

AGE UK EXETER

Controlled Document

Document Name: Absence (Non-Sickness) Policy

Incorporating appointments, dependents leave, time off for public duties, volunteering, and adverse weather

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Owner (Responsibility): Chief Executive Officer

Pass amendments to: Governance Lead

Document Location: www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/policiesandguidelines/

Document Description

The Absence (Non-Sickness) Policy outlines procedures to be followed by staff when reporting non-sickness related absences.

By not complying with this procedure an employee's absence may be deemed unauthorised and go unpaid. Suspected abuse of any aspect of this policy will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedures.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

Implementation and Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice, or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

All aspects of this policy shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy, please contact the Chief Executive Officer by email at info@ageukexeter.org.uk or at Age UK Exeter, The Sycamores, Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter, EX4 7AE, 01392 202092.

Absence (Non-Sickness) Policy

Incorporating appointments, dependents leave, time off for public duties, volunteering and adverse weather

1. Time off work for routine medical or dental appointments

Where possible, staff are asked to arrange medical and dental appointments outside of work time or to adjust their working hours accordingly to accommodate the appointment. Please note that staff may be required to make up their working hours where reasonable. Time off for medical and dental appointments will generally be considered unpaid leave. We are aware however of the significant pressures on the NHS and so, where this is not possible, the situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis as to whether it will be considered unpaid leave or sick leave.

Please note, where an employee is pregnant or is in the process of adopting a child, time off is separately covered within our Time off for Antenatal Appointments Policy and our Time off for Adoption Appointments Policy. Where an employee has a disability, time off for appointments is covered within our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.

2. Dependents Leave

The law recognises that there may be occasions when you need to take time off work to deal with unexpected events involving one of your dependants.

Time off for dependants leave gives all employees the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with certain situations affecting their dependants.

No-one who takes time off in accordance with this policy will be subjected to any detriment.

Reasonable unpaid time off

You have a right to take a reasonable amount of (unpaid) time off work when it is necessary to:

- (a) provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted;
- (b) make longer-term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured.
- (c) take action required in consequence of the death of a dependant.
- (d) deal with the unexpected disruption, termination, or breakdown of arrangements for the care of a dependant (such as a child-minder falling ill); and/or
- (e) deal with an unexpected incident involving your child while a school or another educational establishment is responsible for them.

A dependant for the purposes of this policy is:

- (a) your spouse, civil partner, parent or child.
- (b) a person who lives in the same household as you, but who is not tenant, lodger, boarder, or employee; or
- (c) anyone else who reasonably relies on you to provide assistance, make arrangements or take action on their behalf.

This policy applies to time off to take action which is necessary because of an immediate or unexpected crisis. This policy does not apply where you need to take planned time off or provide longer-term care for a dependant. If this is the case, you should take advice from your line manager.

Whether action is considered necessary will depend on the circumstances, including nature of the problem, the closeness of the relationship between you and the dependant, and whether anyone else is available to assist. Action is unlikely to be considered necessary if you knew of a problem in advance but did not try to make alternative care arrangements.

Reasonable time off in relation to a particular problem will not normally be more than one day or two days. However, we will always consider each set of circumstances on their facts.

Exercising the right to time off

You will only be entitled to time off under this policy if, as soon as is reasonably practicable, you tell your line manager:

- (a) the reason for your absence; and
- (b) how long you expect to be away from work.

If you fail to notify us as set out above, you may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under our Disciplinary Procedure for taking unauthorised time off.

We may in some cases ask you to provide evidence for your reasons for taking the time off, either in advance or on your return to work.

3. Time off for public duties

We wish to enable employees to perform any public duties that they may be committed to undertake and so will give them time off to do so where it does not conflict with the operational needs of our business. We are not legally obliged to grant paid leave for these purposes. The circumstances in which we are prepared to do so are set out below.

Jury service

You should tell your line manager as soon as you are summoned for jury service and provide a copy of your summons if requested.

Depending on the demands of our business we may request that you apply to be excused from or defer your jury service.

We are not required by law to pay you while you are absent on jury service. You will be advised at court of the expenses and loss of earnings that you can claim. However, we will pay basic pay to employees on jury service less any amounts you can claim from the court for lost earnings for up to 14 working days. Time off beyond 14 working days may be paid at our discretion.

Voluntary public duties

Employees are entitled to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to carry out certain public duties, including duties as a tribunal member, magistrate, local councillor, member of an NHS Trust, prison visitor, police station lay visitor or school governor.

If you are unsure whether a public service that you perform is covered by this policy, you should speak to your line manager.

As soon as you are aware that you will require time off for performance of a public service you should notify your line manager in writing, providing full details of the time off that is being requested and the reasons for your request. In order that arrangements can be made to cover your duties in your absence you should make your request in good time.

Each request for time off will be considered on its merits taking account of all the circumstances, including how much time is reasonably required for the activity, how much time you have already taken, and how your absence will affect the business.

All periods of time off to perform public duties will be granted on an unpaid basis.

Reserve forces duties

We are aware that employees who are members of the Reserve Forces (the Territorial Army, Royal Navy Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve or Royal Auxiliary Air Force) may be called up at any time to be deployed on full-time operations and are expected to attend regular training.

We offer up to 10 days special unpaid leave per year (in addition to existing paid holiday entitlements) for reservists to undertake training. In exceptional circumstances we may grant additional unpaid leave in order for these commitments to be met.

If we receive notice that you have been called up for active service, we may apply to an adjudication officer for the notice to be deferred or revoked if your absence would cause serious harm to our business (which could not be prevented by the grant of financial assistance).

Once your military service has ended you may submit a written application for reinstatement to your employment. This should be made by the third Monday following the end of your military service and you should notify us of the date on which you will be available to restart work.

If it is not reasonable and practicable to reinstate you into your former employment, we will offer you the most favourable alternative on the most favourable terms and conditions which are reasonable.

4. Volunteering by Age UK Exeter Employees

As an organisation that benefits from the skills, experience and time of so many volunteers, we recognise the contribution volunteering makes to society. However, due to the charity's limited resources and capacity any voluntary activity undertaken by staff should not be to the detriment of Age UK Exeter. In the main this means that we expect employees to work the hours for which they are contracted. We are also aware that potential conflicts of interest could arise, and staff should be cautious of involving themselves with organisations whose policies and practices are at major variance to those of Age UK Exeter.

Full-time employees

We have limited capacity to provide cover where full-time staff request time off to volunteer with another organisation. One-off requests for unpaid time off will be considered, but a regular commitment during normal work time will not be agreed.

Part-time employees

Some staff are contracted to work on certain days, or at certain hours, others will work flexible hours. Where it is practicable, we will consider a change in work patterns to allow for voluntary activity, but only if it does not impact negatively on our own service provision. One off requests for unpaid time off during normal working hours will be considered in light of the impact to service provision.

5. Adverse weather and other travel disruptions

The charity recognises that employees may face difficulties attending their place of work and returning home during periods of severe weather or when there are disruptions to public transport. While the charity is committed to protecting the health and safety of all of its employees, it must ensure that disruption caused to its services remains minimal.

Reasonable efforts to attend work

Employees should use their best endeavours to attend work in all circumstances. However, it is not the charity's intention that employees put themselves at unnecessary risk when trying to attend work. Members of staff should make reasonable efforts to attend work and if they are unable to do so should contact their line manager or the main reception by 9am to report their absence.

When will this apply

This policy will apply in the case of severe weather conditions or when there are disruptions to transport as determined by the CEO or a senior manager. Advice from the local weather centre, motoring and public transport information services will be sought as appropriate.

Severe conditions or disruptions to public transport occurring at the start of a working day

Employees unable to attend work or delayed because of the weather conditions or disruptions to transport should contact their line manager/senior manager or failing that the main reception by 9am to report their absence and receive instructions on the course of action they should follow.

Lateness

Employees who are delayed will have the opportunity to make up this time at a later date. However, it is open to the Chief Executive Officer to waive this requirement if the lateness is negligible having regard to the severity of the weather conditions or disruptions to transport and each employee's personal circumstances (e.g. distance from their home to work, mode of transport used).

If lateness amounts to half the time of the employee's normal working day, the provisions in relation to absence apply.

Absence

Employees who are unable to report for work due to adverse weather conditions or disruptions to transport will not usually be paid. Where an employee has made all reasonable efforts to get to work but failed to do so because of severe weather conditions or disruptions to transport, the CEO or a senior manager will decide on pay on a case-by-case basis.

Where a decision is taken to close a service due to concerns for the safety of users, or for any other reason, the staff employed in such services will be paid. Staff within these services will be expected to report to their workplace or may be re-directed by management to other duties.

The Chief Executive Officer, Senior Management Team and Governance Lead all have work laptops that they take home daily, thus they should be able to work from home in the case of extreme weather conditions.

Severe conditions or disruptions to transport occurring during the course of a working day

The CEO will decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not it is appropriate for employees to leave work early. When making this decision, they will take into account the employee's circumstances (e.g. distance from her/his home to work and mode of transport), the employee's views and the needs of the charity. The CEO

may require employees who leave work early to take work home with them as appropriate and feasible.

Health and safety

While the charity will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees, employees are reminded of their duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. This includes taking extra care when travelling to and from work in severe weather conditions.

Revision History

Revision date	Summary of Changes	Other Comments
23.12.2021	New Policy to draw together various different policies into one document, using templates supplied by HR Express. This document incorporates and replaces: • Volunteering Policy for AUKE Employees • Adverse Weather & Travel Disruptions Change in 6.2 the time to report in by has changed from 9.30am to 9am to mirror other reporting requirements. Change in section 6.6 to remove the specified options and reworded to say that options will be explored on a case-by-case basis.	Approved by Board of Trustees 10.2.2022 Next review due January 2025
31.01.25	Three yearly review. Section 2 expanded to give clarity around who compassionate leave refers to in line with HR Express guidelines. 14-day payment window added to point 4 regarding jury service.	
02.07.26	Compassionate leave taken out and made a stand-alone policy as recommended by HR Express. Other sections detailed more clearly to see what this policy incorporates.	