



ANNUAL LEAVE/STATUTORY OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Annual Leave is a contractual entitlement and is necessary for the physical, social and psychological well-being of staff, who often work under pressure. Staff are therefore expected to take their full leave entitlement during the annual leave year.
- 1.2 To ensure that staffs are given sufficient opportunity to take their leave the Trust has built in a relief factor within each area/grade. Every effort will be made to allow individuals to take their full entitlement within the leave year; however this will not always be possible due to the needs of the Service. When this is not possible provisions apply for the carry-over of leave (refer to Section 9 of the Trust's Annual Leave Policy).

2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 This Procedure applies to all operational Emergency and Non-Emergency staff and to staff employed in the Regional Emergency Medical Despatch Centre and Regional Non-Emergency Medical Despatch Centre

3.0 PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 All operational staff shall have their annual leave entitlement allocated to them in hours, in line with Section 6 of the Trust's Annual Leave Policy which is compliant with Agenda for Change Terms & Conditions of Employment and Trust contractual obligations.
- 3.2 The principles of a block leave system will be applied to part-time staff on a pro-rata basis.
- 3.3 For the purposes of this Procedure the working week spans Monday to Sunday.

4.0 APPLICATIONS FOR CASUAL LEAVE

- 4.1 All casual leave applications must be made via the PROMIS Web system. A casual leave application form is available on the intranet and should be completed in full and e-mailed to the Resource Management Centre (RMC). A message confirming receipt of your application will be sent when you submit the

request. This can be confirmed by checking your personal leave record on PROMIS

- 4.3 It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure, at all times, that their application for leave has been received.
- 4.4 Applications for casual leave are considered and approved by the RMC taking into account the needs of both the Service and the individual's circumstances in line with the spirit of the Trust's Annual Leave Policy.
- 4.5 Applications for casual leave can be made on the basis of a rolling year i.e. leave for Jan 1st 2011 cannot be applied for until Jan 1st 2010, therefore requests for leave cannot be made more than 12 months in advance of the requested annual leave dates (excluding Christmas see Section 8).
- 4.6 Requests for casual leave should be made to the RMC no later than 48 hours before the first day of the requested leave, in order to provide RMC with adequate time to manage service needs.
- 4.7 Where short notice casual leave is requested (i.e. requests made less than 48 hours prior to the date on which they wish to take casual annual leave), RMC has the discretion to approve these short notice leave requests.
- 4.8 No employee should finalise holiday arrangements or take casual leave before RMC has approved their leave request. Where staff have booked and paid for holidays which have not been approved, the Trust will not compensate them for any loss of monies, should it not be possible to grant leave for that period.
- 4.9 Where an employee takes casual leave prior to approval being granted the Trust may consider invoking the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 4.10 The RMC will endeavour to notify staff 7 days before the date of the casual leave whether it has been granted or not, provided it has been applied for well in advance.

5.0 BLOCK LEAVE

- 5.1 Consistent with the principle of encouraging more pre-planning of leave, a process for allocating blocks of leave during the spring, summer and winter leave period will be established at each station.
- 5.2 All staff within the scope of this Procedure must take one week spring leave (April to May), two weeks summer leave (June to September) and one week winter leave (Oct – Mid Dec + Mid Jan to Feb). This will be organised via a block leave system for all stations/control rooms.

- 5.3 Staff have the opportunity to move a week from their summer block to a second week in either the spring or winter blocks. Alternatively staff can request a second week in spring or winter using their casual leave. Such requests must be made 6 months before the requested change.
- 5.4 The system for the allocation of Block Leave is detailed in Appendix 1. Stations/control rooms that already have a block leave system in place will conform to the principles of the policy and the system of block leave detailed in appendix 1.
- 5.5 Staff returning from a period of sickness, who have been unable to take leave during the set block periods will have block leave reallocated in line with the needs of the service. Should there be more than one set of suitable block leave available the RMC will liaise with the individual to select a block.
- 5.6 There is scope for individuals to exchange their blocks within the same station/control room, provided this is confirmed in writing by the two individuals and approved by Resource Management Centre. Swaps will only be permitted for same grades of staff i.e. Paramedic for Paramedic, EMD for EMD, etc. EMT may where appropriate swap with a Paramedic in Training. These exchanges must take place by 31 January for Spring and Summer Leave and 31 August for Winter Leave. Once a swap has been agreed, block leave cannot be cancelled.
- 5.7 Consideration will be given to swapping with staff in neighbouring stations within the criteria above.
- 5.8 When such changes are agreed, this will not alter their starting place in the following year.
- 5.9 Staff on block leave are not permitted to carry out changes of duty within the block leave period.
- 5.10 There must be an even spread of staff allocated to all blocks to ensure operational cover.
- 6.0 CASUAL LEAVE**
- 6.1 Casual leave is the term applied to leave that is not included within the block and may generally only be taken as complete shifts.
- 6.2 Casual Leave can only be granted if cover can be maintained. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that their casual leave has been granted. If the Casual Leave is not granted and the employee is not at work they will be considered absent without leave.

- 6.3 Where there are conflicting leave requests, priority will be given on a first come first served basis, except during Christmas holiday period (see Section 8)
- 6.4 In order to ensure that there is ample opportunity for staff to take their leave, but at the same time to ensure that such absences can be covered by relief, maximum notification should be given.
- 6.5 A minimum notice period of 48 hours (prior to the start of the actual shift) for casual leave requests is required, however leave will not be refused just because less than 48 hours notice is given, This is called Emergency Leave but in such circumstances will only be granted, with the permission of the Resource Management Centre, if operational cover can be maintained and the employee has Casual leave hours left.
- 6.6 Operational cover will be a key consideration for RMC when endeavouring to grant Casual Leave requests, i.e. EMT covering EMT, EMD covering EMD, Paramedic covering Paramedic and ICS covering ICS. However as a last resort a paramedic may cover an EMT/PIT and vice versa.
- 6.7 Any additional Leave outside the set leave blocks will be considered Casual Leave and will conform to the criteria set for Casual Leave. Except when up to two shifts leave is requested either side of the block leave to accommodate travel arrangements. This leave will be included within the block leave but requests must be submitted by 31 January for Spring and Summer Leave and 31 August for Winter Leave
- 6.8 Where casual leave has been booked but an employee subsequently wishes to cancel their casual leave at short notice (i.e. less than 48 hours prior to the intended annual leave dates), consideration will be made as to whether this is viable both operationally and with regard to the management of that individuals personal leave year. Staff have no automatic right to cancel casual leave within the 48 hr period leading up to the intended annual leave dates. However, all requests for cancellation of casual leave will be considered on an individual basis and where possible accommodated.
- 6.9 Where cancellation of annual leave is approved, but the staff member's original shift has been covered by relief or a colleague, the staff member will not be entitled to return to their original shift pattern but will receive an allocation of working pattern in consultation with RMC.

7.0 SPECIAL CASUAL LEAVE

- 7.1 Requests for Casual leave for special occasions will be given special consideration and a decision to grant leave made on the merits of the application.

8.0 SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHRISTMAS

8.1 As there is no block leave over the Christmas and New Year periods, applications for Casual leave must be made. Casual leave can only be applied for in the rolling leave year with all applications being made by 1 October in any given year.

8.2 Casual Leave will be allocated over this period with preference being given to applicants who have worked over the previous 3 year Christmas and New Year holiday periods. Overtime worked will not be included in the calculation.

8.3 A points system will be used to determine the approval of applications for casual leave over the Christmas period with points being awarded to staff based on their previous three years working. Points will be awarded pro rata as follows: -

- Christmas Eve night shift working into Christmas Day 2 pts
- Christmas Day Shift 3 pts
- Christmas Night Shift working into Boxing Day 2 pts
- Boxing Day Shift (inc night shift starting Boxing Day) 1 pt

Staff will be placed in a ranking order based on points accumulated and preference will be given to those staff with the highest accumulated total.

8.4 A points system will be used to determine the approval of applications for casual leave over the New Year period with points being awarded to staff based on their previous three years working. Points will be awarded as follows: -

- New Year's Eve night shift working into New Year's Day 2 pts
- New Year's Day shifts 1 pt

Staff will be placed in a ranking order based on points accumulated and preference will be given to those staff with the highest accumulated total.

8.5 Staff will be made aware, by 31 October in any given year, whether their leave application has been granted for the Christmas and New Year periods.

9.0 CARRY OVER OF LEAVE

9.1 Any requests for the carry over up to 37.5 hrs of leave must be submitted in writing using form RMC 04 (reference Appendix 2) to the RMC normally by 31 January of the leave year.

9.2 Any requests for the carry over in excess of 37.5 hrs of leave must normally be submitted in writing to the Area Manager, detailing the reasons why, by 31

January of the leave year. Only in exceptional circumstances will staff be authorised to carry over in excess of 37.5hrs leave

- 9.3 In exceptional circumstances as determined by the Director of Operations, the amount of annual leave that may be carried over by all operational staff, may be increased where the exigencies of the service necessitate it e.g. national emergencies.

Document Reference:	Document title:
Authorisation date:	Document type:
Review date:	Responsible authority
Signed off by	

AGREEMENT on the above Policy has been agreed between the following individuals: -

Management Representative: -

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair of HR JCG)

Trade Union Representatives

Signed: Richard Date: 3 March 2011

Signed: BAXTER Date: 3rd MARCH 2011

Signed: P. Zomer Date: 7th September 2011

Signed: _____ Date: _____

January 2011

**NIAS NHS TRUST
BLOCK LEAVE SYSTEM**

APPENDIX 1

The aim of this procedure is to provide a service wide system for the equitable allocation of blocks of annual leave.

It proposes a basis for making the initial allocation, the annual process for moving those blocks forward and the process to be adopted by individuals who wish to do mutual changes of blocks. These arrangements must be in place at all Stations and every member of that station will be allocated a block.

Typically such a scheme will have 'blocks' available for leave and sufficient people need to be allocated to each block to allow the entire station establishment to have the appropriate block of leave.

Initial Allocation

Once the blocks have been identified, it will be necessary for the entire station establishment i.e. all existing in-post staff and vacant positions to be allocated to one of the blocks in each leave period

General Operation of Block System.

After the initial allocation to blocks for the first year, each group will move forward to the next numbered block i.e. block 1 to block 2 to block 3. To ensure fairness and a distribution within the leave period the blocks will not necessarily be consecutive.

Year 1

Week 1	Week 4	Week 3	Week 2	Week 5
Mr.A				
Ms.B				
Mrs.C				

Year 2

Week 1	Week 4	Week 3	Week 2	Week 5
			Mr.A	
			Ms.B	
			Mrs.C	

New staff joining the unit will take one of the vacant positions.



FORM RMC 04

Appendix 2

**NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE
APPLICATION TO CARRYING OVER LEAVE.**

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Place of Work: _____ Staff No: _____

Number of hours: _____

Year of leave entitlement from: _____ to: _____

Reason for carrying over leave: _____

Applicants signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved / Not Approved by:

Reason for not approving

Signed: _____

Grade: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3

North Division Implementation Procedure

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Currently North Division does not operate a Block Leave system. Therefore an implementation programme will be put in place, on the basis of a one year pilot, to facilitate the smooth introduction of this policy.
- 1.2 This North procedure will be reviewed in September 2011 as part of the regional review of the Annual Leave Procedure.

2.0 Rule Set

- 2.1 The RMC will produce the block leave allocating blocks to operational staff for North stations in line with this policy and other divisions. This block leave document will be known as the default block leave.
- 2.2 This document will be emailed to the relevant staff at the relevant station on the first Monday of December.
- 2.3 The Station Supervisor will be emailed a blank block leave document.
- 2.4 Local staff now have the facility to request blocks of leave on the blank document
- 2.5 The Station Supervisor will now complete the blank leave document, in line with the principles of this document and in consultation with the local staff, and will allocate staff to the blocks.
- 2.6 Staff must be allocated to the blocks according to grade, i.e. Paramedic vacancy to Paramedic, EMT vacancy to EMT/PIT
- 2.7 Staff can not be allocated to the same block which they had the previous year, unless no other staff has requested this off.
- 2.8 Should two or more staff request the same block off, historical data will be studied and the block leave allocated to the member of staff with the longest time frame since last leave on that block. Should this data not identify someone, names will be drawn at random
- 2.09 All local staff must be in agreement with the allocation of the leave. Should there not be total agreement on the station to the newly completed block leave allocation; the station will revert back to the original allocation of block leave from the RMC (the default block leave).

- 2.10 Should an agreement not be reached at Station level the Station Officer must be informed by 1st Monday in February.
- 2.11 The newly completed block leave document/default allocation must be emailed to the RMC by the first Monday of February.
- 2.12 This procedure will be overseen by the Station Officer and should the Station Supervisor be absent, the SO will undertake this duty.
- 2.13 The Supervisor/SO will ensure all staff are involved in the process, including those absent, on sick, maternity leave, etc.

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