



# Employee Leave Policy

South Kesteven District Council supports our employees to take time off work and this policy outlines the different entitlements and schemes available.

## Contents

1. Policy Statement.....	2
2. Scope .....	2
3. Guiding principles .....	2
4. Annual Leave .....	2
4.1 Annual leave entitlement .....	2
4.2 Requests for annual leave .....	3
4.3 Leave period and carry over .....	3
4.4 Leavers .....	3
4.5 Purchasing annual leave .....	3
5. Parental Bereavement leave and pay.....	4
6. Dependents leave .....	4
7. Compassionate leave .....	4
8. Support for military community employees .....	5
9. Carers Leave .....	5
10. Time off for public duties.....	5
11. 'Safe Leave' policy .....	6

### Relevant forms and letters:

- [Compassionate Leave Form](#)

### Related policies and support:

- [Domestic Abuse Guide](#)
- [Maternity Leave](#)
- [Paternity Leave](#)
- [Shared Parental](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing [hr@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:hr@southkesteven.gov.uk)

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

## 1. Policy Statement

At South Kesteven District Council, we recognise the importance of healthy work-life balance and are committed to supporting employees in managing their personal responsibilities alongside their professional duties. This Leave Policy outlines the types of leave available and the conditions under which they can be accessed. By providing a fair and consistent approach to leave, we aim to promote employee wellbeing, support individual circumstances and ensure service continuity.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of South Kesteven District Council. It does not apply to casual workers or agency staff.

Please see separate Council policies for:

- Maternity Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Flexible Working
- Shared Parental Leave

## 3. Guiding principles

- The Council is committed to treating all employees fairly and equitably in relation to leave entitlements and requests.
- Leave arrangements will be administered in accordance with statutory rights and the Council's policies.
- Requests for leave will be considered sensitively and managers will balance operational requirements with individual needs.
- Employees are encouraged to take their annual leave entitlement to support their health and wellbeing.
- Where possible, leave should be planned and approved in advance to ensure effective service delivery.

## 4. Annual Leave

### 4.1 Annual leave entitlement

Annual leave entitlement is outlined in the table below. Annual leave for part time staff is calculated on a pro-rata basis.

	Basic leave entitlement	After 5 years Local Government service
Annual Leave Entitlement	26	31

The additional leave after 5 years Local Government service becomes effective at the start of the next leave year (1<sup>st</sup> April) following the 5 year qualification.

Annual leave for new starters is calculated on a pro-rata basis.

In addition to the entitlement outlined above, employees are entitled to 8 bank holidays per year. Part time workers are entitled to a pro-rata bank holiday entitlement.

#### **4.2 Requests for annual leave**

Leave requests should be approved in advance, with reasonable notice provided wherever possible. While there is no fixed notice period for booking annual leave, it should be agreed upon between the employee and their manager.

Managers should ensure that approval of leave does not compromise staffing levels or negatively impact service delivery.

#### **4.3 Leave period and carry over**

The Council's annual leave year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Up to 5 days leave may be carried over to the following year with line manager approval. In exceptional circumstances, more than 5 days leave may be carried over with Assistant Director or Director approval (e.g. where the employee has been away from work for a significant period of the year).

Requests to bring leave forward from the following leave year will only be approved by line managers in exceptional circumstances.

#### **4.4 Leavers**

Employees leaving the Council should agree with their line manager if outstanding leave (pro-rata for the year worked) will be taken prior to their last day of service or paid in their final salary.

Employees who have taken annual leave in excess of their pro-rata entitlement will have the appropriate amount deducted from their final salary payment.

#### **4.5 Purchasing annual leave**

Purchasing annual leave is available to all permanent employees and those on fixed term contracts over 12 months. This scheme gives employees the opportunity to buy additional annual leave on top of their usual holiday entitlement, subject to management approval. Up to five working days can be bought, or equivalent weekly hours for part time staff, with the appropriate deductions in pay spread over twelve months. Requests to purchase annual leave should be sent to HR by 31<sup>st</sup> January in the leave year prior to the year the requested leave is for.

## 5. Parental Bereavement leave and pay

Under the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018, employees who experience the loss of a child under the age of 18 are entitled to two weeks parental bereavement leave paid at the full basic pay rate. This is a day one right, meaning there is no minimum length of service required. This entitlement applies to anyone with parental responsibility for the child. This also applies to parents who suffer a still birth 24 weeks or more into pregnancy, although it does not affect right to maternity leave entitlement.

## 6. Dependents leave

Employees can take a reasonable amount of time off work (unpaid) to deal with unexpected and sudden emergencies involving people who depend on them. The time off is subject to managerial discretion and supports employees in being able to make longer term care arrangements if required. This can be used for illness or unexpected incidents involving a dependant child during school hours.

Employees should personally make contact with their line manager as soon as is reasonably practicable to explain the reasons for the need to take time off and how long the absence is likely to last. In most cases, the period of absence should not be more than one or two days.

## 7. Compassionate leave

SKDC will normally grant compassionate leave in circumstances where an employee has to make arrangements for family bereavements of immediate family members or attend their funeral:

Family Member	Maximum number of days paid
Mother, Father, Spouse, Brother, Sister.	5 days
Grandparent, Mother-in-Law, Father-in-Law, Niece, Nephew, Aunt, Uncle, Cousin.	1 day

At the discretion of the line manager, flexibility will be applied on the above categorisations on a case by case basis.

SKDC may also grant up to five days of compassionate leave where an employee's close relative or dependant has a serious illness.

All types of compassionate leave are granted at the discretion of the line manager.

## 8. Parental Bereavement Leave

The Council recognises the devastating impact of losing a child, including stillbirths after 24 weeks of pregnancy, and provides parental bereavement leave to support employees during such deeply difficult times. Eligible employees may take either one or two weeks of leave, either consecutively or separately, within 56 weeks of the child's death. The Council will provide two weeks' leave at full pay, regardless of length of service or earnings.

Employees can access a range of emotional and practical support through the Council's Employee Assistance Programme, including free and confidential counselling services.

## **9. Disability Leave**

Disability Leave is available to support employees who are disabled to attend planned medical appointments, treatment or rehabilitation relating to their disability. This leave is separate from sick absence which will be used when an employee is unwell. This leave will usually be unpaid or employees may choose to make up time through the Council's flexi-time scheme where applicable.

Managers are encouraged to take a flexible and supportive approach to ensure reasonable adjustments are made, helping to remove barriers and enable employees to remain in work.

## **8. Support for military community employees**

As a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant and a Gold Award holder under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, we are committed to supporting Council employees within the military community.

A Reservist will be granted 10 days additional yearly paid leave to meet commitments such as training camps or courses. Employees should provide evidence that they need to take the time off e.g. a letter from their Commanding Officer. Any additional leave should be taken out of holiday entitlement.

New recruits or members of staff planning to become a Reservist should inform their line manager.

## **9. Carers Leave**

Employees have a statutory right to one week of unpaid carer's leave per year (pro-rated for part time employees). This leave can be used to provide or arrange care for a dependent with a long-term care need. The leave may be taken flexibly, in blocks ranging from half a day to a full continuous week.

All carers are entitled to this leave from their first day of employment.

For further information on this, please see the 'Carer Support' section on the [HR Hub](#).

## **10. Time off for public duties**

Employees may request reasonable time off work to perform specified public duties such as a 'Justice of the Peace'. Colleagues requesting time off for public duties should speak to their line manager and HR.

Employees who are called for jury service should provide evidence to HR. The Council will 'top up' the standard allowance provided by the court to reach the employee's usual rate of pay.

## 11. 'Safe Leave' policy

The Council recognises that employees experiencing domestic abuse may require time away from work to access support and ensure their safety and wellbeing. In such cases, up to 5 days additional paid leave will be provided to employees. This can be used for various purposes, including attending medical appointments, seeking legal advice or arranging/moving into alternative accommodation.

Employees in this situation are encouraged to speak confidentially with their line manager or a member of the HR team.

## 12. Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is any absence from work that has not been approved in advance or cannot be reasonably explained. The Council expects all employees to follow the correct procedures for requesting and reporting leave. Failure to do so may be treated as a disciplinary matter as it can impact service deliver and place additional pressure on colleagues.

For further information about this policy, please contact the HR Team at [hr@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:hr@southkesteven.gov.uk).

- This policy applies to all employees within South Kesteven District Council unless stated otherwise within the policy.
- This policy does not form part of contracts of employment.
- The Council reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.