

2020 Holiday Entitlement Amendments due to Covid-19

Introduction

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, we've put in place some extra flexibility and additional guidelines for the 2020 holiday year.

Principles:

We've been focussing on some key principles through this crisis to help us make decisions:

- Reducing the risk to our people
- Protecting our public benefit
- Helping with cash preservation
- Effective communications

We've used these to help us make decisions regarding holiday entitlement:

- **It's not just about managing through the crisis.**

We need to be mindful of the future and our recovery (skills and capability will be needed for both).

With regards to holidays it's important that we don't create an unnecessary backlog of holiday through 2020 and beyond which could put pressure on our services later on.

- **Protecting the frontline service and key support teams.**

We need to ensure that whilst we have the right skills in place during the crisis, people are also able to take time away from work for their own health and wellbeing.

Government changes

The government has recently put in emergency changes for Covid-19 related holiday carry over.

The temporary changes state that workers who have not taken all of their statutory annual leave entitlement due to COVID-19 will now be able to carry it over into the next two leave years.

The Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 amends the Working Time Regulations 1998 to create a further exemption relating specifically to COVID-19. Where it is not reasonably practicable for a worker to take some, or all, of the holiday to which they are entitled due to the coronavirus, they have a right to carry over up to 4 weeks into 2021 & 2022.

Different categories of employees

As we look at how we apply the government changes, and comply with our PDSA principles we have identified that one size will not fit all.

We recognise that we have a number of different colleagues in different circumstances and therefore don't believe that one approach to holidays will be appropriate.

Employees (non-frontline) that are working

All colleagues should continue to take any pre-booked holiday as planned.

This is important to ensure that we do not have backlog of holidays as we enter the recovery phase. Many organisation are requiring colleagues to take over 50% of their holiday before the end of June. However we're not taking that approach. Pre-booked holidays should be taken and we're asking colleagues to consider booking holiday through this period, where workloads allow, so that we don't end up in a position where we are having to refuse holiday requests in the second half of the year due to operational requirements.

We would allow this colleagues to carry over a maximum of 5 days holiday (pro-rata for part time colleagues) into 2021. However, we would expect this to be minimal as holidays need to be managed locally to maximise holiday entitlement to be taken within the year.

Employees frontline or business critical (in the crisis) who are working

We may find ourselves in a position where we are asking colleagues to cancel pre-booked holidays. This will only happen where there is a clear business reason to do so.

Wherever possible we will honour pre-booked holidays, or where they are cancelled, we will look to enable them to be booked back in as soon as possible. It's really important that people are getting time away from work at this difficult time.

These colleagues will also be given priority for booking holidays in the recovery stage.

We would allow these colleagues to carry over a maximum of 20 days (pro-rata for part time colleagues) into 2021 and 2022 in line with the governments holiday carry over scheme.

However we would encourage, wherever possible, for the maximum holiday to be taken within the applicable holiday year to ensure that our colleagues are able to get time away from work.

Employees who are not working due to self-isolating

All colleagues should continue to take any pre-booked holiday as planned.

Employees who are off sick

Employees who are off sick (which may include those that are social distancing) our current rules apply.

Holidays override sick absence and therefore holiday time should be taken as planned - apart from in exceptional circumstances where you may be able to claim your holiday back. Please see current sick policy on Pawtal.

We would allow colleagues to carry over a maximum of 5 days holiday (pro-rata for part time colleagues) into 2021. However we would expect this to be minimal as holidays need to be managed locally to maximise holiday entitlement to be taken within the year

Employees who are furloughed

Whilst we previously stated that holidays would be cancelled whilst on the Job Retention Scheme, as of 16.04.2020 this has changed. Any pre-booked holidays can and should be taken.

You are also able to book holidays during your furlough period and any holiday taken will be paid at your 'normal' salary (including any additional payments such as overtime calculated over a 52 week period)

We would expect colleagues to take their holiday entitlement within the same holiday year. Where this is not practical **we will allow colleagues to carry over a maximum of 5 days holiday (pro-rata for part time colleagues) into 2021.** However we would expect this to be minimal as holidays need to be managed locally to maximise holiday entitlement to be taken within the year.

Buying and Selling Annual Leave

This was a really popular benefit last year, however, at this stage we won't be offering the holiday buying or selling benefit in 2021 due to these unprecedented circumstances.

Booking of Holidays

Holidays should be booked through the normal procedure using MyView. For our furlough colleagues, holidays will be booked on their behalf in line with the guidance that has been provided to them.

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