

Approver	Operations Committee
Pre Board Committee Scrutiny	Executive Team, Leadership Team, Care Home Managers, Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)
Date Approved	March 2024
Classification	Policy
Title	Special Leave Policy
Revision Date	5 March 2024
Revised by	Director of Finance and Business Support/HR Manager
Next Revision Date	March 2027
Related Documents	Maternity Policy and related procedures Annual Leave Policy Pay & Rewards Policy
Location of Electronic Copy	F:\Live Policies\HR

## **1.0 VIEWPOINT'S VALUES**

1.1 Viewpoint is here to help people enjoy their later years. Everything we do is about realising this vision, which is supported by the following straightforward set of values:

- Inspire with positive smiles and words;
- Say 'yes I can, and I will;'
- Celebrate age, experience, and wisdom;
- Do according to our customers' wishes and ambitions;
- Treat people (everyone is a VIP) as we would a "loved one;"
- Work hard, have fun and laugh;
- Stay courageous, creative, and ahead of the game; and
- Work with those that share our values.

1.2 These promises shape us. They are a commitment to our tenants, residents, staff, and suppliers. They are fundamental to every single plan, decision, and project we embark on.

1.3 Ensuring that we have systems and processes in place will support us to deliver those plans, decisions, and projects, in accordance with our vision and values.

## **2.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

2.1 Viewpoint recognises that family responsibilities, statutory and other non-work commitments impact on the working life of people. This policy aims to provide a fair and consistent framework to enable people to achieve a reasonable and appropriate balance between their work commitments and other responsibilities.

2.2 The Policy encourages a positive and consistent response to individuals' needs whilst also ensuring that the needs of the organisation are considered.

2.3 The Association is committed to ensuring the implementation of this Policy and it will be monitored to ensure consistency of application.

## **3.0 SCOPE**

3.1 The Special Leave Policy outlines the comprehensive scope of provisions and entitlements available to employees for specific circumstances requiring their absence from work. It describes the permissible grounds for granting special leave, such as compassionate leave for bereavement, parental leave for the birth or adoption of a child, and medical leave for serious illness or injury. Additionally, the policy specifies the duration and conditions applicable to each type of special leave, ensuring clarity and consistency in its application across the organisation.

## **4.0 AIM**

4.1 The aim of the Special Leave Policy is to provide a structured framework that supports employees during exceptional circumstances that necessitate time away from work. This policy is designed to uphold the well-being and welfare of employees by offering provisions for various personal, family, and health-related situations that may arise. By outlining the scope and entitlements within this policy, the organisation aims to demonstrate its commitment to employee welfare while maintaining operational

effectiveness. Additionally, the policy seeks to promote fairness, consistency, and transparency in the process of granting special leave, ensuring that all employees are treated equitably and with dignity during challenging times.

## 5.0 POLICY GUIDELINES

- 5.1 The granting of Special Leave is initially a matter for consideration and decision by the employee's line manager within the guidelines outlined in this Policy.
- 5.2 Employees who wish to apply for Special Leave (paid or unpaid) should apply to their line manager, using the Special Leave Request Form (*See Appendix 1*).
- 5.3 In determining the leave to be authorised, the line manager should take into account the individual's circumstances (e.g. nature/closeness of personal relationships, travel required to attend a funeral) and ensure that a consistent approach is followed. The HR Team will be happy to advise on individual cases.
- 5.4 Paid Special Leave will not normally be appropriate where an employee receives compensation from another source for the period of absence. Where it is considered that Special Leave is not appropriate, Line Managers should try to accommodate any requests to take Annual Leave or time off in lieu. The HR Team is available to assist with any enquiries.
- 5.5 Special Leave (paid or unpaid) will be recorded on an employee's absence record. The employee should be advised that there may be a Pension impact if the Leave is unpaid.
- 5.6 It is noted that in some circumstances an employee may not be able to apply for the leave prior using the Special Leave Request Form (Appendix 1). **For example, where an employee phones a manager and their child is sick and they need to stay home to look after the child and are unable to work from Home. The form will be required to be complete and signed retrospectively immediately following the return of the employee. Please note, the employee must inform their line manager at the time the situation arises.**
- 5.7 Supporting documentation must be provided with the Special Leave Request Form, for example a hospital appointment letter.

## 4.0 TYPES OF LEAVE

- 4.1 The Policy provides detailed guidance on the following types of special leave:
  - Domestic, personal, family reasons and time off for dependants including statutory leave. (**Appendix 2**);
  - Essential civic and public duties, or related circumstances (**Appendix 3**);
  - Unpaid and Career Break (**Appendix 4**);

## 5.0 REFUSAL OF LEAVE

- 5.1 No request for leave under this policy will be unreasonably withheld. Should a disagreement arise as to whether the leave is to be taken as paid or unpaid the employee will be given the reasons for the decision detailed on the Special Leave Request Form. If the employee is still unhappy with the reason for the decision, the employee has the right to appeal the decision at a more senior level.

## 6.0 REVIEW OF POLICY

- 6.1 This Policy is due for review after 3 years, or earlier if there are any legislative or other changes which necessitate this.



**SPECIAL LEAVE REQUEST**

I, ..... seek approval for the following Paid / Unpaid\* Special Leave.

Date leave will commence ...../...../..... and finish on ...../...../.....

Number of days ..... AM / PM / FULL\* (\*delete as appropriate).

*NB: If a whole day is requested, and the appointment is only in the morning or afternoon, a supporting statement is needed, supplying the reason for this request.*

The reason I require this leave is due to:

.....  
.....  
.....

If the request is for Bereavement or Attendance at a Funeral please state your relationship to the deceased:

.....  
.....

I have enclosed relevant documentation to support my request .e.g. Hospital Appointment Card.

Employee Signature: .....

Date: .....

I understand that a false claim will result in a breach of the Special Leave Policy and may lead to disciplinary action being taken against me. I agree that, under the terms of the Special Leave Policy, any unpaid leave that I have requested to take will result in a deduction from my salary equivalent to the appropriate daily rate via the association’s payroll

**PLEASE HAND THIS TO YOUR LINE MANAGER**

\*.....

**LINE MANAGER TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION**

I, ..... have authorised / not authorised\* this Paid / Unpaid\* Special Leave request, (\*delete as appropriate).

If you have not authorised this leave, or wish it to be unpaid (unless otherwise stated in the Special Leave Policy), please state your reasons for this decision:

.....  
.....  
.....

Line Manager Signature: ..... Date: .....

**PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO HR**

**Appendix 2**

**1. SPECIAL LEAVE – DOMESTIC, PERSONAL, FAMILY REASONS AND TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS**

A Dependant is the Husband, Wife, Partner, Spouse, Child, Step-Children, Parent, Guardian of the employee or someone who relies on the employee in an emergency.

Examples of close family member are Siblings, Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, Partner’s parents, Nieces, Nephews.

Circumstances	Those Covered	Leave available (Working Days)	Paid/ Unpaid	Additional conditions/remarks
<p>Bereavement</p> <p>Attendance at funeral of Close Family Member</p> <p>Attendance at any other Funeral</p>	<p>Dependant relatives Husband, Wife, Partner, Spouse, Child, Parent, Guardian of the employee</p> <p>Other than those detailed above</p> <p>Any other acquaintance, family member or non- dependant.</p>	<p>Up to 5 days (including funeral)</p> <p>Up to one day</p> <p>Up to one day</p>	<p>Paid</p> <p>Paid</p> <p>Unpaid</p>	<p>When determining the number of days of paid leave to be granted on any occasion, Line Managers should satisfy themselves on the following factors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The relationship with the deceased and resultant degree of distress to the employee;</li> <li>2. Attendance at and proximity of funerals;</li> <li>3. Responsibility for funeral arrangements or any executory duties</li> </ol> <p>The Association offers Bereavement Counselling via EAP for employees who have been deeply affected by the death of a dependant. For more information contact HR.</p>
<p>Emergency Time off for dependants, including serious illness (including attendance at hospital in emergencies).</p> <p><i>Note this does not include planned appointments.</i></p>	<p>Dependant.</p>	<p>Up to 2 days</p>	<p>Up to 2 days unpaid</p> <p>Additional unpaid leave maybe available if further leave is required.</p>	<p>Before granting such leave, the Line Manager should be satisfied that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The employee carries the burden of care;</li> <li>2. The leave is required to meet immediate care needs or for arranging long term care;</li> </ol> <p>The amount of leave granted will reflect all the circumstances including the seriousness of the illness.</p>

**Appendix 2 (cont).**

Circumstances	Those Covered	Leave available (Working Days)	Paid/ Unpaid	Additional conditions/remarks
GP Appointments/Dental appointments	All employees	As necessary  1. Employees are expected to try to arrange appointments out-with working hours, or where this is not possible, to arrange them to cause least disruption to work e.g. first thing in the morning or late afternoon.	Paid	Employees should make up time for a GP appointment, Dental appointment or other short length medical appointment.  Employees will be required to liaise with their Line Manager and ensure the time is worked up at a time is convenient.
Hospital appointments/Medical Appointments	All employees	As necessary  1. Employees are expected to try to arrange appointments out-with working hours, or where this is not possible, to arrange them to cause least disruption to work e.g. around shift patterns/first thing in the morning or late afternoon	*Paid	*Payment for this leave will be dependent on the individual producing a copy of their appointment card/letter(s) to their line manager.
Breakdown of normal Childcare arrangements	Care of Children or relatives for whom the employee has caring responsibilities or leave to deal with an emergency.	Up to 2 days No limit on the number of times an employee can be absent from work under this right has been set.	Un-paid  Additional unpaid leave will be available if further leave is required.	Before granting such leave the Line Manager should be satisfied that the employee carries the burden of care.  In such instances, where reasonable notice has been provided, This leave is not applicable. (What is reasonable should be determined following discussion between the Line Manager and employee).  In the case of a sudden/unforeseen breakdown of arrangements, such as a childminder being taken ill, day-care centre or school being closed at short-notice etc., then Special Leave would be

**Appendix 2 (cont).**

Circumstances	Those Covered	Leave available (Working Days)	Paid/ Unpaid	Additional conditions/remarks
				appropriate to allow the employee to make alternative arrangements. <b><u>Appendix 2 (cont).</u></b> The Leave is provided as a help with the arrangement of alternative/temporary arrangements.
Maternity/Paternity /Adoption Leave/Shared Parental Leave		Statutory Provisions apply	Paid	Please refer to the Maternity Policy and related procedures or contact HR for more details on the current statutory provisions that apply.
Parental Leave		Statutory Provisions apply	Unpaid	Please refer to the relevant procedure or contact HR for more details on the current statutory provisions that apply.
Carers Leave		Statutory Provisions apply	Unpaid	Please refer to the Carers leave Policy or contact HR for more details on the current statutory provisions that apply.
Secondment to another organisation	All employees	As Necessary	Paid	2 Directors or Director and Chief Executive must authorise
Examinations – Study Leave	Employees on an approved training course	Up to 1 day per exam	Paid	For courses financed by Viewpoint, providing there is a signed Training Agreement in place.
Examinations – attendance		Up to 1 day per exam	Paid	
Joint Consultative Committee Members (JCC) Training and Duties	All Viewpoint JCC Members	As necessary and agreed with the HR Manager	Paid	Elected JCC representatives of Viewpoint can apply for reasonable leave to undertake JCC duties.
Representing country at sport	All employees	As Necessary	Paid (provided any fees received are given to VHA)	Director or Chief Executive must authorise

NOTE: The above examples are not exhaustive of the reasons for requesting leave for domestic, personal or family circumstances.



**Appendix 3**

**2. SPECIAL LEAVE – FOR ESSENTIAL CIVIC AND PUBLIC DUTIES, OR RELATED CIRCUMSTANCES**

<b>Circumstances</b>	<b>Those Covered</b>	<b>Leave available (Working Days)</b>	<b>Paid/Unpaid</b>	<b>Additional conditions/remarks</b>
Serving as a Justice of the Peace	All employees	Up to 18 days in any period of 12 months	Paid (provided any fees received are handed over to employer)	Where leave is requested beyond 18 days in 12 months, a detailed written request should be made to HR.
Attendance at Court for Jury service	Employees required to attend Court as Jury member or witness	As required by the Court	Paid (provided any fees received are handed over to employer)	Employees must provide HR with a copy of their Juror's citation and following the absence, ask the court to confirm the length of time sat on the jury via email/official letter. If the employee cannot supply the required details on official documentation, the leave will be classed as unpaid.
Attendance as a witness at Appeal Hearing	All employees	As required	Paid	
Children's Panel Membership	All employees	Up to 6 days in any period of 12 months	Paid	Unpaid leave may be requested beyond this. A stated case should be made to Line Manager
Non-regular Forces	Employees required to attend annual training camp	For not less than a week and not exceeding a period of 15 calendar days (Service pay and allowances will be deducted from VHA pay)	Unpaid	Individual requires letter of required attendance which includes dates from Army reserves/army cadet force a minimum of 1 month before first date of leave required. Viewpoint to consent to application to join Reserve or Cadet Forces (or to be aware of at appointment if already a member)
Civic and Public Office	All employees	As required		The holders of certain civic and public offices, whose involvement has been authorised by the Chief Executive, will be granted reasonable leave of absence to fulfil their duties subject to the needs of the service and the provision of

Circumstances	Those Covered	Leave available (Working Days)	Paid/Unpaid	Additional conditions/remarks
				reasonable notice. The basis of payment will be considered by the Chief Executive dependant on the nature of the duties. Viewpoint requires all employees seeking appointment to public offices to consult in the first instance with their Line Manager. Full details should be provided of the level of involvement and commitment required in order that an assessment can be made regarding the effect on Viewpoint's operational requirements before it is passed to the Chief Executive for consideration.

NOTE: The above list is not exhaustive of the reasons for requesting leave which would be considered under essential civic and public duties or related circumstances. Other similar requests will be considered as they arise by the Manager who will seek advice from the Human Resources Manager where necessary.

#### Appendix 4

#### 2. SPECIAL LEAVE – UNPAID

Unpaid Special Leave may be authorised for circumstances where Paid Special Leave/Annual Leave is not appropriate or unavailable and where the Department is **able to accommodate the absence, taking into account the needs of the business**. An example may be where an employee wishes to add 2 weeks unpaid leave to 3 weeks annual leave for an extended holiday. Similarly, Unpaid Special Leave may be considered for an employee who wishes to attend a course of study which has no direct relevance to his/her employment.

Where an employee is representing their country and receiving payment for doing so, then any leave given would normally be unpaid.

#### Authorisation of Unpaid Special Leave

Circumstances	Employees covered	Leave Available	Authorised By
All cases	All employees	Up to 10 days 11 to 20 days 21 days +	Director Director and HR HR, Director and Chief Executive

#### 4. CAREER BREAK – UNPAID

Career Break – Unpaid Leave/absence may be authorised for up to 2 years, where Viewpoint is **able to accommodate the absence, taking into account the needs of the business.**

3 months notice should be given by the employee before commencing their break and also the employee must give three months notice of their intention to return.