



Disability Leave Guidance

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Introduction

Disability leave is a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act (2010) and is distinct from sickness absence. It is time off work for a colleague who is well but absent from work for a disability-related reason.

Disability leave may be planned such as hospital treatment as an outpatient or unplanned such as time off work relating to a disability or long-term condition, which would otherwise be recorded as sick leave.

A colleague requesting disability leave is not ill but needs time off for a disability related reason. The following are some examples of disability related reasons but it is not an exhaustive list. All of these must be related directly to the colleague's disability:

- Hospital appointments, hospital treatment as an outpatient or specialist check-ups including monitoring of related equipment or treatment
- Assessment for conditions such as dyslexia
- Training with their support dog or in the use of specialist equipment
- Counselling or therapeutic treatment
- Recovery time after blood transfusion or dialysis treatment
- Physiotherapy
- To allow time for adjustments or adaptations to be made

Time spent on disability leave is counted as continuous service for all contractual benefits such as accruing annual leave, sick leave. Disability leave will not be included for the purposes of assessing performance, promotion, attendance, selection for redundancy, and similar issues.

If an employee is on disability leave for more than two weeks, their manager will brief them on their return to work of any changes that have occurred while they were off. In addition job adverts, internal newsletters and similar materials will be sent to them in an accessible format.

Medical information about employees will be kept strictly confidential unless they agree to disclosure.

Any concerns about the amount of disability leave allowed or on the procedure followed should be managed through the Respecting Everyone, more information is available [here](#)



Disability Leave and Sick leave

Disability leave is distinct from sick leave, and includes time when someone is well but absent from work for a disability-related reason. If time off work due to ill health is for a reason not disability-related, then it will be recorded as sickness absence.

A high level of sickness absence may sometimes be a result of a colleague having become disabled. This possibility should be explored and may result in the absences that are disability related being reclassified as disability leave and discounted.

Recording Disability Leave

Disability leave should be recorded separately from sickness and disability-related sickness absence. This is so that employees are not adversely penalised under sickness absence or capability procedures for routine, short-term absences related to a disability.

Agreeing Disability Leave

People are often the expert in managing their health condition and identifying the support or adjustments they need, accommodating disability leave requires creativity and flexibility. Disability leave is one of a range of possible workplace adjustments, such as working from home and flexible working.

Planned disability leave will be agreed in advance as a Workplace Adjustment, recorded in the colleague's Health Passport and reviewed as required. Please see the guidance [here](#).

Planned Disability Leave

Planned Disability Leave may be a number of individual days each year for treatment, rehabilitation or assessment or a longer block of time needed for a specific reason such as time for treatment, rehabilitation or recuperation or for physical adjustments to be made to the work environment.

Some examples of reasons for planned disability leave include, but are not limited to

- hospital, doctors, or other health practitioner appointments
- hospital treatment as an outpatient
- training and/or time to adjust in relation to adaptive equipment
- A number of days per year for migraines
- assessment for conditions as dyslexia
- hearing aid tests
- training with guide or hearing dog
- counselling/therapeutic treatment
- appointment time and recovery period relating to blood transfusion or dialysis treatment
- physiotherapy



Some examples of longer disability leave include, but are not limited to

- time off work while workplace adjustments are made at work
- an operation, and recuperation and rehabilitation afterwards
- time off work due to depression, stress, or mental illness
- a phased return to work or period of time off work to adjust to a recently diagnosed condition

Unplanned Disability Leave

Unplanned disability leave covers disability related absences that may previously have been recorded as sick leave. It should be recorded in the same way, but separate from, the sickness absence procedure, and clearly identified as disability leave.

If time off work due to ill health is for a reason that is not related to a disability or long-term condition, then it will be recorded as sickness absence.

Sources of Support

Health Assured – Free, confidential counselling and advice is available 24/7

Call: [REDACTED]

Website: [REDACTED] username: [REDACTED] and password: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] enter the unique code: [REDACTED]

UHBW Wellbeing resources [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

HR Services – [REDACTED]

Unions - [REDACTED]

Able+ for colleagues with disabilities and underlying health conditions [REDACTED]

Occupational Health - [REDACTED]

Manual Handling - [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

Flexible working [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service

[REDACTED]