



# SP-UK

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SUICIDE PREVENTION UK

Suicide Prevention UK

## Annual Leave, Sickness and Other Leave Policy

2024

## Introduction

Suicide Prevention UK (SPUK) is committed to supporting our team members and ensuring that they receive ample time off to rest, relax, and recuperate throughout the year. In addition, we recognise that individuals may require time off for unforeseen circumstances such as illness, bereavement, and emergencies related to dependants, and planned time off to care for another or participate in other activities.

This Policy has been created to allow our team members to understand their statutory and discretionary rights to time off work and the procedure for making such requests or reporting absences.

All time off is granted in a fair, transparent, and legal manner.

## Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of SPUK.

Whilst SPUK is also committed to supporting its volunteers and self-employed team members, we recognise that by law, these individuals are entitled to choose their own hours of work and will not receive any payment for holidays, sick days, or any other non-working hours. Therefore, only certain sections of this Policy (which are clearly stated) apply to these individuals.

## Annual Leave

### Entitlement

Full-time employees will be entitled to 28 days (5.6 weeks) of paid annual leave per year, which includes all public and bank holidays.

Annual leave for the first year of employment and part-time employees is calculated on a pro-rata basis.

### Pay

Pay will be at the normal basic pay unless shown otherwise in the main terms of employment.

Should an employee decide to leave SPUK, they will either be paid for any annual leave entitlement that remains or may be required to take any remaining entitlement during their notice period.

If an employee has taken more holiday by the time of leaving than they have accrued, this will be deducted from their final salary.

### Carrying Over Leave

Our Policy is that employees are not permitted to carry over any leave from one year to the next unless the employee has been on family or long-term sick leave and was unable to take the leave accrued in that year.

As a general rule, employees should take any outstanding accrued leave before starting family leave wherever possible.

### Booking Leave

Employees must request annual leave by writing (via email) to the Chair and Founder, Michael Everett and are asked to give at least one (1) month's notice (unless in an emergency situation).

Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate the wishes of our employees, SPUK has a duty to our stakeholders and community, and there may be times when annual leave requests are declined due to the needs of the Charity.

### Cancelling/Changing Leave

Employees are encouraged not to cancel or change a period of leave; however, they may request to cancel or change leave by making a formal request to the Chair and Founder, giving a minimum of two (2) weeks' notice.

SPUK reserves the right to cancel annual leave already booked; however, this will only be done when there is a legitimate need, and employees will be given, at a minimum, notice amounting to the length of the period of annual leave that the employee was originally due to take plus one day. This is in line with statutory provisions.

### Illness During Annual Leave

Annual leave may be changed to sick leave when an employee becomes unwell or incapacitated during periods of annual leave so long as the employee provides medical evidence of the illness or incapacity in the form of a doctor's 'fit' note or similar.

### Public/Bank Holidays

Employees will not normally be required to work public/bank holidays.

### Volunteers and Self-Employed Team Members

Volunteers and self-employed team members are not required to give notice of the intention to take a leave of absence. However, we ask that these team members let a manager know when they are unavailable so that we can plan ahead.

## Emergency and Other Leave

### Medical/Dental Appointments

We understand that circumstances may arise where an employee needs time off for medical/dental appointments, counselling, or other therapies.

Where possible, such appointments should be made outside normal working hours. If this is not possible, we ask that employees give as much notice as possible and try to make appointments at the start or end of the day so that the service is minimally disrupted.

Any time taken to attend the appointment must be made up at a mutually convenient time.

If further absence is anticipated following the appointment, the employee should contact the Chair and Founder as soon as possible to let them know of their continued absence.

### Bereavement Leave

We acknowledge the personal nature of bereavement and grief and are committed to supporting employees in practical and reasonable ways. Therefore, bereavement leave, without pay, may be granted at SPUK's discretion to allow an employee time off to deal with their distress and related practical arrangements, primarily, but not limited to, when a member of their family dies.

Employees should contact the Chair and Founder (or another manager in their absence) as soon as possible to inform them of the bereavement and to discuss their circumstances/needs.

Should an employee require additional time off following bereavement leave, they are asked to let us know in advance so that we can discuss whether they may take annual leave or unpaid leave to extend their absence.

### Time off for Dependents

Employees are entitled to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during working hours to take necessary action in an emergency, such as:

- To assist if a dependant<sup>1</sup> falls ill, gives birth, or is injured or assaulted.
- To make arrangements to care for an ill or injured dependant.
- To make arrangements to deal with unexpected disruption to care arrangements.
- To deal with an incident involving a child which occurs unexpectedly during school time.

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<sup>1</sup> A dependant is a spouse, child, or parent of the employee or any person who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance or to make arrangements for their care (this may cover a situation where the employee is the primary carer or is the only person who can help in an emergency).

To take this leave, employees should contact the Chair and Founder (or another manager in their absence) as soon as possible to inform them of the need to take this leave, give the reason for their absence and indicate how long they expect to be absent.

Please note:

- This leave must not be used to cover situations that an employee was aware of in advance or could reasonably have foreseen.
- This leave should only be used to deal with an emergency and make alternative arrangements to return to work. Therefore, we expect that employees return to work within a few days of the emergency. Any further time off will be granted at the discretion of SPUK and should be taken as annual or unpaid leave.

## Carers Leave

Employees are entitled to one week (pro rata) of carer's leave per year if they have a dependant with long-term care needs<sup>2</sup> and want to be absent from work to provide or arrange care for that dependant. We will provide full pay for this leave.

The minimum period of carer's leave an employee may take is half a working day, and the maximum is one continuous week.

Employees should contact the Chair and Founder (or another manager in their absence) to give notice to take carer's leave. This notice must be twice as many days' notice as you want to take off or three days' notice (whichever is the higher).

For example, if an employee wanted to take 4 days off, they would need to give 8 days' notice (as 8 is higher than 3). But if they wanted to take 1 day off, they would need to give 3 days' notice (as 2 is lower than 3).

## Other Emergencies

To support our employees and to prevent the use of annual leave or sickness to cover stressful and distressing situations, we offer discretionary unpaid compassionate leave in response to immediate domestic crises or other emergencies which severely impact the employee.

Employees should contact the Chair and Founder (or another manager in their absence) as soon as possible to inform them of the need to take this leave, give the reason for their absence and indicate how long they expect to be absent.

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<sup>2</sup> A dependent has a "long-term care need" if: they have an illness or injury which is likely to require care for more than three months; have a disability under the Equality Act 2010; or require care for a reason connected with old age.

## Jury Duty

Employees should inform the Chair and Founder as soon as they receive a summons or other notification of court attendance, providing a copy of the summons and relevant dates.

Employees should claim Court Attendance Allowance (CAA) for loss of earnings (which will be paid to the employee directly from the court). A claim form will be supplied to an employee by the court service. This form will require certification by SPUK and should, therefore, be given to us by the employee at the start of the jury duty. The form will then be returned to the employee for completion at the end of the court attendance (when it should be submitted to the court).

## Training and Development Activities

Time off with pay will be granted to attend work-related training, conferences, and other events where approval has been granted.

## Redundancy-Related Time Off

Employees with two years' continuous employment who are given notice of dismissal because of redundancy are entitled to reasonable time off with pay during working hours to look for another job or make arrangements for training for future employment.

## Gender Reassignment/Transitioning

Employees are entitled to time off when they are planning to transition, are in the process of transitioning or have transitioned already. This time off might be for surgery, treatment, or to attend medical or counselling appointments.

Time off to undergo surgery/treatment for transitioning will be granted in the same way as it would when an employee was undergoing surgery/treatment for medical reasons and will be classed as non-elective (i.e., as sickness absence).

Time off to attend medical or counselling appointments will be treated in the same way as any other employee attending an appointment for a medical purpose.

Employees who are transitioning and are too unwell to attend work should follow the normal sickness absence procedure and have their absence recorded as sickness.

## Volunteers and Self-Employed Team Members

Volunteers and self-employed team members are not required to give notice of the intention to take a leave of absence. However, we ask that these team members let a manager know when they are unavailable so that we can plan ahead and also discuss if and how we may support them in what may be a difficult time.

# Sickness Absence

## Reporting Absences

Sickness absences must be reported to the Chair and Founder (or a manager in their absence) as soon as possible on the first day of absence and every working day proceeding until the seventh working day (unless a Fit for Work Note has been provided before the seventh day).

Reports may be made via a telephone call, text message, WhatsApp message, or any other means that is seen as a normal way of communicating.

## Pay During Sickness Absence

Eligible employees are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

Please refer to the following website for more information on SSP:

<https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay>.

## Keeping in Touch Days During Over 7-Day Sickness Absence

During periods of sickness absence, the Chair and Founder will keep in touch with the absent employee.

The aim of keeping in touch is to:

- Ask how they are currently feeling.
- Ascertain whether they have seen a doctor.
- Ascertain whether they are taking any measures to get better.
- Ascertain whether they are seeing an improvement in their health.
- Ascertain whether SPUK can help. For example, discussing whether any reasonable adjustments can be made that will allow them to return to work.

**Keeping in touch is not a means to ask or pressure an employee to return to work early.**

## Providing Evidence of Sickness

Employees must fill in and provide a self-certification form for sickness absence of up to seven calendar days.

Where the sickness absence lasts for more than 7 days, the employee must provide us with a relevant doctor's or specialist's certificate, called a Fit for Work Note (fit note), which will state why they are not fit for work.

If sickness absence is likely to continue when the fit note expires, it is the employee's responsibility to provide us with a new certificate covering the continued absence before the current note expires.

Where a doctor provides a fit note stating that the employee 'may' be fit for work with recommendations, the employee must inform their Chair and Founder so that we can discuss arrangements for their safe return to work wherever practicable.

Where, for whatever reason, appropriate steps cannot be taken so that the employee can return to work, they will remain on sick leave.

## Return to Work

When an employee returns to work following a sickness absence over seven days, their Chair and Founder will hold a return-to-work interview in most cases.

The reason for the meeting is to ensure that the employee is fit enough to return to work and consider whether any steps could be taken to assist in the successful return.

## Sickness Due to a Disability

If an employee is absent due to a disability, they should inform SPUK at the earliest opportunity so that we can discuss what, if any, reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate their return to work.

## Sickness Absence Due to Occupational Illness/Injury

Where an employee is absent due to an occupational illness, disease, or injury, they must inform SPUK of the facts surrounding the case so that we can fulfil our duties under RIDDOR.

## Managing Long-Term Sickness or Frequent Short-Term Absences

All sickness absences are recorded in Bright HR and regularly reviewed by the SPUK Trustees.

Should long-term or recurrent short-term sickness absence become unacceptable, the Trustees will determine whether action should be taken under the Disciplinary Policy or Performance Management and Capability Policy as appropriate.

Note: Where an employee is diagnosed with a terminal illness, formal action will not be taken, and SPUK will focus on supporting the employee however possible.

## Volunteers and Self-Employed Team Members

Volunteers and self-employed team members are asked to let the Founder and Chair or another manager know when they are unavailable due to sickness so that we can plan ahead and also discuss if and how we may support them in what may be a difficult time.

When a volunteer struggles with their role due to ill health, their supervisor will meet with them to discuss whether we can do anything to support them. For example, encouraging them to take a break, adjusting their roles and responsibilities, etc.



## Monitoring and Reviewing

This Policy should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains compliant with current legislation, meets best practices, and is not discriminatory.

Where evidence or trends indicate that our culture, Policy, procedures, or workforce require intervention, an action plan will be initiated.

Policy Date: June 2024

Review Date: June 2025

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Dated and Signed by the Chair and Founder of Suicide Prevention UK:

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