

Leave, Absence and Flexible Working

Why this Policy matters

Supporting working lives is crucial for the BBC to attract and retain diverse talent, boost creativity and productivity, and create an inclusive workplace culture that reflects our values.

This Policy sets out our approach to:

- Promoting work-life balance and employee wellbeing.
- Supporting parents and carers.
- Recognising long service.
- Managing health and attendance.
- Providing flexible working options.

Who this Policy applies to

This Policy applies to you if you are:

- A BBC employee in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man, in Bands A-Fp, and
- On a continuing or fixed term contract of employment, either full or part-time.

This Policy forms part of your contract of employment. It is an agreed statement between the BBC and recognised joint unions for Bands A-Fp and can only be varied by joint negotiation at the National Joint Council.

The essential things you must know or do

These high-level essential mandatory requirements are the most important for you to understand and follow to meet the Policy objectives.

In addition to these, there are detailed requirements and best practices outlined in supporting procedures and guidance, linked below. Read this information when you need to understand the detail.

If you have any concerns or conflicting priorities that prevent you following essential requirements, please discuss them with one of the people listed in the section under 'Where to go for help and exceptions'. Without an approved exception, breaches may put the BBC at risk and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, or termination of our relationship with you.

Annual leave and Public Holiday leave

Your annual leave entitlement is calculated as your contracted hours per week, without meal breaks, times five weeks (equivalent to 175 hours for a full-time employee). In addition, Public Holidays, plus one Corporation Day around Christmas time. These entitlements are per leave year 1 April to 31 March.

Where specified in the detailed requirements, entitlements to leave are pro rata for part-time employees.

Parent support

Time off for appointments

Antenatal - All prospective parents can attend any appointments related to antenatal care on the advice of a doctor, nurse or midwife.

Adoption - All prospective parents can attend any appointments related to the adoption process that the adoption agency has arranged or asked for, including training sessions, social worker meetings, discussions with placing authority representatives, and panel hearings.

Fertility Treatment – All employees undergoing fertility treatment, or partners who need to accompany them, can attend appointments related to their treatment.

You do not need to use annual leave or Time Off in Lieu (TOIL).

Parent Leave

Eligible parents can take 52 weeks of Parent Leave following the birth of their child or adoption.

1. If you are expecting a child or planning to adopt, you must notify your line manager no later than the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) or within the placement notification timelines.

Your manager will conduct a risk assessment with you if you are pregnant.

Parent Pay

Eligible parents are entitled to up to a maximum of 18 weeks of BBC Parent Pay. This entitlement applies to birth parents/mothers, primary adopters, partners/fathers/secondary adopters, and includes those taking Shared Parental Leave.

BBC Parent Pay would be followed by any statutory only payment if applicable, the remaining entitlement to Parent Leave is unpaid.

Notification for Parent Leave

2. If you intend to take Parent Leave, you must give BBC HR at least 28 days' notice of the planned start date of your Parent Leave.

3. If you would like to return early from Parent Leave, you must give your line manager a minimum of eight weeks' notice.

Premature births and Neonatal Care Leave and Pay

Premature births

Where a baby is born prematurely (before 37 weeks) parents will receive the equivalent extra leave and full pay.

Neonatal Care

Parents will receive additional leave and full pay if their baby requires seven or more days of neonatal care within the first 28 days after birth.

Bereaved Partner Parent Leave

In the event that a child's birth parent or primary adopter dies within the first year following birth or adoption, eligible partners are entitled to up to 52 weeks Bereaved Partner Parent Leave.

Unpaid Parental Leave

Eligible parents are entitled to take up to 18 weeks unpaid Parental Leave, for each child before the child's 18th birthday. Parental Leave can be taken, subject to operational needs, up to the maximum entitlement of four weeks in any one year for each child.

Carer Leave and Time off for dependants

Carer Leave

We support those with caring responsibilities to maintain a healthy work/life balance. You may be entitled to up to 70 hours of paid leave per leave year in certain circumstances.

Time off for dependants

You have the statutory right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to support dependants during illness or injury or to plan for care in such situations.

Bereavement and Emergency Leave

We provide support during times of loss and unforeseen emergencies. This includes Bereavement Leave and, in certain circumstances, Emergency Leave.

Volunteer Leave

We support volunteering to encourage community engagement. You may be able to take up to 14 hours of paid leave per leave year for external volunteering, subject to operational requirements.

Weekend working

If you work a qualifying number of weekends, recognition is granted in the form of 7 hours additional leave, subject to meeting the qualifying criteria.

Long service awards

We recognise and reward long-serving employees at key milestones in their careers, at 25 years' service and 40 years' service. Some employees are eligible for additional leave following 10 years' service.

Other paid leave

You may also be eligible for paid leave types for the following circumstances:

- Standing in parliamentary/local elections or local councils.
- Duties as a magistrate.
- Time off for training if part of reserve forces or volunteer civilian organisations.
- Jury service.
- Other public service duties such as member of police authority.

Unpaid Leave

You may be eligible to take up to three months of unpaid leave if you need more time off in the leave year.

Time off to carry out approved external engagements or time off to attend a criminal proceeding as a defendant is also unpaid.

Career Breaks

You may be able to take unpaid time off for a career break between three months and up to three years. This is agreed time away from work and can be to undertake a period of travelling or pursuing full-time study for example.

Health-related absence

All employees that have followed the correct reporting procedure are eligible for 18 weeks full pay and 9 weeks half pay during periods of health-related absence in a rolling 12-month period.

When returning from an absence, if a phased return on reduced hours is recommended, you will be entitled to up to four weeks of phased return at full pay, after this you will be paid for the hours worked.

4. If you are unable to attend work due to illness, you must report your absence to your line manager or designated person within 30 minutes before you are due to commence work or as soon as possible and provide GP fit notes for absences that are 8 calendar days or more.

5. If you are a manager and one of your direct reports has high absence levels, you must discuss their attendance with them and consider appropriate support.

The threshold for "high absence" is:

1. three instances of absence in a 12-week rolling period.
2. five instances of absence in a 12-month rolling period.
3. 28 consecutive days of absence.

6. If you are a manager and one of your direct reports has a disability, as defined under the Equality Act 2010, you must provide support and reasonable adjustments.

Flexible working

To make a flexible working request is a day-one right. This includes changes to working patterns, hours, times, or location of work. You can make two formal requests a year.

Some changes can be informal and may not require a formal flexible working application. This may be an informal arrangement for a short-term adjustment and/or non-contractual change.

7. If you want to adopt permanent or contractual flexible working arrangements, you must submit a formal request for any changes to your working pattern.

8. If you are a manager, legally you must review and provide an outcome within two months of a formal request, including to any appeal received.