

Leave, Absence and Flexible Working

Why this policy matters

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

This policy sets out our approach to:

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

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to you if you are:

- A BBC employee in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man
- On a standard contract, either continuing or fixed-term (full or part-time)

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

Some groups, such as Senior Leaders or freelancers, may have specific conditions. Where this is the case, it will be specified within this policy.

The essential things you must know or do

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

Annual leave and Public Holiday Leave

Your annual leave entitlement is calculated as your contracted hours per week, without meal breaks, times five weeks (equivalent to 175 hours for a full-time worker). In addition, statutory UK Bank Holidays and one Corporation Day, around Christmas time. These entitlements are per leave year 1 April to 31 March. Where specified in detailed requirements, entitlements to leave are pro rata for part-time employees (see exception on accruing service for Additional Leave).

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

Flexible working

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

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

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

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

2. If you are a manager you must legally review and provide an outcome within two months of a formal request.

Parent support

Time off for appointments

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

Adoption - 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).

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

Parent leave

Eligible parents can take 52 weeks of parent leave following the birth of their child or adoption.

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

You can read more about [how to notify your manager and BBC HR about pregnancy and adoption](#).

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

Parent pay

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

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

Notification for parent leave

3. If you intend to take parent leave, you must give BBC HR at least 28 days' notice of your planned start date of parent leave.

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

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

[You can read more about notifying your manager and BBC HR about an early return](#)

Premature births

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

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

Unpaid Parental leave

Eligible parents are entitled to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave, for each child (a week's leave is defined in the same way as for annual leave) before the child's 18th birthday. Parental leave can be taken, subject to operational needs, up to the maximum entitlement of four weeks in any one year for each child.

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

Carer support

Carer leave

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

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

Bereavement and Emergency Leave

We provide support during times of loss and unforeseen emergencies. This includes bereavement leave and, in certain circumstances, emergency leave.

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

Time off for dependants

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

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

Health and attendance

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

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

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

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

You can read more about [how to report absence, including requirements for extended absence and doctor's notes](#).

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

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

The threshold for “high absence” is:

- a) three instances of absence in a 12-week rolling period
- b) five instances of absence in a 12-month rolling period
- c) 28 consecutive days of absence

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

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

Long service recognition

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

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

Volunteer Leave

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

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

Weekend working

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

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

Other paid leave

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

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

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

Unpaid Leave

You may be eligible to take up to three months of unpaid leave if you need more time off in the leave year. Time off to carry out approved external engagements or time off to attend a criminal proceeding as a defendant is also unpaid.

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

Career Breaks

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

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