

Leave, Absence and Flexible Working: Detailed requirements

[Button: Link to the overview policy version]

You can read more about [the BBC leave year, annual leave and Public Holiday Leave entitlements and how to request time off.](#)

Principles

- The 'leave year' for all leave calculations in this policy is from 1 April to 31 March.
- All entitlements to leave are pro rata for employees who join or leave part-way through a leave year (see Appendix).
- The taking of leave is subject to operational requirements.
- All entitlements to leave are pro rata for part-time employees (see exception on accruing service for Additional Leave).

Annual leave

We recognise that it is important for you to take regular breaks from your duties through annual leave.

Your annual leave entitlement, without meal breaks, is calculated as your contracted hours per week, times five weeks (equivalent to 175 hours for a full-time worker). If you join or leave part way through the leave year, you'll have a proportionate entitlement to annual leave. If you are on a fixed-term contract, you're entitled to annual leave in proportion to the length of your contract. If you work a shift or variable work pattern, annual leave is calculated as follows:

- Once a schedule is published, if you want to take annual leave for a published shift, you will use the equivalent hours of your shift, minus any unpaid breaks, out of your leave entitlement.

- If you do not work a fixed length shift, before a schedule is published, the standard deduction is seven hours (excluding unpaid meal break) of entitlement to book a day's annual leave.

Where leave is scheduled, the same number of hours will be credited to an employee's accounting period for that shift.

You should submit requests for annual leave with reasonable notice. In considering requests, Team Leaders will consider your needs and the needs of the business. Requests for annual leave will not be refused unreasonably.

A maximum of five days leave (equivalent to 35 hours) may be carried over each year. The five days leave (equivalent to 35 hours) may be exceeded in emergency circumstances with the agreement of your team leader. No payments will be made in lieu of accrued, but untaken, annual leave, except on termination of employment where it has not been possible or practical for you to take the leave.

In addition to your annual leave entitlement, full-time employees receive the statutory UK Bank Holidays and one Corporation Day, at Christmas time, which fall within the leave year.

Part-time employees will have a pro rata entitlement to annual leave. If a Bank Holiday or Corporation Day coincides with your normal duty day, you may apply for leave and, if granted, the leave is deducted from your pro-rata entitlement. If it does not coincide with a normal duty day, then the leave is not deducted from your entitlement.

If the number of duty days that coincide with Bank Holidays and the Corporation Day is less than your entitlement, the remaining allowance can be taken at other times of the year. If the number of duty days that coincide is greater than your entitlement, you should use your annual leave to make up the shortfall.

You can read more about [flexible working options and eligibility](#) and how to request formal and informal flexible working arrangements

This policy aims to support and encourage staff when considering flexible working arrangements. The BBC is committed to being an industry leader in promoting a person centred, business led approach to flexible working, improving work-life balance and supporting colleagues to do their best work and deliver value for our audiences.

We aim to improve the working lives of employees by promoting flexible working policy and practices, such as caring responsibilities, leisure activities, further learning and other interests. It is recognised that respect for work-life balance enables productivity and wellbeing and is key to attracting, retaining and valuing employees.

The BBC is committed to agreeing flexible working arrangements, provided that the needs and objectives of both the organisation and the employee can be met. It is the BBC's policy to encourage open discussion with employees. If an employee thinks they may benefit from flexible working, they are encouraged to speak to their line manager to consider the options available to adjust working arrangements.

Every employee has a statutory right to request flexible working. This right applies from the first day of employment.

Definition

Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works.

This policy describes the range of flexible working options that the BBC may be able to offer employees whilst allowing the BBC the scope and flexibility to adapt the changing demands of a 24/7 service.

. Principles

The BBC will give due consideration to all flexible working practices which can be mutually beneficial for both the organisation and the employee.

The BBC will endeavour to ensure that no employee will be treated less favourably, be disadvantaged, or be dismissed because they request, or take, flexible working.

The following flexible working options are considered to be the typical arrangements that employees will request, but the organisation recognises that there may be alternatives or a combination of options which are suitable to both the organisation and the employee:

Part-time working

Term-time working

Staggered working hours/Flexitime

Compressed working hours

Annualised working hours

Remote working

Hybrid working (includes Agile working)

Permanent Homeworking

Job sharing

Flexible retirement

Career breaks

Types of flexible working

1) Part-time working covers any arrangement where an employee is contracted to work anything less than 35 hours per week, excluding meal breaks.

The BBC believes that all posts will be available on a part-time basis, except where a critical examination by line management proves this to be impractical.

Under part-time working, basic pay and other terms and conditions such as annual leave, are adjusted pro rata.

Term-time working is where an employee works during school terms and takes time off during any school holidays.

Any leave taken above the employee's annual leave entitlement will be unpaid. The employee's total annual leave entitlement is taken to cover some of the holidays and salary is adjusted pro rata to cover the extra leave required. The salary is then averaged out over 12 months and paid in equal monthly instalments.

Staggered Working Hours/Flexitime enables an employee to agree a variation to start, finish and /or break times with their manager, within reasonable limits. For example, staggered working hours from 10am – 6pm rather than 9am – 5pm, therefore the specific start and finish times are mutually agreed in line with operational needs or flexitime of working a set number of hours with the starting and finishing times chosen within agreed limits by the employee.

Agreement to staggered working hours may be on a permanent or temporary basis; each day of the week or specified days of the week. The full-time contracted hours for the post must be worked over the week.

Compressed working hours are where an employee works their full contracted hours over fewer working days for example a five day week is compressed into four days.

This arrangement can also apply over a longer period, for example enabling someone to work their fortnightly hours over nine days rather than the standard 10 days.

This option is only suitable whereby the role of the employee would facilitate their work being done earlier or later in the day than the standard working hours. Managers must also consider if the service can be adequately covered when the employee is not in.

Annualised hours are where an employee's contractual working hours are calculated as the total number of hours to be worked over the year, allowing flexible working patterns to be worked throughout the year.

Usually the hours will be divided into rostered hours, which are set, and unallocated hours, when an employee can be called into work as demand dictates (and to cover unplanned work and employee absence). Payment will usually be in 12 equal instalments.

Remote working is the term used for employees who work away from their main BBC office base on:

an occasional basis – where they have a main office base with some remote working either at home or at a non-BBC location, by its nature occasional working from home can only be agreed on an informal basis;

a regular basis – where there is an agreement to work at home and/or remote location for a specified number of days and the remainder amount of days at the main office base.

a permanent contractual basis – where the employee's home is agreed as their main place of work, the employee will not have a specified BBC office location and becomes a permanent homeworker (see below).

a contractual change to their base location – where an employee requests a change to their contractual base location to another BBC office.

7) Hybrid working is the term used to reflect the ability to work in a way to best meet the requirements of the role, which may include remote working. Employees will be either office based or agile workers:

Office – contracted to a BBC base where specialist equipment is required and work is linked to onsite delivery.

Agile – contracted to a BBC base where some work is undertaken and some work can be undertaken remotely.

Agile working is non-contractual as there is no change to the employee's contractual base. The level of agility in working hours, days, location is informally agreed between the line manager and employee in relation to the particular team, role and tasks to be delivered. Where and when you work may vary in line with business requirements and individual requests and is not considered as a defined flexible working pattern.

Managers should consider the specific health and safety requirements and costs of these remote and hybrid working before agreeing to requests. Remote working must be carried out within the UK for employees on UK contracts unless their role requires them to undertake overseas work. Further information can be found on the Hybrid Working Gateway page.

Permanent homeworking applies where the employee's base location is their home address. For a UK employee this will normally be at the employee's residential address within the UK. There will be occasions when employees will be required to attend meetings or events at BBC locations to fulfil aspects of their role. Where travel is undertaken reasonable expenses from home (contractual base location) to the BBC location will be met.

Permanent homeworkers will not have a personal desk or storage routinely at a BBC location. They must have appropriate facilities at home to manage BBC

equipment and information in line with GDPR and other statutory provisions and BBC policies, such as BBC Mobile Devices and Remote Working Security Policy.

Permanent homeworking may be applied to certain roles/functions from the outset. Employees applying for a permanent homeworking role will complete a 'Home' assessment to ensure that the specific health and safety requirements can be met prior to appointment.

Where an employee seeks a request to do permanent homeworking for a defined period or as a permanent contractual change, the 'Workplace assessment' must be undertaken in line with the individual needs, role responsibilities and compatibility with overall team scheduling,

For further information, refer to the Working from Home Gateway page.

While the BBC recognises that working from home can benefit employees with domestic care responsibilities it should not be used as a substitute for adequate care arrangements. When working from home employees must ensure that they have made appropriate arrangements for the care of their dependents.

Job Sharing is an arrangement where a full-time post is divided into two part-time roles. The two job holders then share the overall duties and responsibilities. The skills and the hours each employee wishes to work must be compatible or complimentary, and meet the needs of the organisation.

People who job share are employed under part-time conditions and the arrangement requires a high level of co-operation by each job sharer. The flow and overall quality of work should not be affected by the employee who is

working at any one time. The level and nature of expected co-operation between job sharers should be agreed as part of each job sharing arrangement.

In a job sharing arrangement, a manager may decide that each employee is required to be capable of carrying out the full range of duties or have complimentary skills, in order that the full range of duties can be successfully completed between the job share partners.

Requests can be made by an employee under this policy, without identifying a potential job share partner themselves.

Managers have the option to either formalise one half of a job share before identifying a suitable partner, or, to wait until a job share partner has been selected through BBC's recruitment processes.

The arrangement may also be brought to an end if one of the partners takes up another job or leaves the BBC. If one job sharing partner is leaving then the other partner will be offered the job on a full-time basis. If the employee is unable to accept the job on a full time basis, the manager will undertake a recruitment exercise to source a suitable replacement partner.

Flexible retirement enables members of the BBC Pension Scheme to apply for flexible retirement (subject to eligibility) and request that their pension is paid whilst still continuing to work for the BBC. This is referred to as a 'flexible payment' and is subject to the BBC's approval. Further information is outlined in the 'BBC's Guide to Flexible Payment Old and New Benefit Members'. If, as part of this process, employees would like to change their working arrangements, they can also submit a flexible working application form. Employees are encouraged to engage in early discussions with their manager about reducing their working hours if they are considering flexible retirement.

Career breaks provide employees with the opportunity to request an extended period of authorised unpaid leave with the ability to return to the same role, suitable alternative role or apply for an internal role (dependent on length and category of career break). Specific details on the eligibility requirements are contained within the Career Break Policy.

The needs of the BBC

The BBC is committed to providing a range of appropriate working patterns and will give due consideration to all flexible working requests made under this policy. However, there is no automatic right to a flexible working arrangement.

Requests and Eligibility

It is recommended that a flexible working request starts as an informal conversation between the member of staff wishing to request a flexible working arrangement and their manager. Early discussions, in advance of a request will allow both parties to informally explore viable options available to both and how the proposed working pattern may impact the team and the department.

Where these initial conversations take place, the member of staff and manager can decide together whether to take this forward as a formal or an informal request, informed by the eligibility criteria, the duration of the request and the flexibility being requested.

Consideration may be given to flexible or hybrid working in line with any advertised role for new joiners to the BBC as well as internal applicants.

Any employee (continuing or fixed term) is eligible to make two formal flexible working requests within a 12 month period. Employees may only have one live request for flexible working at any one time. Once a request has been made, it remains live until:

a decision about the request has been made

the request is withdrawn

an outcome is mutually agreed

the statutory two-month period for deciding requests ends

All requests leading to contractual change and / or change in pay will need to be submitted formally. If a formal flexible working request is refused, consideration may be given to an adjustment to the original request within 12 months to be re-considered. More information on 'Making a request' is available on the Flexible Working gateway page as well as in the Help Card available on BBC Launchpad.

Informal Requests

If an employee is seeking an informal arrangement for a short term adjustment or non-contractual working arrangements, this local agreement can be captured on People View.

In addition, the nature of the request may not require a formal flexible working application form. Examples of this include employees wishing to make a temporary adjustment to the start/finish time of their working day (without a change in FTE) or occasionally to work from home. Where small and temporary adjustments can be accommodated, a manager may choose to agree a flexible working request informally. When this happens, it is good practice to confirm, in writing, what has been informally agreed (e.g. by email).

An informal arrangement for example where an employee requests to work from home on a Friday for the next month to help with child care, will not constitute a contractual change or a change in pay – where there is an ongoing requirement for a contractual change and/or a change in pay then the application will need to be made formally.

For agile working arrangements a manager will update an employee's hybrid working status on PeopleView.

How to make a formal request

Employees should complete a request via BBC Launchpad ideally at least two months prior to the start date of the proposed new working pattern. It may be helpful for the employee to have an initial discussion with their manager prior to submitting their request regarding confirmation of the eligibility criteria, and viable options available.

The flexible working application will capture:

the changes that the employee is seeking to their terms and conditions (in regards to base location, contractual hours and/or working pattern pattern)

whether the change is permanent or temporary, and the proposed effective dates

If the employee is making the request in relation to the Equality Act 2010, e.g. as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, this should be made clear in the application.

Before applying, employees should carefully consider the potential impact on their pay and other terms and conditions (such as annual leave and pension). Employees are able to seek confirmation of their revised terms and conditions calculations through the HR Service Centre. Employees are advised to refer to their BBC Pension Scheme member's handbook or contact Pensions by emailing myPension@bbc.co.uk for information on how the different types of flexible working will affect their pension.

The BBC is legally obliged to deal with all flexible working requests within a period of 2 months from first receiving the employee's application to notifying them of the outcome of any appeal against the decision.

This time limit may be extended if required, for example when circumstances make it impracticable for the outcome to be reached within 2 months. Any extension must be mutually agreed between the colleague and manager.

Regardless of the outcome of an informal request, employees who meet the eligibility criteria have the right to submit a formal request for flexible working.

Meeting to discuss a flexible working request

The manager will set up a meeting with the employee to discuss the request. This meeting will take place as soon as possible after receiving the application, unless the person due to consider the request is absent or an extension for some other reason is agreed with the employee.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

discuss the request and find out more about the proposed working arrangements in depth

the wider context of / reasons for the colleague submitting the request

understand any contractual implications

Each request will be dealt with by the manager individually, taking into account the likely effects that the proposed changes could have on the employee, the work of the department and the work of the employees' colleagues.

In considering the request and the associated business requirements, employees must not be discriminated against on the basis of protected characteristics as those detailed in the Equality Act 2010, e.g. religion, request to work flexibly to observe a religious festival.

Where reasonable adjustments are recommended following an Occupational Health referral, recommendations will be agreed wherever possible in line with the BBC's duties detailed in the Equality Act 2010. Associated flexible working may be agreed outside of this policy, and this approach is encouraged where the formal process may lead to additional stress on the part of the employee.

The employee has the right to be accompanied at meetings by an accredited trade union representative or a BBC employee (other than a practicing lawyer). If the employee fails to attend a meeting and then a rearranged meeting without a reason, the manager may consider the application as withdrawn. The manager should however, give the employee an opportunity to present reasons for failing to attend the meetings and write to the employee with their decision.

Employees should also be aware that under the formal process the new working arrangements will apply permanently as a permanent variation of their terms and conditions of employment. There will be no automatic right to return to the previous working pattern.

Considering the application

It is the responsibility of the manager to consider, assess and evaluate the potential business implications of implementing flexible working arrangements and the potential impact on costs, services and the ability of the department to meet its objectives.

In doing so, the manager will need to take into account the following criteria:

the costs associated with the proposed arrangement

the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff

the need for, and effect on, supervision

the existing structure of the department

the availability of staff resources

details of the tasks specific to the role

the workload associated with the role

whether it is a request for a reasonable adjustment related to a disability

health and safety issues

In order to maintain continuity in each area, each request will be considered individually on its own merits in balance with the needs of the department.

It is important to recognise that by agreeing to one employee's request the BBC will not set a precedent or create a right for another employee to be granted the same or a similar change to their working pattern.

It is the responsibility of both the manager and employee to proactively manage flexible working relationships. Existing flexible working arrangements should be reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to be effective in meeting the needs of both the BBC and the employee.

Any flexible working patterns agreed by the BBC must comply with Working Time Regulations (1998). In line with the Managing Working Patterns Policy,

employees are scheduled to work the contractual hours outlined in their contract of employment (full time hours are 35 per week excluding unpaid breaks). Employees may reasonably be asked to work additional hours as set out in the BBC Managing Additional Hours Policy.

Consultation meeting

Once the manager has considered the application, if it cannot be accepted in full they must consult with the employee to discuss further before making a decision. The manager should invite the employee to a consultation meeting to discuss their request.

This will allow the manager to communicate the potential impacts of accepting or rejecting the request, and any practical considerations that would need to be taken into account.

This should also provide them opportunity to discuss other alternative working patterns where the proposed pattern is not viable.

5.6. Confirming the outcome

Having decided whether the request can reasonably be accommodated, and having consulted with the employee if the request cannot be fully accommodated, the manager will write to the employee to confirm the outcome.

There are three options available to the manager:

- i) the request will be granted in full,

ii) the request will be granted in part or

iii) the request will be declined.

If the request is declined or only granted in part, the manager must give one of the grounds for the decision set out as one of the following criteria:

the burden of additional costs

an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff

an inability to recruit additional staff

a detrimental impact on quality

a detrimental impact on performance

a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand

insufficient work available for the periods the employee proposes to work

planned structural changes to the BBC

If the request involves a change to the employee's contract or pay, this will be outlined in the letter. This would constitute a permanent change to their terms and conditions of employment, unless agreed otherwise e.g. on a trial basis or as a temporary arrangement with an agreed time period (with a maximum of three months for trial periods and twelve months for temporary periods).

If the employee has any questions or concerns about their new contract of employment they should contact their manager to discuss the matter further.

Right to Appeal Decision

The employee has the right to appeal the decision of a formal request for contractual changes if their request is refused or is only agreed in part. An appeal must be lodged within 14 calendar days of the date of the letter confirming the decision.

This should be done in writing and clearly state the grounds on which the employee is appealing.

The appeal meeting will be conducted by a more senior manager than the manager who made the original flexible working decision, unless exceptional circumstances make it impractical.

The employee can be accompanied at an appeal meeting by an accredited Trade Union representative or a BBC employee (other than a practicing lawyer).

Trial periods

The manager may suggest an initial trial period to ensure that the proposed new arrangements meet the needs of the employee and/or the business. Equally the employee may suggest a trial period through a conversation for agreement with their manager.

Trial periods should last no longer than three months. If successful, the variation would be implemented as a permanent change to contract. If however during the trial period the flexible working arrangement is found to be unsatisfactory, the manager and employee should explore whether there are other suitable flexible working options which could be accommodated. If this cannot be agreed, the employee will revert back to their previously agreed contractual working arrangements.

Alternatives and temporary periods

If the manager refuses the application on one of the grounds set out at section it may offer either an alternative permanent working arrangement; and/or in situations where a shorter or longer period could be accommodated and would meet the needs of the employee, the manager may offer a variation for a temporary period of time and subject to ongoing review. Any such agreement will be confirmed in writing.

Temporary periods should last no longer than twelve months. If during the temporary period the flexible working arrangement is found to be unsatisfactory, the manager and employee should explore whether there are other suitable flexible working options which could be accommodated. Only if this cannot be agreed, will the employee revert back to their normal working arrangements. If successful, the variation would be implemented as a permanent change to contract.

Complaints and further information

The BBC is strongly opposed to any form of victimisation of individuals who work, or request to work under flexible working arrangements.

If an employee feels that they have been treated unfairly or are dissatisfied with any stage of the flexible working request process, they should raise their concerns informally with their manager and/or HR.

If informal discussions do not resolve the matter to an employee's satisfaction, they should raise a grievance under the BBC's grievance procedure.

For further information an employee should refer to the documents listed below and/or contact HR Gateway. Law relating to this document:

Employment Rights Act 1996

Equality Act 2010

Flexible Working Regulations 2014

You can read more [about time off for appointments](#)

Time Off for Medical Appointments

Employees should endeavour to arrange appointments outside their working hours wherever possible; however, where this is not possible, a flexible and reasonable approach from both the manager and the employee should be taken to facilitate the attendance at medical appointments/treatments. Requests for paid time off should be accommodated without the need for annual leave to be taken or locks to be used. Time off for regular treatments or medical appointments should be discussed with the line manager and should be managed sensitively and sympathetically in a way that prioritises the wellbeing of the employee.

Fertility treatment

For colleagues embarking on a treatment to become pregnant, we recognise this is a sensitive time for prospective parents and we want to ensure we support you during this period.

To support you during this time, you may have paid time off or your working hours may be adjusted with the agreement of your Team Leader. Any time off for appointments or sickness absence related to the fertility treatment will be treated in accordance with the BBC Managing Health and Attendance Policy.

Any workplace or working time adjustments required during treatment should be discussed and agreed with your team leader in advance. This may include safe storage of medication, changes to working hours or location.

Time off for Antenatal care appointments

All prospective parents can attend any appointment related to antenatal care on the advice of a doctor, nurse or midwife. These can include appointments for scans, pregnancy health checks, relaxation classes, for example pregnancy yoga, and parentcraft classes. You do not need to use annual leave or Time Off in Lieu (TOIL).

Your Team Leader may ask for evidence of the requirement to attend, this could be an appointment card or an email confirming a class booking for example.

Time off for adoption appointments

All prospective parents can attend any appointment 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. You do not need to use annual leave or Time Off in Lieu (TOIL).

Your Team Leader may ask for evidence of the requirement to attend, this could be an appointment letter or letter from social services, for example.

You can read more about [Parent Leave entitlement and pay, keeping in touch days and about how to give notice of parent leave.](#)

Parent leave

Parent leave is for the purpose of caring for the child/ren or supporting the child/ren; providing each eligible parent with the choice to take up to 52 weeks off work for a new child/ren.

Parent leave has replaced maternity, surrogacy, paternity, and adoption leave policies. To make the entitlements easier to understand we have divided the information up as follows:

- [Parent leave for birth parents/mothers](#)
 - [Parent leave for primary adopters](#)
 - [Parent leave for partners/fathers/secondary adopters](#)
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Birth Parents/Mothers

This section is for birth parents/mothers and those carrying out surrogacy.

Parent Leave for birth parents/mothers

All birth parents/mothers will have access to 52 weeks of leave. There is no eligibility criteria for this.

Parent Pay for birth parents/mothers

Your BBC Parent pay is basic pay and any continuing allowances (it does not include any additional payments) for up to 18 weeks followed by 21 weeks of statutory entitlement to Maternity Pay (SMP).

BBC Parent Pay is basic pay at the point Parent Leave commences and any continuing allowances which would normally be paid. To qualify for BBC Parent pay you must at the end of the qualifying week:

- be an employee of the BBC; and
- have been employed for a continuous period of at least 26 weeks.

It is sufficient for your BBC employment to have started at any time during the first week to accumulate the 26 weeks' service required. The continuous employment must extend into the qualifying week, but it is not necessary for you to be employed for the whole of that week.

BBC Parent Pay is inclusive of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP).

Statutory Maternity Pay

The qualifying criteria for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) are the same as for BBC Parent Pay. In addition, you must earn above the Lower Earnings Limit set by Government. If you do not qualify for BBC Parent Pay or Statutory Maternity Pay you may be entitled to claim Maternity Allowance from the state.

SMP is defined as

- First six weeks of (maternity) leave paid at the rate of 90% of your average earnings
- Followed by 33 weeks paid at the lesser of either the weekly SMP rate or 90% of your average weekly earnings.

Average weekly earnings are your average gross earnings over a period of at least eight weeks up to and including the last payday before the end of the qualifying week.

If the calculation for the first six weeks of SMP results in a higher payment than BBC Parent (Maternity) Pay, then the higher payment will be made.

Any Parent leave beyond 39 weeks is unpaid. If the contract of employment expires before the 18 weeks, then BBC Parent Pay is only payable up to the contract expiry date. However, any entitlement to SMP will continue beyond this date.

BBC Parent Pay and SMP both start on the same day which is the day on which the Parent leave commences.

Key steps to follow:

1) Notification of pregnancy

Colleagues should notify their team leader that they are pregnant as soon as they feel able but no later than the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC). This information should be treated in confidence and only disclosed where necessary.

What you need to provide to confirm access to BBC Parent leave and pay and/or statutory entitlements:

- You must provide a maternity certificate ([MATB1](#))
- If you are on an international assignment or live in the Channel Islands you must provide a letter from a medical professional with the Expected Week of Childbirth.
- Your intended start and end date for parent leave

2) Pregnancy related risk assessment

Following notification, the team leader should undertake a risk assessment with the pregnant colleague. Actions arising from the assessment must be conducted without delay and where necessary working conditions or the role adapted. In cases where a colleague is unable to continue in their role during their pregnancy and no suitable alternative work is available, they will be entitled to receive their basic pay plus any continuing allowances up to the start of their parent leave.

Access to additional support is available for team leaders through the Wellbeing support team. Any concerns about fitness for work at any time during the pregnancy should be referred to [occupational health](#).

3) Sick absence during pregnancy

If you are absent from work due to ill health during their pregnancy, regardless of whether it is pregnancy related or not, the normal procedures for health absence should be followed. Refer to our [Managing Health and Attendance Policy](#).

- If you are pregnant and absent from work for a **non-pregnancy related illness**, your sick absence will automatically end on the day you intended to commence your Parent leave.
- For a **pregnancy related illness** that occurs in the four weeks prior to your due date, this will trigger the start of your Parent leave and pay period on the day following your absence notification.

If you are absent before 36 weeks with a **pregnancy related illness**, this will be treated as sick absence up to four weeks prior to your intended start date. Your parent leave will automatically commence, and sick absence will end at 36 weeks.

4) Planning your time off

Your team leader will discuss your intentions with you following confirmation by submission of a maternity certificate (MAT B1)

The first 26 weeks of Parent Leave covers the statutory 'maternity' provisions of Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) and includes a compulsory leave period of two weeks from the date of childbirth. OML is immediately followed by the second 26 weeks which is called Additional Maternity Leave (AML).

You can choose to start your Parent leave any time after the 11th week before the EWC. If your baby is born earlier than the intended start date, your Parent leave will commence on the day following the birth.

You must give BBC HR at least 28 days' notice of when you plan to start your Parent leave, stating:

- the fact you are pregnant;
- the expected week of childbirth (EWC); and
- the date you intend to start your maternity leave.

The BBC will vary the notification requirements only in exceptional circumstances where it is not practicable for the notification to have been given earlier.

As an employee, you are entitled to the benefit of your terms and conditions of employment, except for basic pay and continuing allowances, during Parent leave – this covers both ordinary and additional maternity leave provisions.

If you are pregnant and wish to work beyond the 11th week before the EWC, we may ask you to provide medical evidence to confirm that you are fit to continue working. You must keep your team leader advised of any changes that may impact you during this period and your risk assessment is kept up to date throughout.

Redundancy during Parent Leave for Birth Parents/Mothers

Birth Parents/Mothers may benefit from additional legal protections giving priority consideration for suitable alternative roles, where available, if they

otherwise would be made redundant. This applies from when you notify us that you are pregnant up until 18 months after your child was born.

The 18-month protection also applies in circumstances where a pregnancy is lost after 24 weeks, or for two weeks following a miscarriage prior to the 24th week of pregnancy.

Further information is available in the [Reorganisation and Redundancy Policy](#).

Primary Adopters

This section is for the 'main adopter', if there is another adopter they will take parent leave for partners/fathers/secondary adopters.

Parent Leave for Primary Adopters

If eligible, Primary Adopters will be able to take 52 weeks of leave.

You must be in BBC employment and have completed 26 weeks' service to access BBC Parent leave:

For UK adoption: by the week in which the employee receives notification from an Adoption Agency of being 'matched' with a child; or

For overseas adoption: by the week in which official notification was sent, or from their completion of 26 weeks' continuous service if this is later.

- You must be the biological parent of the child/ren and/or the individual matched with a child by an Adoption Agency and/or the mother's/adopter's spouse, civil partner or partner

Parent Pay for Primary Adopters

The leave is made up of a single continuous period of paid and unpaid leave, subject to eligibility:

- 18 weeks' full pay including any statutory payments (statutory adoption related)
- A further 21 weeks' statutory payment (statutory adoption related) where eligible
- Unpaid time off for 13 weeks to make up to 52 weeks in total

1) Notification of placement and planning your time off

Adoption or Fostering: You must provide a 'Matching Certificate' if adopting in the UK, which is provided by their adoption agency, or an 'Official Notification', if adopting from overseas, which is issued by or on behalf of the relevant UK authority.

If you're adopting in the UK

You must inform the BBC within seven days of being notified by an approved adoption agency of:

- the fact that they have been newly 'matched' with a child for adoption;
- the date on which the child is expected to be placed with them; and
- the date on which they intend their adoption leave to start. This can be either the date of the child's placement or up to 14 days before the expected date of placement.

If you're adopting from overseas

You must first inform the BBC within 28 days of receipt of the 'Official Notification' of:

- the date on which the official notification was received; and
- the date on which the child is expected to enter the UK.

You must then give at least 28 days' notice of when you wish their Parent leave to start following adoption. You can choose to start either on the date on which the child enters the UK or on a date that is no later than 28 days after that date.

Parents who are fostering with a view to adopt under a local government scheme and **surrogate parents** may be entitled to Parent Leave and Pay. Where

eligible, this provides for up to 26 weeks of Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL) followed by 26 weeks of Additional Adoption Leave (AAL).

You can choose to start Parent Leave when adopting a child, from either the date of the child's placement or up to 14 days before the expected date of placement.

If adopting from overseas

You can choose to start Parent Leave either on the date on which the child enters the UK or on a date that is no later than 28 days after this date.

The parent intending to take Paternity Leave should tell their Team Leader by the 15th week before the EWC or within seven days of notification of having been matched with the child unless this is not reasonably practicable.

An employee can change the start date of their Parent Leave if they let their team leader know 28 days in advance of the following:

- the first day of the EWC or the expected placement date; or

the new date they wish to start their Parent leave, unless this is not reasonably practicable, in which case they should notify the BBC as soon as they can.

Redundancy during Parent Leave for Primary Adopters

Primary Adopters may benefit from additional legal protections giving priority consideration for suitable alternative roles, where available if they otherwise would be made redundant. This applies from when you start Parent Leave up until 18 months after your child was placed with you, or enters Great Britain (if it is an overseas adoption).

Further information is available in the [Reorganisation and Redundancy Policy](#).

Partners/fathers/secondary adopters

This section is for partners/fathers/secondary adopters.

Parent Leave for Partners/fathers/secondary adopters

If eligible, Partners/fathers/secondary adopters will be able to take 52 weeks of leave. The leave can be taken in two blocks, however one block must be for one week maximum (7 calendar days).

You must be in BBC employment and have completed 26 weeks' service to access BBC Parent leave:

- For partners/fathers: by the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC);
- For secondary adopters: by the week in which the employee receives notification from an Adoption Agency of being 'matched' with a child for UK adoption or by the week in which official notification was sent, or from their completion of 26 weeks' continuous service if this is later.

Parent Pay for Partners/fathers/secondary adopters

Your BBC Parent pay is basic pay and any continuing allowances (it does not include any additional payments) for up to 18 weeks. This includes the two-week period and pay in respect of Statutory Paternity Pay. BBC Parent Pay is basic pay at the point Parent Leave commences and any continuing allowances which would normally be paid.

To qualify for BBC Parent pay (paternity-related), you must at the end of the qualifying week:

- be an employee of the BBC; and
- have been employed for a continuous period of at least 26 weeks.

It is sufficient for your BBC employment to have started at any time during the first week to accumulate the 26 weeks' service required. The continuous employment must extend into the qualifying week, but it is not necessary for you to be employed for the whole of that week. BBC Parent (Paternity) Pay is inclusive of Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP).

Statutory Paternity Pay

The qualifying criteria for Statutory Paternity Pay are the same as for BBC Parent Pay (*paternity-related*) above, in addition the employee must earn above the Lower Earnings Limit set by Government.

Notification and planning your time off

You can take the leave any time after the birth/date the child is placed with you. You will need to take this leave within 52 weeks of this date.

If you would like to take two blocks and know the dates of both blocks, you can let your Team Leader and BBC HR know when planning your leave.

If you're unsure of the second block, once confirmed with your Team Leader, you will need to contact BBC HR 28 days before the start of the next block.

Shared Parental Leave

Colleagues eligible for Shared Parental Leave ('SPL') are entitled to share up to 50 weeks maternity or adoption leave with your partner, to care for your child. This includes surrogacy or prospective adoption arrangements where the colleague is the primary adopter or other parent.

Immediately after childbirth, it is compulsory for the birth parent to take the first two weeks of their entitlement of up to 52 weeks' parent leave. This means that, in respect of childbirth, up to 50 weeks of SPL is available to share with the other parent.

In the case of adoption, SPL cannot be taken during the first two weeks of adoption leave. This therefore means that, in respect of adoption, there is also up to 50 weeks of SPL to share. In respect of childbirth and adoption, any entitlement to the 50 weeks SPL is reduced by the number of weeks' maternity leave taken by the birth parent, adoption leave taken by the primary adopter and SPL taken by either. SPL must be taken before the baby's first birthday or within one year of the child's placement for adoption.

Eligible colleagues can take SPL as a continuous period or as separate discontinuous blocks each a minimum of one week in duration (enabling you to stop and re-start leave). Notices detailing discontinuous leave will be agreed at the BBC's discretion in consideration of operational requirements. Once notice requirements have been complied with, parents can be on SPL at the same time as each other. Eligible colleagues are entitled to submit up to three notices requesting periods of leave.

To be eligible for leave and pay BBC employees must:

- be the mother, father, or primary adopter of the child, or the partner of the mother or primary adopter (known as the birth parent or parent);
- share with another parent the main responsibility for the care of the child;
- have at least 26 weeks' continuous service at the 15th week before the expected week of birth or at the week in which the primary adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (known as the 'relevant week');
- themselves be entitled or have a partner who is entitled to statutory maternity or adoption leave, (or to receive statutory maternity or adoption pay or maternity allowance);
- be in continuous employment until the week before any SPL is taken and during the leave period; and
- comply with the relevant notification and declaration requirements summarised below.
- have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit (set by the government) over the eight-week period ending with the qualifying or matching week.

In addition, the other parent (working for or externally to the BBC) must:

- have at least 26 weeks' employment (employed or self-employed) out of the 66 weeks prior to the 'relevant week'; and
- have average weekly earnings of at least £30 during at least 13 of the 66 weeks prior to the relevant week.

Notification Requirements

Employees are encouraged to discuss informally with their manager the intention to take SPL to ensure that any plans for discontinuous periods of leave can be considered as soon as possible. The practise also reduces the risk of wasting one of three notices on a discontinuous arrangement that cannot be accommodated.

In addition, the following notification and declaration requirements must be met.

The mother/primary adopter must provide the BBC with a 'Curtailment Notice' (contained within the Notice of Entitlement and Intention to Take Shared Parental Leave) at least eight weeks before the date on which their maternity/adoption leave will end. The Curtailment Notice is binding unless:

- it is given before the birth and is revoked within six weeks of the birth (in this case another curtailment notice can be submitted);
- neither parent is entitled to SPL or SShPP; or
- the other parent dies.

If the mother is entitled to maternity allowance only, her notice of curtailment of her allowance must be submitted to the Jobcentre Plus. The allowance cannot be reinstated.

At the same time, employees must give their manager a 'Notice of Entitlement and Intention to Take Shared Parental Leave' at least 8 weeks before the start date of the first period of SPL (this will identify at least the first period of SPL but could detail further discontinuous periods of leave). This notice must also include certain declarations by both the mother and other parent sharing the leave e.g. confirmation of eligibility, how you your partner intend to use leave and pay entitlement and curtailment of maternity, adoption leave or maternity allowance, as appropriate.

If binding notification of leave dates is not provided as part of the Notice of Entitlement and Intention to Take SPL document (this is not necessarily a requirement if the notice is submitted more than eight weeks in advance of proposed leave dates) the employees must then finalise their period(s) of SPL by giving their manager a 'Period of Shared Parental Leave Notice' **at least eight weeks before** the start date of the first period of SPL.

Employees are entitled to submit a further two 'Period of Shared Parental Leave Notices', each must be submitted **at least eight weeks before** the start of the period of leave. Employees are entitled to take a continuous period of leave as detailed in each 'Period of Shared Parental Leave Notice'. However, if more than one period of leave (i.e. a discontinuous period) is detailed in the notice, the leave pattern will be subject to management approval, the BBC will attempt to accommodate the pattern but it cannot be guaranteed. An alternative pattern of leave may be suggested or discussed, or the pattern may be refused.

Where a notice detailing a period of discontinuous leave has been submitted and no agreement has been reached after two weeks the employee may:

- take the discontinuous leave as one block from the start date stated on the notice;
- take the continuous block starting from a new start date (as long as the date is later than the start date of the notification and the employee notifies the BBC of the new date within two weeks and five days of the notice being submitted); or
- withdraw the notice, up to the 15th day after it was originally submitted (in which case it will not count towards the maximum three Period of Leave Notices employees can submit). Employees can submit a 'Notice to Vary Period of SPL' where the variation is:
 - to the start or end date (as long as the notice is submitted at least 8 weeks before the original start date and the new start date);
 - to change or cancel the amount of leave detailed in the notice at least 8 weeks before the original start date; or
 - to notify the BBC that a single period of leave becomes discontinuous or vice versa. Where a discontinuous period is detailed agreement must be reached within two weeks see provisions above. Variations will count as one of the three Period of Leave Notices unless:
 - it is made as a result of the baby being born earlier or later than the expected week of childbirth;
 - the BBC has requested the variation; or
 - the BBC has agreed (at its discretion) to accept more than three Period of Leave Notices.

The eight week notice requirement may be modified where the baby is born early, in this case notice to vary the start date should be given as soon as reasonably practicable after the birth. The BBC reserves the right to request that employees provide copies of: (a) either the birth certificate (or if a birth certificate has not yet been obtained, a signed declaration of the child's date and place of birth) or one or more documents from the adoption agency showing the agency's name and the expected placement date; and (b) the name and address of the employer of the employee's partner (or a declaration that they have no employer). The BBC reserves the right to contact the employer of the employee's partner to confirm and verify entitlements to, and taken, maternity, adoption and shared parental leave and pay

Pay during Shared Parental Leave

BBC Shared Parental Pay is basic pay and any continuing allowances (it does not include any additional payments) for up to 18 weeks, followed by up to 19 weeks Statutory Shared Parental Pay (37 weeks in total, which takes account of the first two weeks of entitlement to 39 weeks statutory pay having been paid as statutory maternity or statutory adoption pay).

Any pay received in respect of BBC Parent leave (Maternity or Adoption Pay) will reduce the enhanced entitlement payable in respect of a colleague's entitlement to 18 weeks BBC Shared Parental Pay, if the maternity or adoption pay related to the same child as the child in respect of whom the parent is receiving BBC Shared Parental Pay.

Any enhanced maternity pay, adoption pay, or shared parental pay received by the colleague's partner from their employer (where that employer is not the BBC) will reduce the colleague's entitlement to 18 weeks BBC Shared Parental Pay by the equivalent number of weeks enhanced pay received by their partner, if the enhanced pay relates to the same child in respect of whom the colleague is claiming BBC Shared Parental Pay.

Nothing within this policy will affect a colleague's rights to receive Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Paternity Pay, Statutory Adoption Pay or Statutory Shared Parental Pay.

To qualify for BBC Shared Parental Pay, the colleague must, comply with the notification requirements set out below, and in the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (the qualifying week) or the week in which they received formal notification of a child match (the matching week):

- Be an employee of the BBC; and
- Have been employed continuously for at least 26 weeks.

It is sufficient for a colleague to have commenced employment at any time during the first week to accumulate the 26 weeks service required. The continuous employment must extend into the qualifying or matching week, but it is not necessary for the employee to be employed for the whole of that week.

BBC Shared Parental Pay is inclusive of Statutory Shared Parental Pay (SShPP) due. For the avoidance of doubt, entitlement to BBC Shared Parental Pay will be limited to 18 weeks between two parents in circumstances where both parents of the child in respect of whom there is an entitlement to BBC Shared Parental Pay are employees of the BBC.

Redundancy during Shared Parental Leave

Employees taking Shared Parental Leave may benefit from additional legal protections giving priority consideration for suitable alternative roles, where available if they otherwise would be made redundant.. This applies for*:

- The duration of the Shared Parental Leave if it for less than six weeks or
- for 18 months until after your child's date of birth/placement if adopting, if six weeks or more of Shared Parental Leave are taken

*for Birth Parents/Mothers and Primary adopters, the 18-months' protection may apply as described above, regardless of any Shared Parental Leave taken.

Further information is available in the [Reorganisation and Redundancy Policy](#).

You can read more about [returning from parent leave](#)

At the start of your Parent leave you will have advised of an intended date of return to work. We understand circumstances may change while you are on Parent leave. You must confirm in writing no less than eight weeks before your intended return to work that you will be returning on that date or propose any changes to your return date for discussion with your team leader. There is no guarantee of a return to work earlier.

You will have your annual leave and public holiday entitlement to arrange and may consider using this entitlement to support your return to work.

For birth parents, the earliest return date is two weeks after the date of childbirth and team leaders should conduct the relevant risk assessment, especially if they are breastfeeding. If there are health complications which mean the birth parent is unable to return to work, the normal health absence procedures outlined in the Managing Health & Attendance policy apply.

As a birth parent or primary adopter, you are entitled to return to your substantive role on the same terms and conditions unless a redundancy situation has arisen following Parent leave. In these cases, you will be entitled to be offered a suitable alternative job on terms and conditions which are no less favourable.

If you decide that you do not wish to return following your parent leave you may wish to explore a career break or submit your written resignation. If you leave following voluntary resignation or because of your role being made redundant during or at the end of your Parent leave, your entitlement to enhanced BBC payments will cease. We won't recover any payments relating to your parent leave that have been made. Where you are eligible to receive further statutory payments these will continue monthly until the entitlement ceases.

You can read more about [premature birth leave and support and neonatal care leave](#)

Premature Births

Where a baby is born prematurely (before 37 weeks) parents will receive equivalent extra leave and full pay. This period is calculated as the difference between the original expected due date and the actual date of birth. Should this happen, we will take you through how this will be processed, which is normally at the end of your planned parent leave.

If your baby also requires neonatal care and you qualify for Neonatal Care Leave, this entitlement will offset any Premature Birth Leave entitlement. Any remaining entitlement for either leave type will continue until it is fully used.

Neonatal Care

Effective from 6 April, 2025, 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. This leave is capped at 12 weeks. This leave allows parents to have dedicated time to spend with their baby while they are receiving medical care without impacting on any parent leave entitlement

Where a baby is born prematurely (before 37 weeks) and there is eligibility for Premature Birth Leave, any Neonatal Care leave will offset this entitlement. Any remaining leave entitlement for either type will continue until fully used. Please refer to Neonatal Care Leave guidance for more information.

You can read more about [unpaid Parental Leave](#).

Parental Leave

Parental Leave is **unpaid** and subject to meeting the set criteria outlined below.

If you meet the following criteria, you are eligible to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave, in respect of any one child (a week's leave is defined in the same way as for annual leave) before the child's 18th birthday.

You must:

- have been employed continuously for at least one year;
- be named on the child's birth or adoption certificate;
- have or expect to have parental responsibility;

- not be a foster parent (unless they've secured parental responsibility through the courts); and
- have a child that is under 18.

This leave is in addition to any eligibility for Parent Leave.

You must have legal responsibility for a child by virtue of birth or adoption, or where not covered by legal responsibility, the partner of a person taking the primary role in caring for the child. We may request evidence of your eligibility.

Parental leave can be taken, subject to operational needs, up to the maximum entitlement of four weeks in any one year for each child. It is recommended that Parental leave is taken as whole weeks (e.g. one week or two weeks) rather than individual days. If you are a parent of a disabled child, you can choose to use individual parental leave days to manage their care.

You must give your Team Leader 21 days' notice of your intention to take Parental Leave. However, subject to operational needs the notice requirement may be reduced to a minimum of seven days to meet emerging responsibilities.

Parental Leave that is due to be taken at the time of the birth or adoption cannot be postponed by the Team Leader provided steps have been taken to notify the anticipated date and all practicable steps have been taken to give seven days' notice of the actual date. In other circumstances Team Leaders may postpone a period of parental leave if they consider that the operation of the business would be unduly disrupted if the colleague took leave during the period identified. The postponement must not change the leave period requested, must allow commencement of the leave no later than six months after the original period start date, specifying in writing the reasons for the postponement and the new dates. This must be done within seven days of the original notice.

Colleagues who join the BBC from another employer, having an outstanding entitlement to parental leave, may be asked to provide a reference from the previous employer to verify the extent of the outstanding entitlement. Annual leave continues to be accrued throughout Parental Leave.

Colleagues have the right to return from Parental Leave to the role in which they were employed before the leave or a role on terms and conditions no less

favourable than those which would have been applicable had the employee not been absent from work.

You can read more about [carer leave entitlements and how to request this support](#).

Carer support

We support working carers to maintain a healthy work/life balance beyond using their annual leave to support their own wellbeing and provide respite from their caring responsibilities. We provide enhanced time off as paid Carer Leave for colleagues who are responsible for regularly supporting another person, who would otherwise be unable to cope without their help. This is different from someone who provides care professionally, occasionally or through a voluntary organisation.

This support is accessible for colleagues with children with disabilities or adult dependants, usually a relative or close friend. These responsibilities may change over time and be applicable on a temporary or permanent basis, as set out in the Care Act 2014.

Although for many carers, caring can have positive and rewarding aspects, there are lots of reasons why caring can also leave carers needing extra support. This may include needing practical help with their caring role, replacement care so they can take a break, help with their finances, emotional and wellbeing support, and access to information and advice. Some may need practical and emotional support if their caring role changes or ends.

Carer leave

Carer leave is not time off for routine care provision as this is provided through our offer of flexible working and reasonable adjustment of working hours during short term adjustment to care for dependants. We also expect that all employees plan regular breaks using annual leave.

In recognition of the important roles working carers undertake, Carer leave is an entitlement to access up to 70 hours paid leave in specific circumstances.

Eligibility

There is no length of service requirement to access Carer leave. It's only available for colleagues who undertake and have caring responsibilities for a friend or family member, who due to illness or disability cannot cope without their support and includes short term foster care arrangements.

In addition, fully paid Carer leave supports colleagues who are permanent or temporary carers where they are required to support their dependant such as at planned hospital appointments or dedicated specific time to meet with care teams or specialist support for dependants.

It is also in place to help during those times where carers have had to respond to short notice emergencies that would impact on their ability to undertake their work. In many cases adjustment of working hours can be agreed to meet ad hoc carer responsibilities following the initial emergency. You should discuss and agree arrangements with your team leader.

Carer leave is prorated. Carer leave is entitlement to paid time off for specified reasons and should be evidenced. Carer leave is an entitlement to access up to 70 hours paid leave which can be taken in one-hour blocks. Carer leave is provided annually in line with the leave year as:

- Up to 35 hours' paid leave for time off for a **planned event**, such as accompanying their dependant, as their primary carer, to hospital appointments, routine healthcare appointments, specialist treatments or meetings with key professionals relating to their care.

Wherever possible, colleagues should endeavour to arrange appointments outside their working hours. However, we recognise that sometimes specialist appointments cannot be rearranged. To facilitate your attendance at medical appointments and treatments for those you care for, you will need to give notice that's twice as long as the leave you want to request or a minimum of three days.

Requests for planned time off can't be rejected. If the request would have a detrimental impact operationally the leave can be postponed, it would need to be taken within one month and for the same length of time however.

Up to 35 hours' paid leave for **care emergencies** such as unexpected emergency or overnight admission to hospital relating to the care of your dependant person. In these difficult circumstances, particularly when occurring outside normal working hours, we ask that you notify your team leader as soon as possible to agree next steps and when you are expected to next attend work.

Any further emergency leave would be discretionary and falls within Emergency leave provision. Carer leave is not accumulated and cannot be carried forward into a subsequent leave year.

Additional support for carers

Additional support is available for primary carers to help in managing for routine care provision through making reasonable adjustments to working hours on a temporary basis or through an agreed flexible working arrangement.

If a colleague needs further support, they can consider [Unpaid Leave](#) or a [Career Break](#).

Time off for dependants

A dependant is a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, any person who lives in the same household (who is not an employee, tenant, lodger, or boarder) or any person who relies on the employee for assistance in cases of illness or injury or to plan for care in such situations.

Colleagues have the statutory right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during working hours in order to take action which is necessary:

- to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted;
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- in consequence of the death of a dependant;
- because of the unexpected disruption or ending of arrangements for the care of a dependant; and/or

- to deal with an incident involving a dependent child, which occurs unexpectedly in a period during which an educational establishment is responsible for the child.

You must tell your team leader the reason for the absence as soon as is reasonably practicable and how long they expect to be absent. Time Off for Dependents is unpaid leave, however, if an employee takes time off within these provisions, they may be eligible to take some of this paid, under Emergency Leave. This does not limit the right of employees to take further time off under these provisions, but any further leave will be unpaid.

Time off during school holidays for childcare should be met using annual, parental leave or approved flexible working arrangement e.g., term time working.

You can read more about [bereavement leave entitlements and emergency leave provisions](#).

Bereavement support

We recognise that dealing with a bereavement is personal and as such we will provide you with the appropriate support once you've discussed this with your Team Leader.

Whether expected or unexpected, a loss can impact you in a number of ways and bereavement leave is available for you to take to best support you at this challenging time.

Bereavement leave is a 'day-one' right for all colleagues and is **two weeks' (70 hours)** full pay and leave, aligned to the BBC leave year. The leave covers the loss of a pregnancy, a child, a legal dependant, immediate family, next of kin or a member of your household.

Following your loss, you can discuss how you wish to use the support available to you with your Team Leader. This may be following the death or the weeks after to plan or to attend a funeral or memorial service.

In the specific case of the loss of a child or stillbirth, we provide an enhancement to the statutory provision for Parental bereavement leave and pay. Team leaders will agree support for the biological parent; stepparent; adopter; intended parent; parent in fact or parent's partner. You can choose to take two consecutive weeks or as separate single week blocks within the year after the loss.

Pregnancy loss

In cases of pregnancy loss (including early pregnancy loss, miscarriages, and stillbirths), Bereavement leave incorporates the statutory entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave and provides enhanced support for early pregnancy loss where this is disclosed to a Team Leader.

For additional wellbeing support, more information can be found on the [Gateway](#).

Emergency leave

There is a variety of support available, dependent upon your personal circumstances.

During global or national emergencies, our service as a public service broadcaster is of particular importance and Team Leaders need to be able to fulfil operational requirements and support employees.

In unforeseen circumstances only, Emergency Leave can be provided where a clear discussion has taken place about the support an employee requires. To support emergencies, Team Leaders can grant up to 70 hours (equivalent to 10 days) fully paid leave. More information on alternative arrangements such as hybrid working, informal flexible working requests can be found in the Flexible Working policy.

You can read more about [health-related absence pay entitlements and phased returns and annual leave](#)

Statutory Sick Pay

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is a minimum weekly payment which employers must pay for 28 weeks to qualifying employees. Employees who are excluded from receiving SSP or who have exhausted their SSP entitlement may be entitled to claim sickness benefits from the state.

BBC Health Related Absence Pay

Providing employees have complied with their obligations in this policy, the BBC will pay 18 weeks full pay and 9 weeks half pay during periods of health related absence in a rolling 12 month period. This means that on the first day of sickness absence, you must look back 12 months from that date to calculate how much paid leave is available.

Each new absence will have a new 12 month rolling period in which to calculate entitlement.

BBC Health Related Absence Pay is basic pay at the point health related absence commences and any continuing allowances which would normally be paid; it does not include any additional payments e.g. night payments. BBC Health Absence Pay is inclusive of any Statutory Sick Pay.

If an employee is reaching the limits of their BBC Health Absence Pay or SSP the manager should advise them in writing giving at least 1 month notice.

Health Related Absence and Annual Leave

Employees who are absent owing to their health during a period of annual leave may have the leave credited if they provide a Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note) or similar medical certificate from a local doctor (if the employee is away from home) confirming the dates of ill-health. Self-certification will not be accepted as evidence in these circumstances.

Employees who are unable to take their leave in the year in which it accrued due to long-term health related absence may carry forward a maximum of 20 days' (equivalent to 140 hours) annual leave into the following leave year. The carry-over of leave should be approved in advance by their manager and must be taken within 18 months of the end of the leave year in which it accrued or it will lapse.

You can read more about the reporting absence and returning to work procedures

Reporting Procedure

On their first working day of sickness absence, employees must notify their manager, or other designated person, at least 30 minutes before they are due to commence work or as soon as is reasonably practical. The employee should confirm the reason or nature of their health related absence and the expected length of absence.

They should also provide their manager with their current contact details. Employees must continue to keep their manager informed of their progress and likely return to work date.

During periods of health related absence, employees may be contacted by their manager or HR, in order to discuss their wellbeing.

Managers may contact employees during periods of health related absence for any urgent work-related query if there is no other practical alternative. Contact should be of a reasonable level taking into consideration that the employee is absent owing to their health.

Employees may self-certify, verbally or in writing, periods of health related absences which are seven or fewer consecutive calendar days in duration. For periods of health related absence that are eight or more consecutive calendar days in duration, employees must provide a signed Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note).

The manager must ensure the absence and reason/category is recorded in the divisional recording system.

Absence that has not been notified in accordance with the above reporting procedure will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Infectious Diseases

Employees who have been in close contact (e.g. with a member of their immediate family) with an infectious or contagious disease, such as tuberculosis, chicken pox, measles, meningitis or other serious condition that could be passed on to work colleagues, should notify their manager and seek advice from their doctor or the BBC's Occupational Health Service on the need to stay away from work. This is especially important if one of their colleagues is pregnant. If they are required not to attend work as a precautionary measure they will be granted paid leave.

Employees must follow the usual procedures for sickness absence if they are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease. If advised to refrain from work employees cannot return without clearance from their doctor or the BBC's Occupational Health Service.

Health Related Absence due to an Off Duty Accident

If an employee has a period of health related absence as a result of an accident or injury caused by a third party, in respect of which damages may be payable, employees must immediately notify their manager and keep them informed of that fact and of any claim compromise, settlement or judgement made or awarded in connection with it and all relevant particulars the BBC may reasonably require.

The employee will be eligible for BBC Health Absence Pay. The employee must make reasonable endeavours to recover damages from the third-party for lost earnings over any period during which the employee has, or will, receive BBC Health Absence pay. The employee must repay to the BBC any damages recovered for lost earnings over and above statutory sick pay and less any reasonable costs they incur in doing so. The employee must keep their manager informed of the commencement, progress and outcome of any attempts to recover damages.

If the health absence pay is repaid to the BBC in full, the period of health related absence will not be included in calculating whether an employee has reached

their BBC Health Absence Pay limit. If, however, no refund is made or the refund is made in part, the BBC at its discretion will decide to what extent the period of health related absence will be taken into account.

Return to Work Conversation

Where a staff member has taken any period of health related absence, the manager should consider undertaking and recording a return to work conversation. The conversation is supportive and intended to understand the reason for absence and what support may be provided to facilitate a return to work and reduce the prospect of further absence.

A referral to the BBC's Occupational Health Service at this stage may be considered in order to receive independent medical advice on what additional support or measures can be considered to support wellness and attendance. The manager may also sign post the staff member to available resources that may be helpful in the Wellbeing Strategy.

Phased Return to Work

Where a staff member has been, or is, absent from work for health related reasons the manager should consider whether a phased return to work is needed or would facilitate an early and sustained return to work. Specific advice on return to work and merits of a phased approach can be received via a referral to the BBC's Occupational Health Service.

Phased returns may comprise:

- Working a shorter number hours than the staff members ordinary contractual hours – usually where the health related absence causes or has resulted in residual fatigue;
- Working full contractual hours but with workload relief;
- Working remotely from home or with altered start/finish times.

Phased returns to work will be paid at the employee's usual full rate of pay for up to 4 weeks. , Phased returns must be informed and recommended by a Occupational Health referral or GP Fit Note.

You can read more about [informal and formal process for managing absence](#).

Management of Health Related Absence Procedure

Managing Wellbeing and Attendance

As set out in the principles above, managers should proactively support and manage the wellbeing of their team. Staff should engage constructively with their manager and utilise the wellbeing resources provided by the BBC set out in the Wellbeing Strategy. This includes occupational health referrals (see appendix 1 for more details on occupational health referrals)

Health Related Absence

Disability

The BBC recognises that health related absence may result from a disability.

Particular consideration will be given to whether any absence is disability related at each stage of the procedure for managing health and attendance as set out in this policy, including whether any reasonable adjustments could be made to the requirements of the role or other aspects of working at the BBC which would provide support and/or assist in achieving acceptable levels of attendance. The manager should provide appropriate support if trigger points are reached. Where a trigger point is reached, the manager should seek independent advice from Occupational Health including whether any reasonable

adjustments could be made to the procedures set out in this policy for managing attendance. The BBC recognises that sickness absence may be disability-related. Where an employee is disabled or becomes disabled during their employment the BBC Guide ['How do I support a disabled team member'](#) will be used.

Pregnancy

Particular consideration will be given to whether any absence is pregnancy related at each stage of the procedure for managing health and attendance set

out in this policy. The manager should provide appropriate support if trigger points are reached. Where a trigger point is reached owing to pre-birth pregnancy related absence, support should be managed informally. More information is available in the [Supporting Working Lives Policy](#).

Managers and staff should utilise resources in the Wellbeing Strategy to proactively manage their wellbeing and achievement of acceptable levels of attendance on a day-to-day basis. If a staff member has levels of absence in line with any of the intervention triggers below, it should serve as a prompt to the manager and staff member that a more structured approach may be more effective.

- A period of long term health related absence of 4 weeks (28 calendar days) or more;
- 3 or more instances of short term health related absence in a 12 week rolling period;
- 5 or more short term health related absences in a 12 month rolling period;

The three stage process outlined below should, therefore, be followed. Please refer to Section 3 re: Disability or Pregnancy.

Informal 1-1 Review

The manager will arrange a review with the employee to discuss their health and related absence. The informal review will be held in good time following the absence.

In the case of short term intermittent absence, the manager should consider whether occupational health advice is required at this stage to help understand any underlying health conditions and how a sustained return to work or improved level of attendance may be achieved. In cases of long term absence a referral to occupational health must be considered. The manager and staff member should also consider whether it would be beneficial to access any of the BBC wellbeing provisions outlined in the Wellbeing strategy.

The discussion should be supportive and is intended to fully understand the reason(s) for absence; the staff member's immediate health needs; prognosis for

return to work and/or improved levels of attendance; and what support may be provided to facilitate a return to work and/or reduce the prospect of further absence. The manager should also consider the employee's full service and attendance record in judging whether further action is required or not.

The manager will confirm in writing to the employee the discussions and any agreed actions to facilitate improvements in the health and attendance levels of the employee.

In cases of short term intermittent absence, the manager will confirm the acceptable level of future attendance and any review period (which may be up to 9 months) before a formal review meeting takes place. The review period and acceptable level of future attendance should be informed by medical advice, and the attendance levels set out in the trigger points above (pro rata). During the review period, the manager should update the employee on their progress against the expected and acceptable levels of attendance.

In cases of long term absence, the manager will confirm any review period and date for a follow up review or Formal Review Meeting if one is needed. Ordinarily a formal review meeting should take place not more than 6 weeks after the informal review if absence continues.

In cases of both short and long term absence, the manager may consider it appropriate to undertake more than one informal review meeting before progressing to a stage 2 review meeting.

Formal Review Meeting

Should there be insufficient improvement in attendance during the review period, the manager will arrange a Formal Review meeting with the employee to explore the reasons for continued or repeated absence.

Staff members are entitled to be accompanied to any formal review meeting by an accredited trade union representative or colleague (other than a practising lawyer) if they wish.

As with the informal review, the primary focus should be on facilitating improved health and wellbeing, a return to work and/or improved levels of attendance. The formal review meeting should also be a review of any actions agreed in the

informal meeting, attendance levels since the informal review and/or prognosis for return to work.

In the case of long term absence due to ill health or injury that is likely to permanently and substantially impair earning capacity consideration should be given to potential eligibility for ill health retirement. This will be subject to the eligibility terms of the relevant pension arrangement that the employee may be a member. For employees who are active members of the BBC Pension Scheme, an independent medical assessment of eligibility should be commissioned via occupational health. For other BBC pension arrangements, the employee should be directed to their pension provider.

The potential outcomes of a formal review meeting are:

- In cases of both short term intermittent and long term absence, the manager may adjourn and/or extend a formal review period before reconvening for a further formal review meeting. This may be appropriate in particular if actions agreed at the informal review stage remain outstanding; and/or there has been a change of circumstances which could impact on the employee's attendance levels; and/or updated advice is required from the occupational health service; and/or there is a positive prognosis for a return to work.
- In cases of short term intermittent absence, the manager may consider an insufficient improvement in attendance levels has been achieved during the review period. The manager may then consider it appropriate to have a further review period or convene a formal hearing with the employee as set out below.

In cases of long term sickness absence where the prognosis for return is considered poor or unclear by the BBC Occupational Health Service and/or an independent medical assessment indicates the employee meets the criteria for ill health retirement under the relevant pension scheme, the manager may inform the staff member that a formal hearing will be convened as set out below.

Formal Hearing

If there is insufficient improvement after the formal review, the manager will convene a formal hearing to consider the ongoing sustainability of any long term

absence or persistent short term intermittent sickness absence. The employee will be informed in advance of the reasons for the hearing and that an outcome of the hearing may be termination of their employment. The employee will be provided with any documents and evidence the manager will consider during the hearing process.

Employees should take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by an accredited trade union representative or a BBC colleague (other than a practising lawyer).

The employee will be permitted sufficient notice of the meeting to have time to contact and brief an accredited representative or BBC colleague, as well as obtain relevant medical records which may be beneficial to the hearing.

The manager may arrange a note taker to take summary notes of the meeting. A copy of the summary notes will be sent to the employee and their representative (if appropriate) for comment. Provided comments are received within a reasonable timeframe, as defined by the hearing manager, they will be held with the original notes from the meeting.

The manager should consider matters such as the following during the meeting (this is not exhaustive):

- The medical advice including the employee's prognosis and any recommendations, and whether further advice is required;
- the effect the medical condition and/or the employee's absences are having on the employee's performance in their current role;
- the effect the employee's absences are having on the business; and
- the reasonable adjustments that could be made to enable a return to work.

Before any decision is taken by the hearing manager consideration should be given to whether any reasonable adjustment should be made to the outcome of this stage of the process for example whether the process itself should be reasonably extended by the addition of a further formal review meeting, where the absence in question is in relation to disability.

The possible outcomes of the formal hearing are:

- making further reasonable adjustments to the working conditions of the employee's current job;
- implementing a further rehabilitation plan;
- searching for suitable alternative employment within the BBC;
- the hearing manager may decide to adjourn the hearing and reconvene at a later date if further lines of enquiry are required before a decision can be reached;

Where an employee has previously been notified that their employment may be at risk if the absence continues, the manager may also consider:

- terminating employment on the grounds of ill health retirement subject to contractual notice; or
- terminating the employment on the grounds of the employee's incapacity to perform the role and/or continuing absence/attendance levels subject to contractual notice.

An employee's employment will usually only be terminated on the grounds of medical incapacity and/or the employee's continuing absence and/or attendance levels if reasonable adjustments cannot be made to the working environment or if suitable alternative employment cannot be found within a reasonable period. The hearing manager must seek advice from Manager Advice before terminating employment on these grounds.

Where termination occurs, an incapacity pension may apply on the basis that an individual cannot carry out their normal occupation and this is likely to permanently and substantially impair their earning capacity.

Where such pension payments do not apply, the manager may, in conjunction with the HR Business Partner, consider whether it is appropriate to make an ex gratia payment to the employee on the grounds of ill-health.

The manager will advise the employee of their decision in writing after the meeting. The employee has the right to appeal the decision. All appeals will be conducted in accordance with the [BBC Appeals Policy](#).

Associated Policies and Documents

- [BBC Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- ['How do I support a disabled team member' guide](#)
- [BBC's Data Protection Handbook](#)
- [Guide to Occupational Health Referrals](#)
- [BBC Appeals Policy](#)

Appendix 1: Medical Examinations and Occupational Health Referrals

As set out in the principles above, medical examinations and referrals to the BBC's Occupational Health service are proactive measures to support staff wellbeing and high levels of attendance.

The reasons for a referral to the Occupational Health Service include, but are not limited to seeking independent medical advice on the following;

- to support general wellbeing and acceptable levels of attendance
- fitness to attend and carry out work
- ability to carry out their duties effectively and, in the case of disabilities, advice on what reasonable adjustments the manager may consider providing
- the long term prognosis for return to and sustained attendance in work
- health and safety risks
- roles that have special medical or health surveillance requirements
- they have been offered a role overseas

- Night working under the Working Time Regulations 1998

If an employee chooses not to attend an examination or consultation the BBC will make decisions and manage attendance as set out in this policy on the information which is available which may ultimately have consequences for the staff members continued employment.

The manager must explain to the individual the reason for the referral and the arrangements for the examination(s).

Employees will be offered the opportunity to view the BBC Occupational Health Service report prepared on them, prior to it being sent to the manager.

If necessary, the employee will be asked to give consent for the BBC's Occupational Health Service to consult with their own doctor and the employee should respond to such a request without unreasonable delay. Any medical report sent by their doctor will be provided in accordance with the Access to Medical Reports legislation.

The full procedure for making a referral to the Occupational Health Service is set out on [Gateway](#).

You can read more about [managing employee attendance, and support options, including those for disabled team member](#).

You can read more about [long service award entitlements and how they are processed](#).

Long Service Awards

10 years' service

This entitlement does not apply to employees whose employment with the BBC began on or after 1 January 2013, regardless of whether they have any prior BBC service.

On completion of 10 years' service, you are entitled to an additional half week of leave (equivalent to 17.5 hours for full-time workers) each year. For additional

leave only, the qualifying period of 10 years completed service will be calculated irrespective of whether the service was part-time or full-time.

Service on either a continuing or fixed-term contract will count towards the 10-year qualification. Separate periods of employment will be aggregated, including secondments to other organisations.

The additional leave is half of the weekly contractual hours you are working at the start of each year in which you become entitled to the leave. If you change your hours, additional leave will be accrued and calculated based on the revised working hours. Any prior additional leave held in reserve will remain at the level at which it was accrued and will not be affected by the new working hours.

The additional leave is credited on the date you qualify and can be taken in that leave year. Subsequent entitlements are given at the start of the leave year, with annual leave, and can be taken in that year or held in reserve.

Additional leave may be held in reserve up to a maximum of eight weeks as agreed with your team leader. Thereafter, additional leave should be taken each leave year. Where this is not possible, due to operational requirements, this should be discussed with your team leader who may agree to hold such leave for a defined period.

You should submit requests for annual leave with reasonable notice. In considering requests, Team Leaders will consider your needs and the needs of the business.

Payment in lieu of additional leave on termination of employment will not be made.

25 years' service

On completing 25 years of full and/or part-time service with the BBC an employee is entitled to an award of 10% of annual basic pay or 5 weeks of paid leave. The award can be taken as a combination of both pay and leave. Separate periods of service will be aggregated for the purpose of determining eligibility. An adjustment to the value of the award will be made if the employee has had full and part-time service during the 25 years' service.

When part of the award is taken in complete weeks' paid leave and the remaining value in cash, the cash payment will be calculated as follows:

$$(5 - \text{number of week's paid leave}) \div 5 \times \text{value of full award}$$

The paid leave must be taken either:

- before the end of the leave year *following* that in which 25 years' service was completed; or
- before retirement, whichever is the earlier.

It may be taken in either one or two instalments, and may be added to annual leave. As with annual leave it must be taken at a time or times approved by the BBC, release from duty is subject to the overriding needs of the BBC.

Reduced pay award

A reduced award is payable when employees complete 21 years', but less than 25 years' service and then:

- Retire (whether normally, prematurely or on voluntary early retirement);
- Resign (other than to avoid dismissal for disciplinary reasons);
- Are dismissed (other than for reasons of conduct);
- Die in service.

Reduced awards are calculated as follows:

| Completed years of service on cessation | % of annual salary on cessation |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 21 | 2 |
| 22 | 4 |
| 23 | 6 |
| 24 | 8 |

The option of paid leave is not available for reduced awards.

Payment of award after death

On death, any full or reduced award that was due to have been paid in the year of the employee's death, reverts to the BBC. Subject to Inland Revenue limits, an equivalent ex gratia payment will be made to the surviving spouse or dependent(s) as the BBC may decide at its discretion. When a member of staff

dies within three months of completing 25 years' service, any ex gratia payment will be based on the full award.

40 years' service

On completing 40 years of service with the BBC an employee is entitled to an award of a tax free gift of the individual's choosing up to a value of £800, inclusive of VAT, engraving and delivery charges. Separate periods of service will be aggregated for the purpose of determining eligibility including wartime and call-up service whether with the Armed Forces or in some other form of service to the nation. No adjustment will be made for part-time service.

Employees are eligible for a reduced award on retiring, resigning, being dismissed for reasons other than a breach of discipline or death in service, after 36 or more years' BBC service. When employees have completed 36 years' service, but less than 40 years' service, they qualify for a reduced award on the following scale:

| Completed years of service on cessation | Maximum value of the gift |
|---|---------------------------|
| 36 | £720 |
| 37 | £740 |
| 38 | £760 |
| 39 | £780 |

Additional resources

- Long service awards (<https://staff.bbc.com/gateway/hr/for-me/long-service-awards/>)

You can read more about [volunteer leave options and how to request them](#).

Volunteer Leave

You might be able to carry out up to 14 hours of external volunteering, either as a team or individually. Volunteering is not an entitlement and is subject to operational requirements.

Volunteer Leave forms part of the Leave Policy and applies to employees in the UK, Channel Islands, and Isle of Man. The BBC recognises that volunteering can benefit our audiences, local communities and volunteers themselves. Find out what to do if you would like to carry out volunteering.

Volunteer Leave

You can carry out up to 14 hours of external volunteering either as a team or individually (pro-rata if you're part time).

Separately, internal volunteering (where you assist with BBC-related opportunities) can be carried out where available.

To carry out volunteering, you will need to make a request to your Team Leader with as much notice as possible for your Team Leader to review and approve if possible. Volunteering is not an entitlement and is subject to operational requirements.

Internal Volunteering

The BBC values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers with supporting internal activities, such as:

- Taking part in an open day to promote the BBC
- Assisting during BBC events, e.g. Sports Personality of the Year
- Support at location productions or election results coverage
- Supporting [BBC Children in Need](#) and [BBC Media Action](#)

Internal volunteering opportunities will be posted on Ariel or the Careers Hub.

Volunteering is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers should complement but not replace the role of paid staff.

Reasonable expenses associated with internal volunteering, such as travel costs, can be reimbursed in line with the BBC Expenses Policy. Any expenses need to be pre-agreed with the area offering the volunteering opportunity and when making a claim, that area's charge code should be used.

Before any internal volunteering can take place, the following will need to be considered where relevant:

- Training including health and safety
- PEEPs (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)
- Reasonable adjustments
- DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks if working with children or vulnerable adults

External volunteering

Volunteering is an opportunity to promote and align with the BBC's strategic objectives, for example engaging in nature projects to support our sustainability ambitions.

Volunteering as a team

Volunteering as a team can be a great opportunity to strengthen relationships. It can also help with learning new skills and contributing to the community, including our hard-to-reach audiences. Taking part would be optional and it would count towards an individual's 14 hour volunteering provision.

Examples of team volunteering could be:

- Fundraising activities like sponsored challenges on behalf of a BBC charity
- Planting or harvesting produce in a community garden
- Teaching filming skills to young people

Individual volunteering

You can choose to carry out volunteering for a charity or not-for-profit organisation of your choice. This includes volunteering with community groups and schools.

If you're looking for an external charity to volunteer with, you could consider the local charities funded by BBC Children in Need near you. For more details please visit [BBC Children in Need](#). Some of these organisations may not be set up to

take on volunteers so please make sure you contact the organisation directly to ask about volunteering opportunities.

Making a request

Before taking part in any internal volunteering opportunities or external volunteering, you should request approval from your Team Leader with as much notice as possible.

All requests will need to be subject to:

Operational assessment

Team Leaders will review requests and agree if it is operationally viable. The leave should be logged on the Leave and Absence Portal or other scheduling systems.

Impartiality

The [BBC guidelines on impartiality](#) state that "the BBC must remain independent and distanced from government initiatives, campaigners, charities, and their agendas. This is the case no matter how worthy the cause may seem or how much their message appears to be accepted or uncontroversial" (4.3.17).

If an organisation is involved in campaigning work on an issue of current public or political controversy, you and your Team Leader will need to be satisfied that this does not give rise to any concerns around impartiality. Any volunteering that you want to undertake would need to be within the BBC's requirements for due impartiality as we need to ensure that we do not give undue prominence to organisations.

Safety

You should refer to [Safety Guidance](#) for guidelines relating to your chosen voluntary activity and contact the [Safety Team](#) if you have any questions.

Insurance

The organisation should have Public/General Liability Insurance as a minimum and, if relevant (e.g. if food is provided), it should have Product Liability cover.

You can read more about [additional leave for weekend working](#).

This entitlement does not apply to employees whose employment with the BBC began on or after 1 January 2013, regardless of whether they have any prior BBC service.

On completion of 10 years' service, you are entitled to an additional half week of leave (equivalent to 17.5 hours for full-time workers) each year. For additional leave only, the qualifying period of 10 years completed service will be calculated irrespective of whether the service was part-time or full-time.

Service on either a continuing or fixed-term contract will count towards the 10-year qualification. Separate periods of employment will be aggregated, including secondments to other organisations.

The additional leave is half of the weekly contractual hours you are working at the start of each year in which you become entitled to the leave. If you change your hours, additional leave will be accrued and calculated based on the revised working hours. Any prior additional leave held in reserve will remain at the level at which it was accrued and will not be affected by the new working hours.

The additional leave is credited on the date you qualify and can be taken in that leave year. Subsequent entitlements are given at the start of the leave year, with annual leave, and can be taken in that year or held in reserve.

Additional leave may be held in reserve up to a maximum of eight weeks as agreed with your team leader. Thereafter, additional leave should be taken each leave year. Where this is not possible, due to operational requirements, this should be discussed with your team leader who may agree to hold such leave for a defined period.

You should submit requests for annual leave with reasonable notice. In considering requests, Team Leaders will consider your needs and the needs of the business.

Payment in lieu of additional leave on termination of employment will not be made.

You can read more about [these leave options and how to request them](#).

- Standing in parliamentary/local elections or local councils.

You may, under normal circumstances, stand in a local government election and sit on local councils. You should find out what attendance will be expected of you if elected. Where these fall within their normal pattern of your working hours, but would not conflict with operational needs, paid leave may be authorised. You are required to give as much prior notice of your intentions as possible. Leave will not be given for absences that conflict with your work duties.

We will, where possible, grant up to 18 working days' (equivalent to 126 hours, prorated for part time workers) paid leave per year to members of local councils, whose duties require them to attend sessions during any part of their working day, provided that such absences do not conflict with operational requirements. If you require more leave to fulfil your requirements, then subject to operational needs, it may be granted, but as unpaid leave.

- Duties as a magistrate

If you are seeking appointment as a Magistrate, you should find out what attendance will be expected and give your team leader as much notice as possible of the requirements. Where these fall within the pattern of a normal working day, but do not conflict with operational needs, paid leave may be authorised. Your team leader may grant up to 18 working days' paid leave (equivalent to 126 hours, pro-rated for part time workers) per year.

If you require more leave to fulfil your requirement then, subject to operational needs, it may be granted, but as unpaid leave.

- Time off for training if part of reserve forces or volunteer civilian organisations

You should tell your team leader if you are a member of the Reserve Forces or a Volunteer Civilian Organisation, since in the event of an emergency it would be essential for a broadcasting service to be maintained.

You may be asked to provide official notification of your training and mobilisation obligations on an annual basis. You may be granted paid leave for the purposes of training as follows:

- **Reserve Forces** – Three quarters of the training period up to one and a half weeks per year.
- **Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve** - twice the above allowance in any year in which 28 days naval training is carried out, provided that the aggregate annual allowance over a period of four years is not exceeded.
- **Civilian Organisations** – six sevenths of the training period if selected for a fulltime instructor's training course, up to a maximum of three weeks (this is not an annual right).

Where this leave does not cover the whole duration of training, the balance of the time must be taken as unpaid leave or annual leave.

In the event of a call-out order for compulsory mobilisation, you should give your team leader the official notification of the request. Your contract will remain in force during any subsequent leave of absence.

- Jury service and court appearances

Paid leave is granted to employees called for jury service or when they appear as a witness on behalf of the BBC. Travelling and subsistence expenses, and any additional loss of earnings above your normal salary, e.g., overtime, must be claimed from the court, in accordance with their rules. You must not claim for any earnings for which you have already paid you, e.g., your basic salary.

Unpaid leave is granted if you are called as a witness in criminal or civil proceedings.

If you appear as a defendant in criminal proceedings, your absence is offset against outstanding annual leave. If there is none, the absence is treated as unpaid leave.

- Other public service duties such as member of police authority

Other public service duties

If you hold certain public positions, you will be granted up to six days paid leave (equivalent to 42 hours, pro-rated for part time workers) per year to perform these duties, subject to operational requirements. These roles include:

A member of a police authority, local education authority, educational governing body, health authority or primary care trust.

A member of any statutory tribunal, an environmental agency or of the boards of prison visitors.

If you require more leave to fulfil your requirements then, subject to operational needs, it may be granted but as unpaid leave.

You can read more about [unpaid leave options and how to request them](#).

For other types of leave not prescribed within this policy, you may apply for a period of unpaid leave up to a maximum of three months. The granting of such a request is at the discretion of your team leader. Where you request a period of unpaid leave of greater than three months, a career break may be considered (see the [Career Break Policy](#)).

You can read more about [career break options and how to request them](#).

This policy details the provisions for employees to take a career break from the BBC. Employees must have been continuously employed for at least one year to be able to apply for a career break.

1. Career Breaks

There are two types of career Breaks in the BBC:

Categories 'A' and 'B' Career Break

Category 'A' Career Break

The manager may agree a career break of 1 year or in exceptional circumstances up to 2 years. The individual will be re-engaged in the same job and on the same terms and conditions. If there are any planned changes to the role which would require consultation, such as terms and conditions changes or redundancies, we will engage with you on these potential impacts

Category 'B' Career Break

The manager may agree a career break of no more than 3 years. During this period the individual can apply for internal vacancies. The individual has no offer of re-engagement.

General Career Breaks Information

The BBC will aim to support employees who wish to take a break from their current job for work-life balance reasons, particularly to:

- meet caring responsibilities;
- pursue a course or full-time study;
- undertake an extended period of travelling;
- accompany a partner on an overseas assignment.

Career breaks will not normally be granted for a period of less than 3 months. The employee will be informed of their category of reinstatement before commencing the career break.

On returning from the career break continuity of employment is preserved in respect of contractual rights and those BBC benefits that depend on continuity of service e.g. redundancy pay, although the period of the career break itself will not count towards continuous service. For BBC benefits that have a qualifying period or date (e.g. BBC Parent pay), the individual must have returned from their

career break by the qualifying date and/or completed the qualifying period to be entitled to the benefit.

Individuals are required to notify their manager of any change to their circumstances that might be relevant to the career break arrangement and may request an extension to their career break. The manager will consider any requests in line with operational requirements and may need to change the category of reinstatement.

If an individual fails to return on the agreed date or breaks the terms of their career break, the career break will be deemed to have come to an end and the individual will have no right to return to the BBC under the terms of this policy.

If an individual has a live disciplinary sanction on record at the point of starting a career break, the sanction will be paused and resumed on the employees return to the BBC.

Career Breaks and alternative paid work

Career breaks are not for the purpose of taking up alternative paid work. Those on Category A career breaks are expressly prohibited from taking up any form of paid work of any nature, without having first obtained the written permission of their manager. Permission is likely to be granted where any proposed work is intended for a community or charitable purpose.

Those on a Category B career break are permitted to undertake alternative paid work only with the written permission of their manager. For those on Category A or Category B career breaks permission will not be granted in any circumstances for an individual to work for the BBC including the World Service and/or the BBC's subsidiaries including BBC Studios in the United Kingdom or abroad in any capacity (including freelance and agency) whilst on a career break.

Pensions

Employees should refer to their BBC Pension Scheme member's handbook, or contact Pensions the pension service line on 01 22811 (ext. 029 2032 2811) or at myPension@bbc.co.uk for information as to how a career break will affect their pension.

TUPE Transfers

In line with the provisions of this policy, staff who are on a Category A career break are deemed to have resigned from their employment on the commencement of their career break and are treated as not being in the BBC's employment for the duration of that career break. Accordingly, they will be unaffected by any TUPE transfer relating to the substantive role which they held before commencing their career break.

On the completion of their career break, they will return to their employment with the BBC in the usual manner. If their substantive role has transferred to a new employer under TUPE in the course of their career break and no directly equivalent role is available, they will be offered a suitable alternative job in line with this policy.

Procedure for Applying

should discuss their request with their manager and send through their resignation if approved. Line Managers then need to submit this request via the Career Break Form on Launchpad. To apply for a career break employees should arrange a meeting with their manager, to discuss the request. If there is likely to be a delay in meeting, the manager should let the employee know. Where a request can be accepted without further discussion a meeting may not be required.

The employee has the right to be accompanied at meetings by an accredited trade union representative or a BBC colleague (other than a practising lawyer).

In considering the request and the associated business requirements employees must not be discriminated against on the basis of protected characteristics as

detailed in the Equality Act 2010, e.g. religion, request to work flexibly to observe a religious festival.

If the employee fails to attend a meeting and a rearranged meeting without a reason, the manager may consider the application as withdrawn. The manager should however, give the employee an opportunity to present reasons for failing to attend the meetings and write to the employee with their decision.

The manager must notify the employee of the decision in writing following a meeting.

If accepted, the employee will need to send through their resignation. Managers then need to submit the request via the Career Break Form on Launchpad

If a request is refused, the manager must give the following grounds for the decision and explain why these grounds apply. Grounds for refusal may include, but are not limited to:

- Burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to reorganise work among existing employees
- Inability to recruit additional employees
- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during periods the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes

Right of Appeal

The employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of the request for a career break. All appeals will be conducted in accordance with the BBC Appeals Policy.