



## **NHS Wales Welsh Partnership Forum**

### **Joint statement on the importance of booking and taking annual leave during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic**

We thank those employees who, due to the pandemic, delayed or cancelled annual leave to support the service.

We recognise that taking annual leave is an important contributor to an individual's physical and mental health and their ability to undertake their duties in a safe and effective manner.

We understand that given the current environment within the leisure and hospitality industry together with the uncertainty regarding school/childcare provision and limitations on foreign travel, individuals may be minded to not take leave at the present time and to save it for later in the year when conditions may have improved.

Whilst there may continue to be challenges with the approval of leave, it is important to ensure that employees are not working for too protracted a period of time without a meaningful break. Therefore, employees are encouraged, and will be supported by their managers, to continue to take leave at regular intervals throughout the leave year.

There are practical considerations regarding the build-up of annual leave as the year progresses and there may be service constraints affecting the approval of leave later in the year. All employees are therefore encouraged to plan their leave at regular intervals throughout the year

Regular annual leave should therefore continue to be planned and taken, even if travel and normal holiday arrangements continue to be disrupted, so as to ensure a meaningful break from the work environment. Individuals should therefore plan to take their leave within their respective leave year. It is, however recognised that in the current environment this may not always be practicable or possible. In these circumstances individual members of staff and managers should discuss and agree what leave can be taken in the foreseeable future, balancing service delivery requirements with the need for employees to rest and recuperate and in so doing identify where there may be any requirement to carry over any unused leave

Unless there are extenuating circumstances any leave which was approved before the Covid-19 emergency arose should be honoured, with any new requests for annual leave being considered and approved, wherever possible. If an individual wishes to reschedule a period of annual leave, this should be discussed with the individual's manager and agreed wherever possible.

In addition to this document, a [joint statement outlining the principles](#) in relation to the application of annual leave, study leave and public holiday arrangements for doctors and dentists in training during the Covid-19 pandemic has also been agreed.



It is important for fairness and equity that all employees follow the principles set out in this statement for their own health and wellbeing as well as to avoid any significant accumulation of annual leave. Therefore, employees who are shielding/social distancing at home and/or who have caring responsibilities and are not working should continue to schedule regular periods of annual leave, as noted above, through discussions with their line manager.

As noted in the FAQs annual leave and public holiday provisions set out in employees' terms and conditions remain in place and individuals are able to carry forward any and all unused annual leave from the 2019/20 leave year.

This statement is endorsed by the joint Chairs of the Welsh Partnership Forum:

Andrew Goodall, Director General Health and Social Services/ NHS Wales Chief Executive on behalf of Welsh Government

Tracy Myhill, Chief Executive, Swansea Bay UHB on behalf of Health Boards, Trusts and HEIW

Paul Summers, Unison on behalf of Trade Union partners

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Related information:

[Health and wellbeing resources and Tools](#)

[NHS Wales Employers COVID FAQs](#)