

Leave Policy

Including:

- Annual Leave
- Time off for Public Duties (inc. July Service)
- Carers Leave
- Unexpected Absence (inc. Medical Appointments & Emergency Leave)
- Unauthorised Absence (AWOL)

January 2025



Contents

Issue Control Sheet.....	3
1. Annual Leave.....	4
1.1 Entitlements.....	4
1.2 Bank Holidays.....	4
1.3 Requesting & Booking Annual Leave.....	4
1.4 Restrictions.....	5
1.5 Carry Over.....	5
1.6 Holiday & Sickness.....	5
1.7 Leaving Us.....	5
2. Time off for Public Duties.....	5
2.1 Purpose.....	5
2.2 Eligibility.....	6
2.3 Responsibilities.....	6
2.4 Reasonable Time Off.....	6
2.5 Jury Service.....	7
2.6 Volunteer Reserve Forces.....	7
3. Carers Leave.....	8
3.1 Introduction.....	8
3.2 Entitlement & Notice Requirements.....	8
3.3 Delaying Requests.....	8
4. Unexpected Absence.....	8
4.1 Purpose.....	8
4.2 Absence Notification.....	9
4.3 Emergency Leave.....	9
4.4 Dependent Care.....	9
4.5 Medical Appointments.....	9
4.6 Payments for Unexpected Absence.....	9
4.7 Returning to Work.....	10
4.8 Further Support – Employee Assistance Programme.....	10
5. Unauthorised Absence (AWOL).....	10
5.1 Purpose.....	10
5.2 Understanding AWOL.....	10
5.3 Prevention.....	10
4.4 Payments.....	11
4.5 Managing Unauthorised Absence.....	11

Issue Control Sheet

Issue Record Sheet		
Issue	Amendment Date	Comment
05	15/01/2025	Included unpaid carers leave. Amended dependent care.

Document Authors		
Name	Signature	Date
Katherine Kerr	[Redacted due to external publication]	15 th January 2025

Document Approval		
Name	Signature	Date
Austen Mirner	[Redacted due to external publication]	15 th January 2025
Ellie Armour	[Redacted due to external publication]	15 th January 2025

1. Annual Leave

1.1 Entitlements

We understand that taking time away from work is really important as this ensures a healthy work-life balance. We want to encourage and support everyone to manage their annual leave effectively but also manage productivity levels across our business to meet and respond to the ever-changing needs of our clients and customers.

Our holiday year runs from 1st April to 31st March. You will be entitled to a given number of annual leave hours, in addition to the statutory bank holidays. If you would like to know your annual leave entitlement, check your Contract of Employment, the IRIS cascade system, or contact the People Team.

If you work part-time, you will receive a pro rata entitlement based on the number of contractual hours that you work.

1.2 Bank Holidays

We recognise the following bank holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Early May Bank Holiday
- Spring Bank Holiday
- Summer Bank Holiday
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

In addition to the above, Scotland recognise 2nd January and colleagues in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland may have varying bank holidays to those listed above.

You are expected to be available to work on any statutory bank holiday would you normally be scheduled to do so and will be paid in line with your terms and conditions. If you are required to work, you will be granted a day in lieu to take at a later date.

1.3 Requesting & Booking Annual Leave

If you would like to take a period of annual leave, you should let your manager know in advance. You should usually give four weeks' notice however if you are booking last minute annual leave, speak to your manager who may at their discretion review the request sooner.

All requests for annual leave should be booked through the IRIS cascade system which will trigger an immediate notification to your manager to review. Managers should respond to requests within two weeks.

We know that there may be occasions where you'd like a longer break because of a certain event (such as a honeymoon or visiting family etc.) If you want to take a period of annual leave longer than two weeks, you should give six weeks' notice to your Managing Director or Head of Department who will review your request.

If you are looking to take a much longer break away from the business, you should consider reviewing our Career Break Guidelines.

All requests for annual leave will be considered on a first come, first served basis. If there isn't enough resource available to meet business demand, unfortunately requests may be declined.

If you are eager to book travel and make holiday arrangements, we ask that you do not do this until your annual leave request has been approved. We cannot be held responsible for reimbursement of any money lost if annual leave is declined.

1.4 Restrictions

Due to the seasonal nature of our business, we have peak periods where we need to ensure that we have enough colleagues available to deliver against our service levels. This means it may be necessary to restrict when annual leave can be taken. Leave may also be restricted during stock-take periods.

We also operate a shut-down over the festive period. You will be required to hold back some of your annual leave entitlement to cover this shut-down period. IRIS Cascade will automatically book these for you at the start of an annual leave year.

1.5 Carry Over

Colleagues are unable to carry annual leave over into the next holiday year. Any annual leave remaining at the end of the holiday year will be lost.

This does not apply to colleagues who have been unable to take their annual leave due to long term sickness or because they have been on maternity or paternity leave. More information about this is detailed in the Sickness Absence Policy or Family Friendly Policy.

1.6 Holiday & Sickness

If you have booked a period of annual leave but you become unwell and are therefore unable to take your holiday, you should inform your manager as soon as possible.

Providing you have followed the correct absence notification procedure; your annual leave will be cancelled and you will be able to take it at another time. Your absence will be recorded as sickness and our Sickness Absence Policy will apply.

1.7 Leaving Us

Annual leave accrues at the rate of one-twelfth of your entitlement from your start date for each completed month of service. Colleagues who have remaining accrued and unused holiday entitlement will be entitled to payment in lieu of outstanding day/s. Payment will be included in the final salary and subject to the usual statutory deductions.

If a colleague has been summarily dismissed or has failed to provide appropriate contractual notice prior to leaving, payment in lieu will be made for statutory holiday entitlement only.

We reserve the right to request colleagues take any outstanding annual leave during their notice period.

If any colleague has overtaken their annual leave, this will be deducted from their final salary. Colleagues will be notified in advance prior to any deductions being made.

2. Time off for Public Duties

2.1 Purpose

We recognise the value of colleagues undertaking public duties outside of work, however we also recognise that resourcing levels must always remain in line with business demand. Some colleagues may be legally entitled to reasonable unpaid leave to conduct public duties.

2.2 Eligibility

As detailed within The Employment Rights Act 1996, colleagues who hold certain public positions have a right to reasonable unpaid time away during working hours.

Colleagues are entitled to reasonable time off if they are a:

- Magistrate (or justice of the peace)
- Local councillor
- School governor
- Member of any statutory tribunal (for example, employment tribunal)
- Member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment
- Member of a health authority
- Member of a school council or board in Scotland
- Member of the General Teaching Councils for England and Wales
- Member of the prison independent monitoring board (England or Wales) or a member of the prison visiting committee (Scotland)
- Member of Scottish Water or a Water Customer Consultation Panel
- Trade Union member (for Trade Union duties)

Any colleague who holds one of the public offices listed above are entitled to time off for duties, regardless of length of service, hours of work or job role.

2.3 Responsibilities

Colleagues are responsible for:

- Applying for any time away from work in writing.
- Providing as much notice as possible when they have commitments they need to undertake.
- Giving an estimate of the amount of time required away from work per year.
- Provide supporting details regarding the impact of the number of meetings or dates.

Managers are responsible for:

- Arranging to meet with any colleague to discuss and consider any written request made.
- Contacting their People Advisor for advice and guidance.
- Notifying the People Team of any colleagues approved time off.
- Confirming in writing the business reason for declining any requests.
- Keeping a record of what requests have been accepted or rejected to ensure time off is not excessive or required at inappropriate times, that it does not have an adverse effect on other colleagues and that it does not cause operational difficulties.

2.4 Reasonable Time Off

If you are requesting time away from work, the amount granted must be agreed in advance with your manager. As a general guide, we would not expect a colleague to take more than 30 days off per year for public duties, however we do recognise this may depend on individual circumstances.

What may be classed as reasonable will depend on:

- What duties are carried out.
- The time needed to carry out those duties.
- The impact on our business.
- How much time you have already taken off for public duties.

We will always endeavour to grant a request for time off to support your duties, however we do reserve the right to refuse requests depending on the following:

- How much notice you've provided.
- How much time off you require
- How much time off you've already taken
- Business needs and the impact of the absence on the running of the operation.

For a decision to be made regarding the amount of time off, colleagues must submit their request in writing as soon as practically possible. Colleagues who do not do this will not be granted time away from work.

We reserve the right to request evidence to confirm the colleague is a public office holder and requires leave for this sole purpose.

2.5 Jury Service

We will allow colleagues time off for jury service. Any colleague on the electoral register between the ages of 18-70 may be randomly selected to serve. Some people will never be called whilst others may be called more than once.

There may be occasions where we ask colleagues to delay their service in exceptional circumstances (generally, if taking time away from work will harm our business, colleagues or customers). Colleagues called for jury service in the UK are only able to delay their duties once in a 12-month period whereas in the Republic of Ireland, jury service is compulsory unless you are ineligible, disqualified or excused.

Jury service usually averages around 10 working days, but we understand that depending on the nature of the case, the time you are required to serve may be longer or shorter.

If you receive a request to undertake jury service, you should notify your manager as soon as you receive your summons. You should let us know when you will need time away from work and how long your absence is expected to last.

During jury service, if for any reason you are not required in court on a specific day, or jury service has been adjourned, you should notify your manager as they may request that you return to work.

In the UK, we have no legal obligation to pay colleagues whilst they are on jury service as in these instances, the courts will pay for any loss of earnings and travel costs. You should request the form directly from the courts and then request the support from the Payroll Department to help you complete the required sections. You will receive your salary as normal through payroll and then be deducted any amount you are able to claim directly from the courts. This will ensure that you do not suffer any loss of earnings if the amount you can claim is less than what you'd usually earn.

If you work in the Republic of Ireland, you will be paid as normal whilst undertaking jury service.

2.6 Volunteer Reserve Forces

Colleagues who are required to attend training exercises as part of their commitment to the Volunteer Reserve Forces (such as Territorial Army, Royal Navy Reserve, Royal Marine Reserve or RAF Reserve) should use their normal leave entitlement.

In the event of a national emergency, we recognise the obligations placed on Reserve Forces and will treat such cases accordingly.

3. Carers Leave

3.1 Introduction

Colleagues are entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

- A physical or mental illness or injury that means they are expected to need care for more than 3 months.
- A disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- Care needs because of their old age.

The dependant does not have to be a family member, it can be anyone who relies on them for care. This leave is not to be confused with unpaid parental leave, which can be found in our Family Friendly Policy.

Colleagues are entitled to carer's leave once they commence employment and all leave rights are protected for the duration of the leave.

Colleagues do not need to give evidence of their dependant's care needs.

3.2 Entitlement & Notice Requirements

Colleagues can take up to one week of leave every 12 months (a 'week' is the length of time you'd usually work over a 7 day period). You can take the leave as a whole week, or individual or half days throughout the year.

If you need to care for more than one person, you do not get leave for each dependant – this is still limited to one week every 12 months.

If your working hours change week on week, we will add the total number of hours worked in the previous 12 months and divide this total by 52. This will confirm your entitlement to carer's leave.

You must give notice you'd like to take unpaid carer's leave. If you'd like to take half a day or a full day, the notice period of at least 3 days. If your request is for longer than one week, the notice required must be at least twice as long as the requested leave (for example, if you'd like to request 2 days leave, you must give 4 days notice).

3.3 Delaying Requests

We cannot refuse a carer's leave request, but we may ask that you take it at a different time if your absence will cause serious disruption to our business.

If we delay your leave request we will:

- Agree another date within one month of the requested date for the leave
- Explain the reason for the delay and confirm the new date in writing to you within 7 days of the original request.

4. Unexpected Absence

4.1 Purpose

We understand there may be occasions when colleagues require time off work for reasons other than annual leave or sickness absence. Colleagues may need to take time off to deal with unexpected events.

This policy applies to everyone employed by Speedy Hire and sets out how we will treat any occasions of unexpected absence whilst ensuring we maintain a fair and consistent approach.

4.2 Absence Notification

Where possible, you should report any unexpected absence as soon as you become aware that you require time off work as this will help your manager arrange cover. If it is not possible to give advanced notice to your manager, you should ensure you follow our Absence Notification Procedure on the day.

Failure to report your absence may trigger our Unauthorised Absence (AWOL) Procedure and/or our Disciplinary Policy.

4.3 Emergency Leave

Examples of emergency leave may include a flood at home, an attempted burglary or travel disruption. It doesn't usually last longer than a day and it allows you to deal with the immediate emergency. It would be expected that you return to work as soon as the situation has been dealt with, which could mean you working a part-day.

If you require time off, authorised unpaid leave may be granted however you may also be able to request annual leave at short notice to reduce any impact on pay.

4.4 Dependent Care

A dependant is somebody that relies on you to care for them. This might be a spouse/partner, parents, grandparent, or child. You may need to take time off work to support the care of a dependant, where normal arrangements are interrupted at short notice (for example, school or nursery closures).

Whenever this situation occurs, you are expected to seek alternative arrangements as soon as reasonable possibly. In these circumstances, we will support up to two days paid leave to resolve the situation.

If your child or dependent falls ill and are unable to attend their usual care arrangements, this will be treated as emergency leave. However, each individual circumstance will be taken into consideration, and an assessment should be made into how effectively you can complete your role. This may include hybrid working, making up any lost hours or swapping rest days to reduce any impact on pay.

If you require change to your working hours to care for a dependant, you should refer to our Flexible Working Policy.

4.5 Medical Appointments

If you need to attend a medical appointment (such as doctors, dentist, or hospital), you should try and attend these outside of your normal working hours. If this isn't possible, you should try and make appointments at the start or end of your working day to minimise disruption and impact on pay. You will be paid as normal even if you attend work late or leave early to attend an appointment.

We understand some appointments are more difficult to change than others (such as hospital appointments). If you need to attend a medical appointment during working hours, you should let your manager know as soon as possible. You may be asked to provide an appointment card or confirmation letter.

You may be asked to rearrange any routine medical appointments if the time away from work cannot be accommodated.

4.6 Payments for Unexpected Absence

Unless specifically detailed within this policy, some periods of unexpected absence may be unpaid, especially if the absence continues for longer than expected.

You may agree with your manager to take annual leave or make back the time, so your pay is not affected. This will depend on the amount of time off needed and the impact to our business.

4.7 Returning to Work

Your manager may conduct a return to work meeting for unexpected absence covered under this policy (except for medical appointments).

These meetings are important for both you and your manager as they enable you to discuss circumstances outside of work that might impact your levels of attendance.

Your manager will consider any support available at an early stage, to help you maintain good levels of attendance. They will highlight if your levels of absence are becoming a concern in line with our Attendance Management Policy.

4.8 Further Support – Employee Assistance Programme

We offer an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) through PAM (People Asset Management) who are completely impartial to Speedy Hire. They offer free, confidential advice 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, either by telephone, email or online chat.

Call free on: UK [Redacted due to external publication] / ROI [Redacted due to external publication]
Go online: www.pam-assist.co.uk (Access code: [Redacted due to external publication])

5. Unauthorised Absence (AWOL)

5.1 Purpose

Unauthorised absence (also known as AWOL) can have a significant impact on our business. Not only can it be a worrying time when a colleague fails to attend work without prior warning, but it can also disrupt the service we offer to our clients and customers because we are unable to plan resource effectively.

We know that sometimes, situations can happen outside of work that are unavoidable and take priority. We ask that should this happen; you communicate with us as soon as possible so we can provide the right levels of support or arrange appropriate cover.

This policy applies to everyone employed by Speedy and explains how we will treat, manage, and reduce unauthorised absence. For further information, please contact the People Team for additional advice and support.

5.2 Understanding AWOL

Unauthorised absence occurs when:

- You did not follow our absence notification procedure to report your absence.
- You have failed to return to work following a period of annual leave.
- You have taken annual leave without it being authorised by your manager.
- You have not kept your manager informed about the status of your sickness absence and/or have not provided medical certificates at the right time.
- You have failed to attend work for any other reason (such as a personal emergency, or to care for a dependant) and have not contacted your manager to let them know why.

5.3 Prevention

You are responsible for notifying us of any unplanned absence, regardless of the reason.

Sickness absence: If you are injured or too unwell to attend work, you should follow the correct absence notification procedure which includes telephoning your manager before your shift starts. In exceptional circumstances, if you are unable to make contact, you could ask a family member or close friend to do this on your behalf as this is often better than not hearing from you at all.

Annual leave – If you'd like to take a period of annual leave, you should request this via IRIS Cascade and only take the leave once it has been fully approved by your manager through the system.

Unplanned absence – If you need to take time away from work for reasons other than sickness or holiday, please refer to section 3 of this policy . This may include emergency leave, dependant leave, bereavement leave or time off to attend medical appointments.

4.4 Payments

Periods of unauthorised absence are unpaid therefore it is extremely important you contact us as soon as you know that you'll be unable to attend work. To avoid this, ensure you always follow the correct absence notification procedure and arrange to receive up to date medical certificates in a timely manner – if you know there is going to be a delay, communicate this as soon as possible.

4.5 Managing Unauthorised Absence

Your manager will attempt to contact you and establish the reason for your absence at regular intervals throughout the day. If we are unable to contact you via telephone, we will also attempt to contact you in writing, asking for you to get in touch.

In some circumstances, if we are genuinely worried about the welfare of a colleague, a member of the management team may decide to visit you at home or contact your emergency contact or next of kin.

If you return to work following a period of unauthorised absence, the situation may be treated as misconduct and investigated as part of our Disciplinary Policy. This will allow us to understand in more detail why you failed to notify us of your absence and hopefully prevent the situation reoccurring in the future. The occasion will also be recorded on your personnel file and may be considered when deciding if a trigger point has been reached in line with our Attendance Management Policy.

If you continue to be absent without authorisation and do not make contact with us, despite our requests for you to get in touch, then this could either lead to you being invited to a disciplinary hearing to consider the matter formally and/or to the termination of your employment.