

# SPECIAL LEAVE POLICY

APPROVED BY HHP BOARD:  
11 February 2025  
EFFECTIVE DATE:  
February 2025



hebridean housing  
partnership

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

|                                                         |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION .....                                      | 2  |
| GENERAL PRINCIPLES .....                                | 2  |
| PAID LEAVE.....                                         | 3  |
| COMPASSIONATE/BEREAVEMENT LEAVE .....                   | 3  |
| REQUIREMENT TO ESCORT TO HOSPITAL .....                 | 4  |
| FAMILY ILLNESS.....                                     | 4  |
| CONFERENCES .....                                       | 4  |
| UNION ACTIVITIES .....                                  | 5  |
| POST ENTRY TRAINING AND EDUCATION .....                 | 5  |
| PUBLIC DUTIES.....                                      | 5  |
| JURY SERVICE/WITNESSES.....                             | 6  |
| MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY.....                              | 7  |
| UNPAID LEAVE .....                                      | 7  |
| WHEN LEAVE MAY BE TAKEN .....                           | 7  |
| WHO IS A DEPENDANT?.....                                | 8  |
| FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES .....                          | 8  |
| CHARITABLE WORKS-NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL.....        | 9  |
| PARENTAL ASSISTANCE/YOUTH CAMPS/SPORTS COMPETITION..... | 9  |
| EXTENDED UNPAID LEAVE.....                              | 9  |
| PENSIONS.....                                           | 9  |
| EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES .....                               | 9  |
| MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY .....               | 10 |
| INTERPRETATIONS & ABBREVIATIONS .....                   | 11 |

---

## INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Special Leave may be defined as leave, either paid or unpaid, given in addition to annual leave to help employees balance the demands of domestic and work responsibilities at times of either urgent, unforeseen and/or parental, carer and public service need. Leave granted under these arrangements is not intended for long term domestic and family needs.

---

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Leave allowances from Para 3.4 onwards are for each calendar year.
- 2.2 All special leave requests should, wherever possible, be applied for in advance of the dates being requested.
- 2.3 With the exception of statutory parental bereavement leave, the entitlements detailed in this policy are non-contractual and we reserve the right to revise this Policy in accordance with our Standing Orders.
- 2.4 Requests for unpaid leave to enhance the time off permitted by this policy can be made to the employee's line Director.
- 2.5 All applications for special leave will be considered sensitively and with the appropriate levels of confidentiality. However, in deciding whether or not to grant request, line manager will take operational circumstances into account, and while every effort will be made to accommodate requests wherever possible, there may be occasions where requests may be declined.
- 2.6 Employees are reminded that if they submit applications for special leave or time off for a specific purpose which are made on a false basis, this may constitute a breach of their contract. Should this be the case, the employee may be subject to Hebridean Housing Partnership's disciplinary procedures, up to and including a final warning.

---

## PAID LEAVE

3.1 Paid leave falls into the categories below:

- a) Compassionate/Bereavement
- b) Requirement to Escort to Hospital
- c) Family Illness
- d) Conferences
- e) Union Activities
- f) Post Entry Training and Education
- g) Public Duties
- h) Community

---

## COMPASSIONATE/BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

3.2 If it is not possible to arrange the funeral within the timescales stated, then the period can be extended by the line manager. Compassionate leave is a day one right.

|                                                                                     | Detail                                                                                              | Timescales                  | Paid Time |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| a)                                                                                  | Death of wife, husband, partner, parent or child (includes a still born child)                      | Within a month of the death | 10 days   |
| b)                                                                                  | Death of a father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister, brother or grandchild | Within a month of the death | 5 days    |
| c)                                                                                  | Next of kin of an employee or an employee acting as an executor/executrix                           | Within seven days of death  | 3 days    |
| d)                                                                                  | Death of Grandparent                                                                                | Within seven days of death  | 3 days    |
| e)                                                                                  | Death of a brother-in-law or sister-in-law                                                          | Within seven days of death  | 1 day     |
| f)                                                                                  | Death of an uncle or aunt, niece, or nephew (blood relative)                                        | Within seven days of death  | 1 day     |
| <i>These relationships also include step relationships and partner relationship</i> |                                                                                                     |                             |           |

- 3.3 Parents who suffer a still birth or the loss of a child under the age of 18 are entitled to two weeks statutory parental leave (which is over and above the leave in the table above)
- The leave can be taken as a single block of two weeks, or as two separate blocks of one week, each taken at different times during the 56 weeks after their child's death.
  - The first week of parental bereavement leave will be paid in full. For the second week of parental bereavement leave, employees who have at least 26 weeks continuous service and earn over the lower earnings limit will be entitled to statutory parental bereavement leave pay, in line with other family leave rates.

---

#### REQUIREMENT TO ESCORT TO HOSPITAL

- 3.4 Paid leave up to a maximum of three (3) working days will be granted to employees who are required by the GP or hospital to escort immediate family members for hospital treatment. The immediate family is defined as being wife, husband, partner, child, mother, father, sister and brother or other relatives, where the employee is the main carer.

---

#### FAMILY ILLNESS

- 3.5 Employees are entitled to up to five (5) days of paid leave to care for a dependant who is suddenly taken seriously ill or has been injured and is unable to look after themselves.

---

#### CONFERENCES

- 3.6 Leave of absence, with pay, will be granted at the discretion of the appropriate Director, to a maximum of six (6) working days per annum:
- (a) Employees attending, as delegates, conferences, courses and meetings which are organised by a recognised body; and

- (b) Employees invited to lecture in their professional capacity.

Any additional leave will require the specific approval of the Board.

---

### UNION ACTIVITIES

- 3.7 Employees elected as a Union Steward or to office of the Western Isles Branch of a Union recognised by the Board or sub-branches thereof shall be granted paid leave of absence to attend meetings of the Branch, and up to 5 days paid leave to attend training subject to the approval of the appropriate Director and service requirements

---

### POST ENTRY TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- 3.8 All post entry training and education must be linked into the Approved Training Plan and the Performance Appraisal process. Employees undertaking approved recognised qualifications will be granted a maximum of five days leave of absence with pay for attendance at examinations, to attend training sessions related to the approved course or exam or to complete modules. Such absence must be in accordance with the Training Contact which is an addendum to the employment contract and must be agreed in advance with the appropriate Director.
- 3.9 Where an employee finds it necessary to re-sit an examination or module, special leave will not apply.

---

### PUBLIC DUTIES

- 3.10 We recognise that under the Employment Rights Act 1996 individuals who hold certain public positions have a statutory right to reasonable unpaid leave during working hours to carry out certain public duties.
- 3.11 Although we are under no obligation to grant paid leave for public duties we recognise the valuable skills gained by employees holding such positions and will grant paid time off (normal basic pay) during normal working hours for employees wishing to carry out such duties.

3.12 Leave for public and lifeline agencies is detailed below:

| Agencies                                   | Paid                                          | Unpaid |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------|
| Children's Panel                           | 5 days                                        | 5 days |
| Maritime and Coastguard                    | 5 days for training and response to incidents |        |
| Lifeboat Association                       |                                               |        |
| Hebrides Mountain Rescue                   |                                               |        |
| Scottish Ambulance First Responder         |                                               |        |
| Police Scotland (Special Constables)       |                                               |        |
| Volunteer Reservists e.g. Territorial Army |                                               |        |

3.13 To ensure we take account of the needs of our communities our Chief Executive will have discretion to award paid days in line with para 3.12 to staff who are involved with other Lifeline Agencies.

3.14 Volunteers with Lifeline Agencies must have recorded on the Declaration of Interest form and held on their Personnel file which Lifeline Agencies they are part of, and in which capacity.

---

#### JURY SERVICE/WITNESSES

3.15 An employee receiving a summons to serve on a jury must report the fact to their Director and shall be granted special leave with pay to attend, unless exemption is secured, subject to the deduction of the allowances to which an employee is entitled under the Juror's Allowances Regulations and accordingly the employee should claim such allowances. Any allowances received should be offset against salary and discussed with the Director of Finance & Corporate Services. When required to attend for jury service, an employee will be furnished with an official note of salary, expressed in terms of an hourly rate.

3.16 As witnesses are legally required to attend Court, paid special leave should be made available for the duration of the attendance. The employee should provide their Director with a copy of the citation and as for the Jury any allowance paid for being a witness will be offset against salary.

3.17 An employee appearing in court on their own behalf is required to use annual leave, flexi-time or time to be made up later which will be at the line manager's discretion

and the employee will be expected to make any time up within a reasonable and agreed time scale. Whilst doing so the employee will not be eligible to claim overtime. Alternatively, the absence may be unpaid.

---

#### MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

- 3.18 Employees are entitled to one day's paid leave per year as a 'Make a Difference' day. This day can be used to volunteer at an event or otherwise provide support to a charity organisation. Employees must have approval in advance to use a Make a Difference day from their Director. Opportunities for positive publicity in connection with activities for a Make a Difference day should be taken.

---

#### UNPAID LEAVE

- 4.1 Time off for Dependants is unpaid leave taken by an employee for urgent family reasons where their immediate presence is indispensable. This entitlement may be used in addition to any relevant paid special leave provided and is intended to help employees reconcile the demands of work and home life.
- 4.2 The length of unpaid leave given is at the discretion of your Director who can grant up to a maximum of five (5) days in any calendar year; and the Chief Executive may grant up to a further five (5) days unpaid special leave in any one calendar year where there are special circumstances.

---

#### WHEN LEAVE MAY BE TAKEN

- 4.3 An employee is entitled to take time off in order to take necessary action:
- To provide assistance on an occasion when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured;
  - To make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured (physically or mentally);
  - In consequence of the death of a dependant;
  - Because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant;



- To deal with an incident which involves a child of the employee and which occurs unexpectedly in a period during which an educational establishment which the child attends is reasonable for him/her;
- To accompany a dependant to a medical appointment; or
- If the employee is going on an extended holiday to see family in a country that requires long distant travel such as New Zealand

---

#### WHO IS A DEPENDANT?

4.4 For all of the situations described above, a dependant is a person who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent, or a person who lives in the employee's household. (This does not include someone who is the employee's tenant, lodger, or employee.)

- 'Dependant' can also mean any person who reasonably relies on the employee: for assistance if they fall ill or are injured;
- To make arrangements for the provision of their care in the event of illness or injury; and
- To assist when there has been unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for their care.

---

#### FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

4.5 In terms of its family friendly policies, we are keen to support employees where there would be no financial consequences or detrimental effect on service by granting such leave.

- Directors may grant up to five (5) days unpaid special leave in any one year; and
- The Chief Executive may grant up to a further five (5) days unpaid special leave in any one year where there are special circumstances.

4.6 The special leave described in 4.5 is in addition to entitlements arising in the Parental Leave Policy, and arrangements that may be agreed in accordance with the Flexible Working Policy.

---

#### CHARITABLE WORKS-NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

- 4.7 Special leave up to ten (10) days be made available to staff involved in voluntary work at a national/international level. The leave taken would be unpaid and require prior approval by their Director.

---

#### PARENTAL ASSISTANCE/YOUTH CAMPS/SPORTS COMPETITION

- 4.8 Special leave up to ten (10) days be made available to employees who are involved with youth activities/clubs and who are required to accompany children to camps and competitions. The leave taken would be unpaid and require 21 days prior approval by their Director.

---

#### EXTENDED UNPAID LEAVE

- 4.9 There will be the rare occasion when employees require more than 10 days unpaid leave and on those occasions their request will be submitted to the Board for consideration.

---

#### PENSIONS

- 5.1 If there is any impact to an Employees Pension contributions or entitlement as a result of taking leave in accordance with this Policy, this shall be dealt with in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland), and following the advice of our Pensions Administrator, Highland Council.

---

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 This policy has been developed ensuring that all employees, including those who work part time have equal opportunities for access to special leave. There are no exclusions to the categories of employee who have access to this policy. No employee will be excluded on the grounds of colour, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, social background, marital status, sexual orientation, age or disability.

#### MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years in line with the policy review schedule.
- 7.2 The amount of leave taken under the policy will be reported to the Personnel Working Group on a quarterly basis.

## INTERPRETATIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

The following interpretation and abbreviations are used in this policy:

| WORD                      | INTERPRETATION                                       |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>HHP or Partnership</i> | Hebridean Housing Partnership                        |
| <i>Board</i>              | Means the Board of the Hebridean Housing Partnership |
| <i>Board Members</i>      | All Members of the Board including co-opted Members  |
|                           |                                                      |
|                           |                                                      |
|                           |                                                      |
|                           |                                                      |
|                           |                                                      |
|                           |                                                      |



HHP is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Registered Number: 2644R(S), Registered Office: Creed Court, Gleann Seileach Business Park, Willowglen Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2QP. It is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number:SCO35767, registered as Registered Social Landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator, Registration Number:359 and registered as a Property Factor, Registration Number PF000183

Email: [info@hebrideanhousing.co.uk](mailto:info@hebrideanhousing.co.uk)

Web: [www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk](http://www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk)