

**LEAVE POLICY**

**FOR**

**Career Grade Medical Staff**

**(Consultant, Associate Specialist, Staff Grade, Hospital Practitioner,  
Clinical Assistant and Honorary Senior Medical Staff)**

### **Policy on leave for Consultants, Associate Specialists, Staff Grades, Hospital Practitioners, Clinical Assistants and Honorary Senior Medical Staff**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The principles of this policy are aimed at identifying good practice. The policy sets out how senior medical staff should book leave prior to taking it. Sanctioning of leave should be dependent upon the stability of the service whilst the applicant is on leave and ensure best use of resources in order to optimise patient care. The Trust also recognises that leave is an important part of staff health and safety.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the procedure for authorising clinicians who are encouraged to take note of the principles and apply discretion when sanctioning leave. Good practice should also involve Trust managers being made aware of leave for individual consultants that perform a management role within the Directorate and Division.

#### **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 2.1 The Medical Director has overall responsibility for this policy and is responsible for the study leave budget and for granting professional leave in principle. The Medical Director devolves this responsibility as per the divisional structure. The study leave budget is managed by Medical Staffing.
- 2.2 Divisional and Directorate Chairmen are responsible for overseeing the effective use of the policy within their directorates and for agreeing and logging leave in all circumstances, including the carry over of annual leave in principle. They must also identify deputies when they are away and unable to deal with leave requests. On a day to day basis it is the Lead Clinician's responsibility to ensure the implementation of this policy.
- 2.3 Each division should decide the maximum number of staff away at any one time so that the ability to deliver safe patient care is not compromised.
- 2.4 Medical Staffing, within the Human Resources Directorate, is responsible for logging study leave and tracking expenditure against the study leave budget.

#### **3. Application Process For All Leave**

Applications for leave must be made on the appropriate form (Appendix B) through the Lead Clinician of the Clinical Unit and copied to the Directorate Chairman normally at least six to eight weeks in advance. Leave forms can be obtained from Medical Staffing.

- 3.1 The leave applicant is responsible for informing all relevant departments, or ensuring that this task is delegated to an appropriate staff member such as a PA, e.g. Outpatients, Theatres, Day surgery Unit and Switchboard of the dates of absence stating who will be providing cover during the absence
- 3.2 The applicant together with the Lead Clinician is responsible for arranging cover (which will include appropriate cover for teaching) and stating those arrangements on the leave form. The granting of such leave shall be subject to approved arrangements having been made for the applicants' work to be done during their absence. Clinical Units will agree methods locally to ensure flexibility and appropriate cover arrangements are in place. Locum cover arrangements are organised as per the Trust's policy on Employment of Locums3.3 Locum cover for Consultant leave will only be provided in exceptional circumstances. If specialist cover by a colleague is not available then authorisation for locum cover must be sought from the Directorate

Manager and/or Chair of the Directorate. The provision of locums is the responsibility of the Trust.

- 3.3 Where permission is obtained to take leave with less than six weeks notice, the leave applicant is responsible for ensuring that clinical commitments are covered and that the arrangements are approved by the Directorate Chair.
- 3.4 University staff fulfilling service commitments on an honorary contract basis must comply with the communication principles proposed in this policy.
- 3.5. The verified leave application must be forwarded to Medical Staffing for record and reference purposes.

#### **4. Annual Leave**

- 4.1 The annual leave year runs from the date of appointment.
- 4.2 Consultants, Associate Specialists, Hospital Practitioners, Clinical Assistants and Honorary Senior Medical Staff, have an annual leave entitlement of 6 weeks plus 2 statutory days per annum. A week's length is dependent on the average number of days of the week on which there is a contractual requirement, eg for a 5 day working week, for example, leave is calculated as follows: i.e. 6 weeks x 5 days + 2 days = 32 days. For part time practitioners (9 sessions or less), annual leave entitlement is calculated pro-rata.
- 4.3 The leave entitlements for senior medical staff in regular appointments are additional to 10 days statutory and public holidays to be taken in addition to Section 2 of the Whitley General Council Conditions of Service, as amended, or days in lieu thereof.
- 4.3 Staff Grade doctors with less than 2 years in the grade have an annual leave entitlement of 5 weeks plus 2 statutory days per annum, i.e. 5 weeks x 5 days + 2 days = 27 days, but those who have completed two years service in their grade, or who have an entitlement to six weeks leave a year in their immediately previous appointment, will qualify for six weeks leave per annum.

<sup>1</sup>Staff who have traditionally enjoyed greater statutory day allocation via previously negotiated local agreement, will continue to retain such entitlement on a protected basis.

<sup>2</sup>As above.

- 4.4 Normally no more than 4 weeks annual leave should be taken at one time. Requests for more than this must be discussed with the Lead Clinician/Chairman of the Directorate.
- 4.5 Repeated requests for ad hoc leave days should not result in a disproportionate amount of fixed clinical sessions being taken off routinely. Should this occur, requests for leave may not be approved.
- 4.6 Ideally leave should be taken in the year, thereby reducing the need to carry forward leave to the following year.
- 4.7 Normally only 5 days may be carried over from one annual leave year to the next. More than 5 days carry over must be discussed and agreed with the Lead Clinician and if necessary the Directorate Chair.
- 4.8 Time off in lieu is granted where Public/Bank Holidays have been worked on-call. This must be verified prior to approval.
- 4.9 Senior medical staff may take short periods of up to 2 days of their annual leave without seeking formal permission beforehand, provided that they give notification when they take this leave.

### **5. Study Leave**

This section should be read in conjunction with Study Leave Policy, Appendix A.

- 5.1 The study leave year runs from the date of appointment. The appropriate Lead Clinician of the Clinical unit must approve study. It should be relevant to the practitioner's discipline and professional development programme.
- 5.2 The allocation of study leave for Consultants and other senior medical staff is 30 working days spread over a 3 year period, in accordance with Paragraph 25 (a) of the Hospital and Dental Staff Terms & Conditions of Service. This entitlement is irrespective of the contracted number of sessions of work.
- 5.3 Normally up to a maximum of 10 working days of study leave may be taken at one time.
- 5.4 As an exception the full 30-day allocation of study leave may be taken all at once when appropriate advanced notification and agreement has been given.
- 5.5. Study leave is paid leave and expenses for course/conference fees, accommodation and travel are paid up to a maximum limit fixed by the budget.
- 5.6 The Medical Director is responsible for the study leave budget, which is managed by Medical Staffing. Each consultant is eligible for a fixed allowance (see Study Leave Policy) and funding requests will be managed within the allowance. All senior medical staff have an equal opportunity to apply for funded study leave that is appropriate for professional development and revalidation, once this is formalised.
- 5.7 Examples of study leave include:
- Attending courses and professional conferences
  - Teaching and research activities
  - Other CME/CPD activities
- This list is not exhaustive.
- 5.8 Study leave applications should be submitted to the Assistant Medical Staffing Manager.

### **6. Professional Leave**

- 6.1 There is no statutory entitlement or limit on the amount of Professional Leave that may be taken, but it is recognised that professional leave is important in running/developing the wider NHS. In agreeing leave and the likely annual amount, the request will be considered in light of the impact of that leave on both the Trust as a whole and the affected Directorate and Division. Professional Leave is to be taken with the agreement of the relevant Lead Clinician/Directorate Chairman who has to ensure the safe delivery of service and who will be aware of other consultants leave plans. In cases of competing interest Professional Leave is not an automatic priority.

Examples of Professional Leave may cover the following - this list is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Official business of the Government, Department of Health, the Royal Colleges and for other recognised bodies. Examining and to attend official committees.
  - Work for recognised disaster or charitable purposes.
  - Official invitations to be a visiting Professor or guest Lecturer for Universities. National and International Societies or other such bodies.
  - Any other special reasons to be agreed by the Medical Director, The Divisional Chair and if applicable the Chief Executive.
- 6.2 Professional leave is paid leave but expenses are not normally reimbursed by the Trust. However, the Trust Medical Director, or the Divisional Chairman has discretion to authorise expenses and such authorisation must be obtained before any expenses are incurred.
- 6.3 Requests for Professional Leave time or payments should be made in accordance with the Trust's policy on Standards of Business Conduct for NHS staff.
- 6.4 Professional leave absence (for a half day, if this involves a fixed session, or full day or more) requires a formal application to be completed. The Lead Clinician of the Clinical Unit and the Directorate Chair must agree the leave. Cover has to be provided by colleagues.

### **7. Leave for Attendance at Court as an Expert Witness**

- 7.1 Attendance at Court to give evidence, and related case conferences, concerning a doctor's own NHS patient, or concerning a doctor's other recognised NHS responsibilities, e.g. Child Protection Issues, is considered part of that doctor's NHS duties. Such attendance must be notified to the Lead Clinician and where this is likely to exceed 3 days the Directorate Chair needs to be included for information. No leave form needs to be completed.
- 7.2 For attendance at court as an expert witness to give an opinion on another doctor's patient, unpaid leave or annual leave must be taken and appropriate leave must be applied for.

### **8. Maternity/Paternity/Parental Leave**

- 8.1 Entitlements to maternity leave, paternity leave and pay, are detailed in Sections 3, 6 of the General Whitley Council Conditions of Service, Paragraphs 260-262 of the Hospital Medical and Dental Terms & Conditions of Service and/or the Trust Employment Policies available for reference in the Medical Staffing Department and Human Resources Department and fulfils statutory obligations.

### **9. Special Leave**

- 9.1 Special leave with or without pay are detailed in section 3,6 General Whitley Council Conditions of Service, paragraph 260-262 of the Hospital Medical and Dental Terms and Conditions of Service and the Trust's Employment Policies available for reference in the Medical Staffing Department and the Human Resources Department. Examples are for carers/compassionate/adoption leave.

**10. Sick Leave**

- 10.1 Sickness absence must be reported to the Lead Clinician who will ensure that Medical Staffing are aware.
- 10.2 A doctor's note is required for sick leave in excess of seven calendar days. Self-certification forms should be completed for periods of sick leave for between the fourth day of absence and seventh day of absence.

**11. Other leave**

Applications for leave that is not clearly defined but which is not annual leave should be made to the Lead Clinician.

**Appendix A**

**Study Leave Policy**

**Medical Staff – Career Grade**  
(Consultant, Associate Specialist, Staff Grade)

**1. Guidelines for Study Leave**

- 1.1 The allocation of study leave is 30 days spread over a 3 year period in accordance with Paragraph 250 (a) of the Medical and Dental Terms and Conditions.
- 1.2 This allocation should not be taken in a block unless very special circumstances prevail. The Lead Clinician in each individual case should agree such allocation. Normally up to a maximum of 14 days at a time may be agreed.
- 1.3 Career Grade staff should make a case for each request and support this with adequate documentation such as a programme, conference announcement, letter of invitation, etc.
- 1.4 The application for study leave should be made on the appropriate form
- 1.5 This form should be submitted to the Lead Clinician for approval, preferably 3 months but at least 6 weeks, prior to the commencement of the leave.
- 1.6 The application should be made to the Lead Clinician who should then pass the form to the Medical Personnel Manager for funding approval.
- 1.7 Cover arrangements must be stated on the appropriate form. The Lead Clinician and Directorate Chair should verify applications and be forwarded to the Medical Personnel Department for reference purposes.
- 1.8 Current budget for study leave is identified for the Trust and equates to £700 per annum 2002/3, £1000 per annum 2003/4 and £1200 per annum 2004/5 per doctor.
- 1.9 A maximum sum should be identified to be reimbursed for each application and this should include all course/conference/travel and subsistence costs.
- 1.10 Subsistence costs should not normally exceed those associated with national guidance on a per night basis.
- 1.11 Allocation of Study Leave to Hospital Practitioners / Clinical Assistants is currently under review.



**CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION/STUDY LEAVE  
APPLICATION FORM**

**RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED**

**PART 1**

Completed forms should be returned to:  
Medical Staffing Department, The Manor House, JR site

<b>Name: (block capitals)</b>	<b>Grade:</b>
<b>Specialty:</b>	<b>Clinical Centre:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Base hospital:</b>  <b>Trust:</b>
<b>Starting date of present appointment:</b>	<b>Type of contract (please circle):</b>  <b>Whole/Max/Part time(no. of sessions)</b>

**PART 2**

<b>DATES OF LEAVE</b>			
From:	To:	No. of days:	Paid/unpaid leave (delete as appropriate)
<b>COVER ARRANGEMENTS ( please delete as appropriate):</b>			
Consultants: My study leave is acceptable to my colleagues and I will make arrangements for my duties to be covered in my absence		Non-Consultants: My study leave is acceptable to my Consultant and we will make arrangements for my duties to be covered in my absence	
<b>DETAILS OF STUDY LEAVE</b>			
Name of conference, etc: Give title of course/conference, paper etc and include any supporting documents		Organizers:  Venue:	
<b>TYPE OF STUDY LEAVE</b>			
Please tick category:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presenting work</li> <li>2. Course – skills update</li> <li>3. Course – specific technique</li> <li>4. Private Study</li> <li>5. Overseas experience</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Symposium/conference</li> <li>7. Observation of clinical practice</li> <li>8. Examination</li> <li>9. Professional society meeting</li> <li>10. Other – please specify</li> </ol>	

**PART 3**



**Notification of Absences**

*Type of absence:*

\*Annual leave, study leave, special leave, sickness, other

Name: .....

Grade:.....

Clinical Unit: .....

*Dates of absence:*

From: .....

To: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Authorised by: .....(Lead Clinician)

Please return to:                      Medical Staffing Department  
   Manor House  
   The John Radcliffe

As soon as leave is planned or date of leave known

PLEASE NOTE: Locum cover cannot be arranged unless formal notice of absence is received by Medical Staffing Department.

Noted on Positive Return to Payroll by .....  
(For action by Medical Staffing Department)

*\*Please delete as necessary*

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