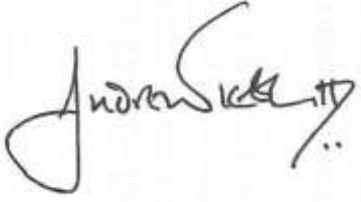


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Signature:	Signed by:	Position:	Date:
	Andrew Tebbutt	Policy Trustee	June 2021

Introduction:

Compassionate Leave is always an emotive area for employers to deal with, because frequently there is a potential conflict between a natural desire to be generous with someone seeking compassionate leave and the need to maintain business continuity. Most organisations that employ staff will have some form of compassionate leave policy. As a charity WVFB would both expect to be, and be expected to be, as generous as possible in the way it deals with requests for compassionate leave. Compassionate leave is, however, not an entitlement as such, being at the discretion of the Board.

When is Compassionate Leave appropriate?

There are two different compassionate leave issues.

- One as to how WVFB deals with its paid staff.
- The other is how WVFB deals with volunteers, particularly those who have key roles.

The Board recognises that it could look at those situations very differently, but it has resolved that the same principles should apply. Each request for compassionate leave will be dealt with as a discrete request, without precedent, but taking into account the following guidelines.

WVFB Board agrees that the following circumstances could warrant the granting of compassionate leave. These are the primary situations but will not necessarily be seen as an exhaustive list:

- Death of a very close relative (e.g. spouse/partner; child; parent, other dependent person)
- Death of a relative (e.g. grandparent, sibling, cousin, aunt/uncle)
- Death of a friend or more distant relative
- Attendance at a funeral involving someone not classified above.
- Accident to a close relative necessitating hospitalisation.
- Accident to a close relative not requiring hospitalisation.
- Illness of a child or other dependent.
- Major damage to a house or car where there is a risk to life or property loss.
- Any traumatic event that cannot be dealt with by taking leave of absence.

As a good & caring employer The Board of Trustees will also carefully consider any request outside the above situations.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees has the responsibility for managing requests for compassionate leave (in his/her absence the Vice Chair).

Paid Staff:

- **Standard employment practice is to grant up to 5 working days compassionate leave, but the WVFB Board has agreed that the maximum amount of compassionate leave can be up to a maximum of ten working days.**
- In some circumstances additional compassionate leave could be granted for the funeral, particularly if this is several weeks afterwards.
- The Board expects that any absence requirements above that should be managed by a combination of annual leave or a covering sick note.
- The maximum of 10 working days would only apply on the death or critical illness of a very close relative; **in all other circumstances the maximum would be five working days**, with discretion being given to the Chairperson (or in his/her absence the Vice Chair) to extend the provision up to ten on a review of the perceived need.

Less critical/emotional situations:

- Each situation will be assessed individually by the Chair or Administration Trustee, but there is expectation that paid staff could (in many instances) have some organised provision for anticipated crises – e.g, a grandparent or child's illness, so one or two days compassionate leave would be the normal allowance to allow alternative arrangements to be made.
- Attendance at a funeral can vary from 2/3 hours away from the office, to having to travel a distance, but WVFB cannot be expected to be over generous – so one day's compassionate leave would seem reasonable. Additional time could be by approved unpaid leave or holiday.
- For all other situations the maximum allocation of compassionate leave would be 2 or 3 days to permit adjustment to the circumstances, but the Chair can increase that up to 5 days if there is justification.

Volunteers: Whilst it might seem initially that volunteers would not be affected by this policy, some volunteers occupy a critical position in the organisation, and the Board thinks it is reasonable for volunteers to know that the Trustees value their service; and will understand in certain circumstances they will need the equivalent of compassionate leave to deal with personal crises in their lives. Equally Trustees and managers need to know how long they will be absent from their role so cover can be organised.

The Board confirms that the same principles apply as for paid staff; it will be for the Operations Trustee to initially assess what is deemed reasonable.

The Board understands that it cannot insist that volunteers should return after a specified time away, but as there is a clear compassionate leave structure everyone should be clear as to entitlement & the WVFB expectations.

The Board reiterates it is a charity attempting to meet need by the rapid delivery of essential food. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the operation, so the Board needs to know how long they might be away.