This policy aims to improve planning about staff needing to take time off, so the staff who are taking time off can do so and so those who are still working can share the responsibilities of covering the role in a fair way.

**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, is 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

The member of staff who is away should also make clear what form of contact is best for them, in emergencies and to clarify key information that will allow others to provide cover for them. This may refer to days of the week, times of day, or checking in via text first, depending on the nature of their absence from work (ie - stress leave, or planned medical or annual leave, or if they are in or out of the country, etc).

If leave is unplanned (ie - illness, bereavement), whatever aspects of the above list are possible will help other staff or members to cover key roles and tasks, as soon as is feasible. In this case, liaising with the staff supervisor is the best way to coordinate wider cover support, once a staff member has had to stop working on short notice. The staff supervisor will do their best to distribute the list of tasks with others. They (or the coordinator, if more operational) will check in regularly with those covering tasks and the absent member of staff.

**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 union coordinator.

**Collective responsibilities:** The rest of the staff team should be prepared to take on cover tasks for the member of staff who is away, including sharing tasks with appropriate members. 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.