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# **A. Sickness policy**

**Long term illness and disability**

The organisation believes it is important to deal with an employee’s absence from work due to a physical / mental illness or injury in a fair and supportive way. If staff are disabled or affected by long-term/chronic health conditions, the organisation will attempt to provide any reasonable adjustments to allow them to continue to do their jobs. These may include:

* + Temporarily-reduced working hours/regular or additional breaks
  + Specialist office equipment
  + Flexibility in home working
  + Additional personal support
  + Reduced or adjusted workload
  + Other reasonable adjustments

Responsibility for these adjustments will sit with the line manager and the member of staff affected to determine what is most appropriate.

In the case of temporarily-reduced hours (or ‘phased returns’), staff will work with their line manager to identify a timeframe (e.g. - 3 months or 6 months), in which their working hours will start from a lower level (e.g. - 50% of contracted hours), and will slowly increase, as deemed feasible (e.g. - 75% after 2 months), until they are back on full hours. Pay will remain at 100% during this time, as will not be included as sick days.

Efforts should also be made to reduce workload during this time, by suspending plans, reallocating tasks or cancelling projects, if necessary.

**Sickness policy**   
  
If a member of staff is unable to carry out their work due to illness or injury they should telephone, text or email their line manager , ideally before the start of the workday, so any alternative plans can be arranged. If the member of staff is too unwell to work for more than 1 day, they should let colleagues know when they think they might be well enough to return.

Failing to report absence due to sickness or injury can be considered unauthorised leave.

Periods of mental illness, or time off required due to an ongoing health condition are recognised as legitimate causes of extended illness leave.

Members of staff must keep a record of all days they are off work sick in a file in their weekly work reports.

If an employee is sick for more than fourteen days, whether these are work days or not, a ‘statement of fitness for work’ from the doctor may be obtained, if it can help The organisation to assess whether the employee is 'unfit for work' or 'may be fit for some work' and if so, allow the organisation to suggest ways of helping the employee return to work. The note is not required, however.

**The organisation will pay at least:**

* Full pay for the first 8 weeks of absence
* 50% pay for between Week 8-24.

To receive this, the organisation may ask the employee to provide further information (depending on the reason for absence) regarding:

* when a return to work may be possible
* whether there is likely to be a full recovery and if a return to the same work is advisable or possible
* whether the return to work should be phased
* what reasonable adjustments could be made so the employee can return to work as soon as possible.

At the start of an extended absence, the SFC/CG will offer support to the staff member to access relevant benefits or additional support, if there is the potential for wages to drop during the absence.

The workers’ supervisor and additional members of the SFC should discuss how to make a return to work possible and should discuss a phased return to work.

Reasonable adjustments, such as shifts to working hours, location, types of work, work equipment and support from other staff, should be explored when a member of staff is returning from extended sick leave.  
  
To receive occupational sick pay the member of staff must have followed The organisation’s sickness policy and incapacity procedure. Regular periods of sickness may count as linked if they are less than eight weeks apart.   
  
A member of staff cannot receive sick pay if they are already receiving The organisation’s maternity, adoption or shared parental leave occupational pay.   
  
The organisation can only pay up to 26 weeks of occupational sick in any twelve month period. A twelve month period is calculated from the first day the member of staff takes off sick.   
  
Annual leave is accrued during periods of sick leave. If, at the end of a calendar year a member of staff has been unable to take all their annual leave due to being on sick leave they can roll over the maximum two week allowance that is usually allowed for staff, plus the pro rata amount that was accrued while off sick. For example, if a full-time member of staff was off sick for a month they would have accrued 1.92 days of annual leave (23/12). So they can roll over a maximum of 11.5 days of annual leave to the next calendar year if it’s not been possible to take it during the current year.

# **B. Parental leave**

The organisation will not discriminate against any employees on the basis of their caring or prospective caring duties. We will do our best to support employees with caring responsibilities and recognise the role of progressive attitudes towards social reproduction and care work in building a better world.

**For all types of parental leave:**

* The employee should inform the organisation of the date they intend to start maternity leave 8 weeks before that date.
* To be entitled to this you need to have worked at the organisation for 6 months before the paid leave begins.
* Tax and National Insurance will be deducted.
* You can still be made redundant on leave, as per the organisation’s redundancy policy.
* If a decision is made by the employee not to return to The organisation after their leave the normal contractual period of notice must be given in writing
* If an employee has taken benefits in addition to the statutory leave and decides to leave the organisation within 6 months of returning to work they will have to repay half the additional salary within a period of twelve months from the date the employee resigns (or a period of time and time-frame agreed by both parties). The employee will be paid half the amount of these benefits if they state they will not be returning to The organisation when they start their leave.

**Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP**) is paid for up to 39 weeks. You get:

* 90% of your average weekly earnings (before tax) for the first 6 weeks
* £151.20 or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks

**In addition to this the organisation will offer:**

* 8 weeks of leave on full pay, inclusive of SMP;
* 22 weeks of leave on half pay, plus SMP;
* 9 weeks of leave at SMP only
* 13 weeks of unpaid leave on the condition that the employee returns to the organisation for at least 6 months following their maternity leave.

Tax and National Insurance on OMP will be deducted in the same way as with regular wages.

* The employee is entitled to time off to attend pregnancy health appointments (though should inform their staff support person with as much advance notice as possible before appointments).
* The employee is entitled to go on maternity leave from 11 weeks before their due date, or earlier if a baby is born prematurely.
* If the employee is not entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay - they are entitled to the Maternity Allowance Benefit.
* The amount you can get depends on [your eligibility](https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance/eligibility).

**Paternity/other parental carer pay**Statutory Paternity Pay is one or two consecutive weeks at £145 per week or 90% of normal weekly earnings, whichever is the lower. Tax and National Insurance will be deducted in the same way as with regular wages.   
  
If you take [Shared Parental Leave](https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay) you’ll get Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP). ShPP is £151.20 a week or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.  
  
**In addition, the organisation shall provide to fathers/other parental carers who provide 2 months notice:**

* 100% of normal weekly earnings for the first 8 weeks or any other 8 week period up to week 39
* Will allow the employee to take 8 weeks leave at 50% of normal earnings provided it is directly before or after any period of leave on full pay

**Statutory Paternity Rights**   
An employee will be recognised as entitled to paternity leave if::

* Have or expect to have full involvement in the child’s upbringing;
* Are the biological father of the child;
* or are the mother’s husband or partner. This includes a mother’s partner in a same sex relationship.

**Adoption Leave**The organisation shall provide the rights, either maternity leave or paternity/other parental carer pay, depending on the role of the parental carer in the adoption.

# **C. Carers and compassionate leave**

Employed carers have the right not to be discriminated against due to their caring responsibilities and to have a reasonable amount of paid time off work to deal with particular situations affecting their dependants.

A 'carer' is someone who provides a substantial amount of unpaid care on a regular basis for another individual.

A ‘dependant’ is defined as a spouse, partner, child, parent or grandparent of the employee, or someone who depends on them for care (this could include: chosen family, housemates, or others for whom the member of staff provides care). Examples of care might be practical (such as help with the shopping and cleaning), physical (such as help with moving and handling) or mental and emotional (such as supporting someone to manage anxiety).

The organisation wants to help staff balance their working and caring commitments, not feel added stress and to continue to be effective in their job.

Care work may happen in a single period, or may be spread throughout the year in a long-term way. Staff are entitled to the following:

* 16 days carer leave at 100% wages
* 16 days care leave at 50% wages
* Additional time can be taken, unpaid, if agreed with staff support.

Staff can take this leave in a way which works best for their caring responsibility, and this needs to be communicated with the Line Manager. Time off can be spread out longer, if workers are able to work reduced hours during their time doing care work (ie - if the worker is only off for mornings and can still work half-days, they can take 32 half-days off on full pay).

These times off also apply to bereavements, after the death of a close loved one, but must be used in the time immediately after the death, rather than being spread out.

If a member of staff is away, or is expected to be away for more than 3 months doing care work, the organisation may decide to hire a short-term replacement for the member of staff, while holding the role for them, unpaid, after a fixed period of time (to be agreed with the member of staff, if there is any way to indicate timescales, and so any replacement worker is able to have clarity about the length of their employment. the organisation will hold funds in reserves to cover these costs, should they arise.

When possible, a plan for how to suspend their work commitments, or have them covered during this time away should be made, for example in the case of caring for a loved one in a medium or long term way. The worker should aim to keep their staff support informed of their expected return dates when possible.

Return to work after an extended leave for caring or a bereavement should be discussed with staff support, and the worker should be offered a phased return to work if required.

# **D. Time off in lieu and overwork**

**Outline**: The organisation recognises the organisation’s responsibility to help ensure work is not negatively impacting on the wellbeing of staff, through quantity (overwork) and quality (conditions) of work.

The organisation will aim to treat overwork primarily as a collective issue of organisational planning and resource allocation, and secondarily as an issue of individual support needs and working habits. We agree that we will attempt to collectivise the issue of overwork, leading to wider organisational discussion and decisions (around recruitment, training, job descriptions, fundraising, and staff support) to shift the unspoken requirements of staff.

Staff support will also work with individual staff to look at ways to cut down working hours, such as by telling working groups and branches to reduce their expectations on paid staff, helping reallocate particular tasks to others in the organisation, and helping identify priorities in staff work plans.

**Quantity of Work:** Most of our staff are paid to work 4 days, which we advise amounts to 30 hours per week. It is the responsibility of Staff Support to ensure that staff members are recording their working hours.

**Quality of Work:** Not only can overwork negatively impact the mental health and wellbeing of staff, but it can also negatively impact the quality of the work undertaken by staff and how they are being in The organisation spaces. Preventing overwork is therefore also an issue of the responsibility that staff and the coordinating group have to the wider union.

**Collective Responsibility**: Staff Support should check in with the workers every month on their toil accumulation. If a worker is consistently clocking significant extra hours and it is identified through staff support that this is a result of ‘invisible work requirements’ (essential tasks not in job description) or extra evening and weekend meeting commitments, this issue will go back to the Coordinating Group at its next meeting for discussion. This is to avoid the issue only being addressed at an individual level and keeps it on the wider organisational radar.

**Individual Responsibility**: Workers should not accumulate more than a week’s toil per month and it is strongly encouraged that toil time is taken back within a week or two after it is accumulated.

The workers should inform the Line Manager as soon as possible about when they are going to be taking back their toil time. No more than 4 days of toil (or 1 working week) can be carried over per month.

**Individual Organisational Budget Lines**: Individual staff members will have a budget allocation of £250 to cover the costs of workplace adjustments for health, accessibility and wellbeing, and can request additional funds as necessary.

**Workspace**: The organisation will continue to work towards dedicated, appropriate and accessible office space for staff and regular volunteers, to give us more control over the working conditions staff and members are regularly working in.

# **E. Additional Leave**

5 extra days of paid leave may be granted as Personal days at short notice for less serious incidents that may require urgent attention but not technically be sick/health issues or compassionate grounds. For example:

* Housing/Legal issues
* Childcare commitments (including school cancellations which have resulted in children being sent home).
* Home emergencies such as e.g. fire, burst pipe, landlord dispute.
* An unexpected summons or need to attend court, police station, hospital or school.
* Attending to a loved one in distress.

# **F. Trade union recognition**

The organisation encourages its workers to join a relevant trade union and will recognise trade unions appropriately.

# **G. Staff access to counselling or other support**

The organisation staff are exposed to the [vicarious trauma](https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/vicarious-trauma) of so many members' individual housing crises. As with social workers and other caring professions, our staff should have access to counselling or other forms of mental health and wellbeing support to work through the psychological and emotional impacts of the stories they are told and the upsetting situations they regularly experience with members.

All staff are empowered to find a counsellor and a form of counselling (or alternative form of wellbeing support or therapy, though this would need to be approved via a conversation with the staff supervisor and may involve checking in with the finance officer to ensure legality) that suits their needs. They will have access to up to £1200/year (January - December) during their time employed by the organisation to spend on these services, with receipts provided.

**H. Annual leave**

Workers receive 23 days of paid holiday each year (January - December) plus bank holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year.

**I. Pension contribution**

The organisation provides a 3% pension contribution.

**J. Staff absence planning**

***Full policy can be read*** [***here***](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wfChqtee19aGk8lQZQVj9AYKTsouQIf2H-GT3YZaBsw/edit?usp=sharing)***.***

**Staff member responsibilities:** If a staff member is planning to take substantial time off (more than a week), they should:

1. Work to minimise their responsibilities over that time, and
2. Make a list at least two weeks beforehand to share with the rest of the staff team, relevant members and particularly the staff supervisor, to help work out a distribution plan for covering their role while they are away. This should be discussed with the team in a Monday meeting to help ensure everything that can be covered.

The list should include **(*A template version of a cover list can be copied from*** [***here***](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1cCmK_mJtaJH6PjYOEkrofy77LSzQOe9V5k9Ox0f6myU/edit?usp=sharing)):

* Regular tasks (checking emails, checking in with members, checking phone, etc)
* Particular key tasks or dates (internal meetings, actions, external meetings, etc)
* Importance (1=critical/ 2=important / 3=if possible)
* Key contacts/contact details associated with any tasks or dates
* If there are any particular members of the team that they would suggest would be best suited to cover a particular task

**Staff supervisor responsibilities:** The staff supervisor should take responsibility for:

1. Supporting the member of staff who is absent to create a cover list,
2. To help find other staff or members to take on particular cover responsibilities, and
3. To check in that those cover responsibilities are being met, with the organisation coordinator.

**Collective responsibilities:** The rest of the staff team should be prepared to offer to take on cover tasks for the member of staff who is away, including sharing tasks with appropriate members of the organisation. Ideally, this will be distributed as widely amongst the team as possible during a Monday staff check-in, to avoid anyone’s individual workload becoming unmanageable.

**K. Parent and carer subsidy**

The organisation offers a parent and carer subsidy of a 12% increase on the staff member’s baseline wage for a first child and a 6% increase for each additional child, as a strong gesture towards ensuring we are not missing potential staff with children or other caring responsibilities and so staff can continue to work with the organisation if they do choose to have kids or need to look after a family member. We would cap this at an additional £10,000/year, above the baseline wage, should it ever arise as an issue. (The subsidy will always be re-calculated based on any increases to the staff baseline wage, ie - annual raises for inflation.)

The subsidy applies from the point a new member of staff joins the team, who has parenting or caring responsibilities, or from when an existing member of staff goes on parental leave or takes on caring responsibilities.

Given how different parent and carer situations can be though, when a member of staff is becoming a new parent or takes on caring responsibilities, or when a new member of staff is hired who is a parent or carer, that the organisation - via the Staffing committee - takes responsibility to work with them to identify if there are any other ways of using the subsidy amount, that might better suit their particular needs, regarding childcare, benefits, health and disability support or any other relevant factors.

There is still an expectation that staff will make arrangements for their own childcare or care during the hours they are expected to work. In addition, the organisation will provide the subsidy above to contribute towards the additional costs associated with parenting or caring responsibilities.

*Initial decision:* [Anonymised pay review policy proposal](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VQemR8HcPMecMHCyRsghNrtW8plGOoGiuEtzb0RRBJ0/edit)

*Updated decision:* [Anonymised pay review](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RnXG-OFTPoPH8WWK-f013DNpq6g_2bn55HFmBExqRY0/edit)