate leave booking system follow the instructions on MyHub.

- [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs | Maternity/Adoption/Shared Parental/Paternity Leave – Managing Annual Leave and Bank Holidays \(sscl.com\)](#)

Sickness absence

You will continue to accrue annual leave entitlement whilst you are on sickness absence. However, if you are ill on a bank holiday or the privilege leave day, and this is a day you are contracted to work you are not entitled to the day even if the illness is medically certified. The exception is the rare situation where, by not taking the bank holiday or privilege day, you would take fewer than 28 days / 207.2 hours (201.6 protected) in your leave year. This is because the statutory yearly entitlement to holidays, which includes bank holidays and privilege leave is 28 days, pro rata for part-time employees.

This means that you cannot take a day in lieu if you are employed on a standard work pattern (Monday to Friday, 7.4 / 7.2 hours per day). If you are employed on a non-standard work pattern you must deduct the hours for each day you're not entitled to from your bank holiday and / or privilege leave plan. You must not take this time on a different date. See [Annex A](#) for what to deduct if you're not entitled to a bank holiday or the privilege day. This is important as you must make sure that you do not take more leave than you're entitled to as this may be considered internal fraud and may lead to disciplinary action.

If the bank holiday / privilege day was on your contractual non-working day you do not need to take any action. You can take the time on another date. However, this leave should be used as soon as possible after the day it was earned.

If your absence spans two leave years, or if you return to work after sick absence so close to the end of the leave year that you cannot reasonably take your remaining entitlement, you may carry over unused holiday into the next year. The maximum leave that you can carry over is 28 days / 207.2 hours (201.6 hours protected 36-hour week) statutory entitlement, pro rata for part time employees, less any leave taken during the holiday year that has just ended. If you have taken 28 days / 207.2 hours (including bank holidays and privilege leave) by the end of the leave year, you will not be allowed to carry anything over. If you have taken less than 28 days, the remainder may be carried over. For example, a full-time employee who has taken two weeks' leave plus two public holidays (total 12 days / 88.8 hours) before starting long-term sick absence can only carry over three weeks and one day (total 16 days / 118.4 hours).

Any holiday that is carried over but is not taken within 18 months of the end of the holiday year in which it accrued will be lost.

Sickness absence during or just before annual leave

If you are ill whilst on annual leave, you can choose whether to have the days that you are unwell treated as annual leave or sick absence.

If you fall sick during a period of annual leave, and this seriously affects your leave (i.e., a period of four or more working days continuous illness) then must follow the normal rules on notifying your manager of your sick absence, staying connected and supply a self-certificate or statement by a qualified medical practitioner to that effect. Your annual leave will need to be cancelled in the corporate leave booking system.

You must notify your manager on the first day you are unwell. In exceptional circumstances if this is not possible, for example if you are abroad and in a remote area, you must make every effort to contact your manager as soon as you can. You must obtain documentary evidence of your incapacity from a local medical practitioner and submit this to your manager on your return. A 'Fit Note' supplied retrospectively by your own doctor cannot be accepted as proof of incapacity whilst abroad.

You can choose to take your paid annual leave during your sick absence to cover any shortfall in pay which would result from being on half or nil pay. Line managers must update the corporate leave booking system with the leave taken and notify SSCL when an employee wants to take their paid annual leave during periods of half or nil pay. This will ensure the individual is paid at the full rate for that period. Use the [forms and follow the instructions on Myhub](#) to notify SSCL.

Employees on a non-standard work pattern

A non-standard work pattern is anything other than full-time, Monday to Friday, 7.4 hours per day / 7.2 (protected 36-hour week). For example, part time, compressed working week, 9-day fortnight, part year working, shifts.

If you have a non-standard work pattern you will have a bank holiday plan in the corporate leave booking system. You must book off all the bank holidays that fall on a contracted working day. If a bank holiday falls on a day you are not contracted to work, you do not book it off.

When you take annual / bank holiday / privilege leave, you must book off the number of hours you are contracted to work on that day. For example, if you work a 4-day compressed working week you must book off 9.25 hours for each day you are contracted to work.

Depending on your contracted daily hours and the days you work you may not have enough hours in your plan to book off all the bank holidays you need to. In this case you should use annual leave to make up the difference. If you have any hours remaining in your plan you may use these in the same way you would annual leave.

Example

Employee A and employee B both work 16 hours a week over two days, both part time employees are entitled to a total of 25.6 hours bank holiday leave (8 days x 7.4 standard daily hours ÷ 37 full time weekly hours x 16 part time weekly hours).

Employee A works part time 2 days per week - Tuesday and Wednesday. During the year only 1 bank holiday falls on one of their working days. Employee A will book off 8 hours from their bank holiday plan for that day, which leaves them with a balance of 17.6 hours (25.6 hours pro-rated entitlement – 8 hours need to book off).

Employee B works part time 2 days per week - Monday and Tuesday. During the year 6 bank holidays fall on a working day. Employee B needs to book off 8 hours from their bank holiday plan for each day (6 days x 8 hours = 48 hours). They do not have enough hours in their plan to cover all of the days and must book the shortfall from their annual leave plan to cover the 22.4 hour difference (25.6 hours pro-rated entitlement - 48 hours need to book off).

In exceptional circumstances, if you have no annual leave left you can clear the deficit using flexi credit hours in agreement with your manager. You must make sure you reduce the credit balance on your flexi sheet if you do this.

If you move from full to part time hours or vice versa, or you change your working pattern through the year, the corporate leave system will update your leave balance. Please see the [Flexible working pages](#) to find out how to change your working pattern.

Carrying over leave

You may carry over up to a maximum of ten days / 74 hours leave (72 hours – [protected 36-hour week](#)) from one leave year to another. This is pro-rated if you work part-time. The corporate leave booking system will automatically carry over up to the maximum allowed.

In exceptional circumstances employees may carry over more than 10 days annual leave, for example if you have been specifically prevented by your manager from taking your full annual leave allowance or for personal reasons, for example to visit relatives in a distant country. You can submit a request for additional carry over via the corporate leave booking system. This leave cannot be carried forward into subsequent years.

! Important – it is a statutory requirement that you take a minimum of 28 days / 207.2 hours leave, pro rata if you work part-time. This includes 8 bank holidays and the privilege day.

Bringing leave forward

In the final month of your leave year, you may anticipate up to a maximum of seven days / 51.8 hours leave (50.4 hours – [protected 36-hour week](#)) from the next year's leave allowance, subject to the approval of your manager. Your manager will need to process this in the corporate leave booking system.

Leave arrangements on retirement, resignation, or dismissal

If, when you leave the organisation, the amount of leave you have taken exceeds the amount you have earned up to that date, you will be required to refund from your salary an amount

equivalent to the number of days leave in excess of your entitlement. You should refer to the overpayments policy.

Payment for untaken annual leave may be made only if you leave the organisation in the following circumstances:

Resignation

If you resign you may convert up to ten days / 74 hours (72 – [protected 36-hour week](#)) of any untaken leave into a cash payment. Any other leave should be taken before your last day and may be converted into cash only if your manager has specifically prevented you from taking it and provides a written statement to support this.

Retirement

If you retired on medical grounds whilst absent due to sickness you need to refer to the [accrual of annual leave section](#) in order to calculate any balance of annual leave for cash compensation.

When your last day of service is known well in advance, as is usual with normal and early retirement and redundancy, payment may be made only for annual leave which your manager has specifically prevented you from taking and if they provide a written statement to this effect.

Dismissal

If you are dismissed, every effort should be made to take any outstanding leave before your last day of service.

Death in service

If you die in service, payment will be made in full for all leave outstanding and untaken at the date of death.

Payment of outstanding leave calculation

Payments for untaken leave and refunds for excess leave are calculated as follows:

For full time employees on a standard 5 day working pattern, we will pay each day of annual leave at the rate of 1/261 of basic annual salary. This includes reckonable allowances, for example TARA.

For example, £25,000 (annual full-time basic pay £23,000 plus £2,000 TARA allowance) divided by 261 equals £95,79.

If you work part time or a non-standard working pattern (9-day fortnight or compressed working week) you will receive an hourly rate of pay based on the number of hours you are being paid for. The hourly rate of pay calculation is annual full time equivalent basic pay plus reckonable allowances divided by 52.2, divided by (37/ 36 protected). For example, £25,000 divided by 52.2 equals £478.93, divided by 37 equals £12.94 per hour.

Annex A – Annual leave calculations and conversion to decimal hours

To calculate full-time leave entitlement in hours you multiply your full-time equivalent leave entitlement days by a standard day.

A standard day is 7.4 / 7.2 hours. This is calculated as 37 / 36 full-time hours divided by 5 days.

The calculation automatically converts any time under 1 hour into a decimal format. This is rounded to 2 decimal places.

For example

25 days x 7.4 standard daily hours = 185 full time annual leave hours

For part time employees this is pro-rated based on your contracted weekly hours. If you work part year we use the same calculation, but multiply by your average weekly hours.

For example

185 (full time annual leave hours) ÷ 37 full-time hours x 25 part time weekly hours = 125 pro-rated annual leave hours

The table below shows the conversion from minutes to hours (one hour divided by 60 minutes, multiplied by the number of minutes).

| Minutes | Hours | Minutes | Hours | Minutes | Hours | Minutes | Hours | Minutes | Hours | Minutes | Hours |
|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1 | 0.02 | 11 | 0.18 | 12 | 0.35 | 31 | 0.52 | 41 | 0.68 | 51 | 0.85 |
| 2 | 0.03 | 12 | 0.20 | 22 | 0.37 | 32 | 0.53 | 42 | 0.70 | 52 | 0.87 |
| 3 | 0.05 | 13 | 0.22 | 23 | 0.38 | 33 | 0.55 | 43 | 0.72 | 53 | 0.88 |
| 4 | 0.07 | 14 | 0.23 | 24 | 0.40 | 34 | 0.57 | 44 | 0.73 | 54 | 0.90 |
| 5 | 0.08 | 15 | 0.25 | 25 | 0.42 | 35 | 0.58 | 45 | 0.75 | 55 | 0.92 |
| 6 | 0.10 | 16 | 0.27 | 26 | 0.43 | 36 | 0.60 | 46 | 0.77 | 56 | 0.93 |
| 7 | 0.12 | 17 | 0.28 | 27 | 0.45 | 37 | 0.62 | 47 | 0.78 | 57 | 0.95 |
| 8 | 0.13 | 18 | 0.30 | 28 | 0.47 | 38 | 0.63 | 48 | 0.80 | 58 | 0.97 |
| 9 | 0.15 | 19 | 0.32 | 29 | 0.48 | 39 | 0.65 | 49 | 0.82 | 59 | 0.98 |
| 10 | 0.17 | 20 | 0.33 | 30 | 0.50 | 40 | 0.67 | 50 | 0.83 | 60 | 1.00 |

What to deduct if an employee is not entitled to a public and privilege day

If you are not entitled to a bank holiday or privilege day you must deduct the pro rata entitlement for that day from the relevant plan. For example, if you work full-time compressed hours this will be 7.4 hours (7.2 protected 36-hour week). If you work part time this will be the pro rata hours for the day. The calculation is:

7.4 full time daily hours (7.2 protected) ÷ 37 full time weekly hours (36 protected) x part time weekly hours

For example, if you work 30 hours per week:

7.4 ÷ 37 x 30 = 6 hours (pro rata entitlement to be deducted for 1 day)

