



Annual Leave policy update - FAQs

June 2018

Is it possible for staff to take all of their contractual annual leave with these new restrictions?

Yes. If leave is managed to the correct levels within the policy then it is possible for everyone to take their full annual leave entitlement.

It is your responsibility to apply in good time for your leave to ensure you can take it within the annual leave year. Please book your annual leave as soon as possible to avoid any disappointment.

Does this leave policy apply to management?

Yes. The annual leave restrictions apply to management and members of the executive team.

Will left over A/L be carried forward or payment paid in lieu? If we are unable to take leave due to this policy change, will the leave roll over or will we lose the leave?

If anyone is unable to take their full annual leave entitlement (as a result of the actions of the Trust) they can request to carry leave over into the next leave year. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis and agreed at the discretion of the appropriate manager.

In this scenario, individuals may also request the Trust to buy back any unused contractual annual leave up to a maximum of five days (This applies for 2018/19 only but a buy back scheme is being included in the annual leave policy moving forwards). This is to be approved by a senior manager and should only be for unused hours over and above the statutory leave entitlement as it is a requirement that staff members will take the minimum levels of time off that statutory leave allows.

What priority will be given to University abstracted students whose course dates may mean summer is the only period available for annual leave?

When managers consider annual leave requests they will consider a number of priorities including situations where annual leave has to be taken in specific times.

Who made this decision and can we see the minutes of the meetings that came to this decision?

The risk summit identified a need for the Trust to provide greater control over abstractions over the winter period. This included annual leave but also sickness absence and the potential impact of flu related absence. The risk summit raised questions over why leave restrictions did not increase until 2nd December and did not continue beyond 1st January when winter pressures have started earlier and continued beyond existing restrictions over recent years.

The Trust had to develop an abstraction plan as one of its risk summit actions. The Annual Leave Policy was developed in partnership with UNISON although the leave limits were not agreed.

The minutes of the meeting are owned by NHS England.

Annual Leave policy update – FAQs (continued)

If you need extra staff cover over these periods, can you use bank staff and increased overtime allowances during these periods instead of cutting annual leave allowance?

We will work hard to bring in bank and private ambulance staff to fill as much of the capacity gap as possible over the busy winter period, as we recognise it is not just about controlling levels of annual leave.

The additional funding we have received as a result of the ISR will mean we can purchase more external provision this year which will help reduce the impact on our staff. We are also working with hospitals to reduce handover delays and are continuing to make good progress.

As a member of staff who works permanent Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights will I be given extra consideration for any leave applications?

When managers consider annual leave requests they will consider a number of priorities including situations where an employee works permanent weekends.

Can we hear the stance on pre-booked leave during this period as this change relates to less than a rolling 12 month period in advance.

All pre-booked leave will be honoured by the Trust.

Is this a unilateral change to our contract of employment?

This is not a change to contract. Annual leave entitlements (how many days annual leave you are entitled to) are a contractual term. How this leave is granted is always subject to the demands of the service.

It should be noted that a significant proportion of these restrictions are the same as last year which were agreed with UNISON.

How will you make sure we get our annual leave?

Managers will work locally with their teams to ensure that all annual leave can be taken within the leave year. If this is not possible (as a result of the actions taken by the Trust), then carry over and buy back options will be available.

We are working to reduce existing annual leave limits at other times of the year so we can help staff take their leave when they want to.