

Title of POL: Additional Time Off

Custodian: Chief People Officer

Version Number: 05

Issue date: 27.03.26

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POLICY (POL)

Title of Policy	Additional Time Off		
What type of document is this?	Policy (POL)	Policy Reference Number	HHH-POL-020
Purpose of POL	<p>Helping Hands values all employees and recognise the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance. We understand there will be occasions when additional time off beyond annual leave is required. This policy sets out our arrangements for such circumstances.</p> <p>This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment. Helping Hands reserves the right to amend or adjust this policy at any time as necessary.</p>		
<p>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES Include in this section details of the key roles and associated responsibilities relevant to the document</p>			
Roles	Responsibility		
Chief People Officer	Is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy and ensuring that the policy is communicated across the company through the Senior Management Team(s).		
Helping Hands Managers	Is responsible for implementing and embedding this policy within all teams across the company.		
Helping Hands Employees	Is responsible for adhering to this policy as directed by line managers.		
Scope of POL	This policy applies to all Helping Hands employees. It sets out the organisation’s arrangements for taking additional time off beyond contractual annual leave. It covers compassionate leave, bereavement leave, bereaved partner’s paternity leave, time off for		

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dependants, carer’s leave, public duties, jury service, medical and dental appointments, time off in lieu, reserve force duties and career breaks. The policy outlines the eligibility requirements, the types of leave available and the responsibilities of employees and managers in requesting, considering and administering such leave.

This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment. Helping Hands reserves the right to amend or adjust this policy at any time as necessary.

1.0 Compassionate Leave

Helping Hands are committed to supporting our employees through challenging times, situations such as a serious illness involving a close family member. At the line managers discretion, employees may receive up to 5 days unpaid leave. Alternatively, they may choose to use their annual leave.

At the discretion of the line manager, employees are entitled to up to 5 days of unpaid compassionate leave within a 12-month period for immediate family members: spouse or partner, child, stepchild, grandchild, parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, grandparent, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, or brother- or sister-in-law.

In certain cases, we may exercise discretion to grant compassionate leave for other relatives or close friends, depending on the specific circumstances.

If an employee is unable to return to work after an authorised period of compassionate leave, they should inform their line manager. In such situations, it may be appropriate to take annual leave, subject to managerial approval, or, at our discretion, additional unpaid leave may be granted.

2.0 Bereavement Leave

Helping Hands are committed to supporting our employees through a life changing event such as the loss of a relative or loved one. At the discretion of their line manager employees are entitled to paid bereavement leave in respect of the below, this may include arranging and attending the funeral.

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Parent/Guardian/Partner/Sibling	5 days
Child Stillborn from 24 weeks of Pregnancy	2 Weeks (Employees can take the leave as either a single block of 2 weeks, or as 2 separate blocks of one week, each taken at different times across the first year).
Immediate Grandparent	3 Days

We may exercise our discretion to grant a period of bereavement leave in respect of any other relative or close friend, depending on the circumstances of each case.

If employees are still unable to return to work following an authorised period of leave you should contact their Line Manager. It may be appropriate to take a period of annual leave, subject to their manager's approval, or we may at our discretion grant them further unpaid leave in those circumstances.

3.0 Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

We recognise that the loss of a partner during or shortly after the arrival of a child is an unimaginable and life altering experience. Helping Hands is committed to providing compassionate support while ensuring you can take the time you need to care for your child and navigate this difficult period.

Employees may take up to 52 weeks of unpaid Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave, which must be taken as a single continuous period. This leave must be taken within the first 52 weeks following the child's birth or adoption placement. We encourage employees to discuss any support needs with their manager or HR so that we can respond with

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sensitivity and accommodate their circumstances wherever possible.

Employees qualify for this leave from their first day of employment. To be eligible, an employee must be the child's father or the spouse or partner of the deceased mother or primary adopter at the time of death, and they must have main responsibility for the child's upbringing following the bereavement.

Regarding notice requirements, if leave is to begin within the first eight weeks after the bereavement, the employee may give oral or written notice at any time before the leave begins and must follow this with written confirmation within the first eight weeks. This approach aligns with the government's flexible transitional arrangements for newly eligible parents. If leave will begin after the first eight weeks, at least one week's written notice must be provided before the chosen start date.

Employees may also use up to ten Keeping in Touch (KIT) days while on leave if they wish to remain connected to the workplace in a limited and manageable way. There is no obligation to undertake any KIT days, and choosing not to use them will not affect an employee's rights.

We recognise that we cannot lessen the emotional impact of such a loss, but we are committed to handling every situation with compassion, understanding and confidentiality. Employees affected by bereavement are encouraged to speak with HR or their line manager whenever they feel ready, so that we can offer guidance and ensure the leave is arranged in the most supportive way possible.

4.0 Time off for Dependants

Helping Hands appreciate there may be times or occasions when employees may need to take unpaid time off work to deal with unexpected events involving a dependent.

Employees have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with certain situations affecting their dependents.

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No employee who takes time off in accordance with this policy will be subjected to any detriment in relation to our Absence Policy and Procedure.

A dependent for the purposes of this policy is:

- spouse, civil partner, parent, or child.
- A person who lives in the same household, but who is not a tenant, lodger, boarder, or employee; or
- Anyone else who reasonably relies on an employee to aid, plan or make arrangements on their behalf for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury.
- In relation to the disruption or termination of care for a dependant.

This policy applies to time off which is necessary because of an immediate or unexpected crisis. This policy does not apply where employees need to take planned time off or provide longer-term care for a dependent. If this is the case, advice should be sought from management.

Although it can be difficult, if an employee requires time off for dependants, they should contact their line manager as soon as they are aware. They must explain the reason for the absence and likely duration of absence.

If an employee fails to report their absence to their line manager, they may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under our Disciplinary Procedure for taking unauthorised time off.

5.0 Care's leave

We recognise the challenges that carers face while trying to balance the demands of caring, work, and looking after their own health. Helping Hands are committed to doing what we can to help to ensure that the health and wellbeing of employees with caring responsibilities are looked after.

Whatever your length of service, you have a statutory right to take carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant if they have a long-term care need. Any leave

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taken as carer's leave is unpaid. All other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid.

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

A dependent for the purposes of this policy is:

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

A dependent has a long-term care need if they:

- have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months.
- have a condition that amounts to a disability under the Equality Act 2010; or
- require care for a reason connected to their old age.

A week of carer's leave is the same duration as the employees normal working week, meaning that a full-time employee is entitled to five days' carer's leave in any 12-month period. If an employee is contracted to work four days per week, they will be entitled to four days of carer's leave in any 12-month period, and so on.

Carer leave can be taken in one continuous block, as individual days, or as half days. If you an employee is caring for more than one dependant, they do not have a separate entitlement to carer's leave for each dependant.

Although it can be difficult, employees must inform their line manger before taking leave of this kind and submit their notice using the request for carer's leave form

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available on collaborate. Otherwise, they may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under our Disciplinary Procedure for taking unauthorised time off.

We ask that you give as much notice as possible when requesting carer's leave so that we can plan for your absence. In any event, employees must give notice in advance that is either twice the number of working days that they wish to take as carer's leave, or three days, whichever is earlier.

6.0 Time Off for Public Duties

We endeavour to support employees to perform any public duties that they may be committed to undertake, such as, tribunal member, magistrate, local councillor, member of an NHS Trust, prison volunteer, police station lay visitor or school governor. Therefore, the company will give the employee's unpaid time off to do so where it does not conflict with any operational need.

7.0 Jury Service

Employees should tell their Line Manager as soon as they are summoned for jury service and provide a copy of their summons.

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

Helping Hands will pay basic pay to employees on jury service, less any amounts employees can claim from the court for lost earnings for up to 10 working days. Time off beyond 10 working days may be paid at our discretion.

To receive this payment, a Loss of Earnings Form must be completed and submitted to Payroll. If you do not complete a Loss of Earnings Form any payments will be deducted in your next salary.

POLICY (POL)**8.0 Time Off for Medical or Dental Appointments**

To make a request for time off to attend a routine medical or dental appointment, employees should contact their line manager and provide as much notice as possible, informing the line manager of the time off required. Wherever possible, employees must arrange appointments outside of core hours, or as near to the start or end of the working day.

The line manager may request for proof of the date and time of the appointment. Every effort will be made to meet the request. However, there may be circumstances where the line manager may turn down the request due to operational needs.

Employees may make up lost time for short absences at their discretion, however, if the time off is significant (e.g. four hours or more), you must agree with your line manager on how this will be managed – whether through making the time up, using holiday entitlement, or unpaid leave.

Medical or dental emergencies requiring urgent, unforeseen medical or dental attention and cases where you are admitted to hospital for emergency surgery will be treated as sickness absence in accordance with the absence management policy.

9.0 Lieu Days

We recognise that there may be occasions when an employee is required to work on a non-working day, (subject to their contract) such as a bank holiday or weekend.

In exchange for this additional working day, the employees will receive a lieu day. Lieu days are paid at the normal rate of pay the employee receives.

Any time off in lieu must be taken as soon as possible, ideally in the next three month of accrual, otherwise it will be lost.

An employee must liaise with their line manager to agree a suitable date to take the lieu day, ensuring that it aligns with the needs of the business.

POLICY (POL)**10. Reserve Force Duties**

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

Employees who need time off for activities as reservists are expected to use days out of their normal holiday entitlement. While our organisation will do its best to accommodate any request for leave for activities in the reserve forces, it cannot guarantee that reservists' holiday requests will be given priority. To avoid reservists being unable to take time off when needed, they should apply for holiday as soon as possible after they are informed that they need to take time off.

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

11. Career Breaks

A career break can provide employees with an opportunity for personal development (such as extended periods of travel, voluntary service overseas or to pursue further education) or to fulfil personal or domestic commitments. This policy provided employees with the opportunity to apply for a 3 to 12 month career break, if they are eligible to do so.

Eligibility

To be considered for a career break, employees must have at least five years' continuous employment.

Application Process

Employees should first discuss the career break they wish to take informally with their Line Manager to outline the reason for their request, the proposed length of absence

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and consider how their workload might be managed while they are away.

Employees should then submit a written application for a career break to their Line Manager three months before the anticipated start date. In exceptional circumstances we may waive this time limit. The application should include:

- The reason for the proposed career break.
- The dates between which they wish to take their career break.
- Whether they have previously taken any career breaks and, if so, the dates between which they have taken them; and
- How their work can be covered in their absence

Responding to the Application

Each application will be considered on its own merits. All requests for career breaks should be made in writing [by email or letter] to [name of individual/the employee's line manager/the HR department], stating the preferred start date of the career break, duration of the career break, and proposed objectives of the career break.

You should also state how our organisation might be affected by your proposed absence on a career break and how any potential problems might be overcome.

Our organisation will consider any request for a career break, but the decision as to whether or not to grant the career break will be entirely at our discretion. There is no right of appeal against the decision.

- We will try to respond to a request in writing within 28 calendar days of receipt of your written application.
- We will hold a meeting to discuss the request before making our final decision

Employees should not commit to plans before the application for a career break has been agreed by us in writing.

Terms and Conditions during Career Break

You should generally take any accrued but untaken holiday entitlement before the start of the career break. If you have any accrued but untaken holiday, you will be paid in lieu

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for this on the termination of your employment if you decide not to return on the agreed return date.

If you return to the organisation at the end of the career break, the period of employment before and after the career break period will be aggregated for the purpose of your entitlement to contractual benefits, including [long-service awards/contractual redundancy pay]. Your continuity of employment for the purposes of contractual benefits, including [long-service awards/contractual redundancy pay], will not continue to accrue during the career break. You will not be paid any salary, you will not accrue annual leave and will not be entitled to any other benefits during the career break.

Employees will share the responsibility for staying connected with us during the career break. We will keep employees up to date with changes in policy, personnel, developments, business updates and news. Employees are requested to maintain any professional links and to keep up to date with any significant development.

Employees must obtain prior written approval from your manager before undertaking paid work for anyone else during the career break.

Returning from a Career Break

We will do our best to ensure employees return to work in the same position they held before commencing leave where practically possible. Additionally, that contractual terms of employment shall be reinstated once the employee has returned.

However, dependent on business changes and the duration of the career break this may not always be possible. Employees will be offered another suitable and appropriate job on terms and conditions that are not less favourable.

When approving a request for a career break, we will agree at the time when the employee needs to contact us before the return date to confirm arrangements. It is likely to be 28 calendar days before the return date.

If an employee is unable to return to work in accordance with previously agreed arrangements for any reason or resigns from post, they must immediately contact their

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Line Manager.

On return the Line Manager will organise for the employee to attend a re-induction process. The length of the induction will be dependent on the duration of the break. This will include training on any new systems or procedures that have been introduced during the employee’s absence and briefing on any changes that have taken place that will affect them.

Suspected abuse of this policy will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue under our Disciplinary Procedure.

12. Data Protection

When dealing with additional time off, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our **data protection policy, (Privacy Information Policy)** which can be found in the Privacy Information Policy on the company website.

We will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

TRAINING	No
Is training required?	
Details of training	The People Team will support with additional understanding where required.
COMPLIANCE	Monitoring and potential review of the policy will be guided by Employment Law and Company changes. Internal checks will be made to ensure that employees have followed the policy by the subject specialists.
How is compliance within this document going to be monitored?	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

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	Positive/Negative/N/A	Comments
Does the document have a positive or negative impact on one group of people over another based on their:		
• Age?	N/A	
• Disability	N/A	
• Gender assignment?	N/A	
• Pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding)	N/A	
• Race (including nationality, ethnic or national origins or colour)?	N/A	
• Marriage or civil partnership?	N/A	
• Religion or belief?	N/A	
• Sex?	N/A	
• Sexual orientation?	N/A	
If you have identified any potential impact (including any positive impact which may result in more favourable treatment for one particular group of people over another), are any	N/A	

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exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	
If the impact on one of the above groups is likely to be negative:	
Can the impact be avoided?	N/A
What alternatives are there to achieving the document's aim without the impact?	N/A
Can the impact be reduced by taking different action?	N/A
Is there an impact on staff, customer or someone else's privacy?	If yes, privacy impact assessment required
Changes since previous version	Changed Policy to new template Added in Bereaved Partners Paternity Pay
Who was involved in developing /reviewing/amending the document? (list titles)	ER Advisor Team Leads People Services Director Chief People Officer
How confidential is this document	Restricted Can be shared freely within Helping Hands but NOT outside
References	<i>Employment Rights Act 2025</i>
Associated Documents	N/A