

## **SECTION 6 – LEAVE FOR RESERVISTS**

### **Introduction**

- 6.1 This section provides information to:
- support employees who are Reservists,
  - manage requests for time off for training,
  - manage pre and post mobilisation,
  - define special leave arrangements.
- 6.2 This policy applies to all employees, including those on probation, fixed term appointments, loans and secondments.
- 6.3 These procedures are for managers and employees. They explain:
- what employees need to do if they are Reservists or if they want to become Reservists,
  - how to manage Reservists,
  - how to deal with requests for time off for training,
  - responsibilities when a Reservist is mobilised, demobilised and returns to work.

[Further background detail and Reservist Advice is available.](#)

### **Objectives and Basic Principles**

- 6.4 To support the Government's ambition to be an exemplar employer, this policy encourages and promotes Reserve Service by:
- providing 15 days paid special leave per year for training,
  - dealing positively with requests for other types of leave to undertake additional Reservist activities,
  - offering support to employees before, during and after mobilisation, in consideration of individual circumstances,
  - recognising the transferable skills and benefits to both the department and society,
  - keeping an accurate record of employees who are Volunteer Reservists.
- 6.5 Reservists are given additional protection under The Employment Rights Act 1996. For information, see the FAQ within the Reservist Guidance.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- 6.6 Employees will:
- (a) understand and follow the procedures including timelines contained in this document.
  - (b) wherever possible, be prompt in notifying your manager of training and mobilisation.

- (c) seek approval from your Grade 7 if you intend to volunteer for High Readiness Reservist status making you liable to be deployed with minimal notice.
- (d) if considering renewing your commitment, known as re-engaging as a Reservist or are interested in joining the Reserve Forces, you must discuss this with your line manager.

6.7 Managers will:

- (a) ensure the policy is complied with consistently.
- (b) respond positively to all requests for training and consider the use of paid special leave, within the recognised limits.
- (c) maintain a record of the Reservist's details which should be updated to reflect training and mobilisation commitments. These details must be kept securely.

6.8 Further details of the procedures to be followed by managers and Reservists are explained in this document and summarised in the [summary flowchart](#)

6.9 Checklists highlighting the key actions and responsibilities for managers and Reservists can be found in the [Manager's Checklist](#) and [Reservists Checklist](#) respectively.

6.10 The manager and Reservist must discuss how to keep in touch during mobilisation and agree the frequency of contact. Responsibility for this discussion rests with both parties. The Reservist must provide contact details including telephone numbers, email and postal addresses of where they can be reached. Next of kin details should also be updated.

## Training

6.11 As far as practicably possible, time off for training, including initial basic training and initial officer training completed on the commencement of Reservist activities, should be requested as early as possible and approved. To support this, Reservists should provide managers with details of their training commitments as soon as possible.

6.12 Reservists, including those on probation, are allowed a maximum of 15 days paid special leave a year to participate in the continuous mandatory period of training. This usually lasts 15 consecutive days, often referred to as annual camp. There may be some variation between the Reserve Forces, particularly within specialist units, where this mandatory training element may be split over two or more shorter periods.

6.13 For any additional training, Reservists can request annual leave, flexi leave, time off in lieu, special unpaid leave or a combination. This should be applied for using existing arrangements. Reservists should note however, that there is no automatic entitlement to special leave with or without pay and authorisation must be obtained from the manager. Additional paid or unpaid special leave should be recorded in Oracle Fusion.

- 6.14 Paid special leave for training will not affect the employee's continuity of service and reckonable service.
- 6.15 If the Reservist is granted unpaid special leave for any period of training longer than four weeks accrual of annual leave is abated (reduced or stopped) Annual leave accrual would be withdrawn if the Reservist was mobilised as accrual would be under the Ministry of Defence.

See the [summary flowchart](#) for an overview of the process for requesting and approving time off for training.

## **Mobilisation**

- 6.16 To fulfil part of the UK's defence strategy Reservists are Mobilised or Called Out. Reservists will receive Call Out papers detailing mobilisation dates and must notify their manager of these dates. Managers will receive an Information Pack that contains a copy of the Reservist's Call Out Notice and a letter setting out the date and possible duration of mobilisation.
- 6.17 Although there is a provision for employers to make a case for exemption or deferral from Call Out of a Reservist, it is not expected that this could be applied to any Reservist in the department. Managers are expected to release Reservists in all cases. This is a Civil Service wide position and managers should only apply for an exemption or deferral in truly exceptional circumstances that would cause the business obvious and significant harm.
- 6.18 During the period of mobilisation, the Reservist is granted unpaid special leave from the department.
- 6.19 Unpaid special leave granted for the Reservist's mobilisation does not affect the employee's continuity of service or reckonable service.
- 6.20 A discussion must take place between the manager and Reservist prior to mobilisation. The discussion should cover mobilisation, the impact on terms and conditions, keeping in touch arrangements and the subsequent return to work.
- 6.21 Following this discussion, the manager should complete the [departmental mobilisation letter](#) and issue it to the Reservist. A copy of the letter should be held by the manager and the Reservist and a copy sent to Shared Business Services for their personal Service Centre file.

See the [summary flowchart](#) for an overview of the mobilisation process.

## **Maintaining Contact**

- 6.22 The manager and Reservist must discuss how to maintain contact during mobilisation and agree the frequency of contact. Responsibility for this discussion rests with both parties. The Reservist must provide contact details

including telephone numbers, email and postal addresses of where they can be reached. Next of kin details should also be updated.

## **Treatment of Terms and Conditions During Mobilisation**

- 6.23 When mobilised, the Reservist is on unpaid special leave and the department will stop paying the Reservist's salary. The Reserve Force will assume responsibility for the Reservist's salary for the duration of their mobilisation and pay a basic salary according to their military rank. If this basic element is less than their normal salary, it is the Reservist's responsibility to apply to the Reserve Force for the difference to ensure no loss of earnings. The Reserve Force will also cover the cost of contractual benefits. Details are available in the Call Out papers.
- 6.24 Pension details are requested as part of the Call Out papers and the Reservist should confirm the pension scheme choice before the first day of mobilisation. The manager is also required to provide details of the Reservist's Civil Service pension payee details as per the Information Pack. Line managers can get this information from Shared Business Services. Reservists can contact [My Civil Service Pensions](#) via email or by phone.
- 6.25 Annual leave is accrued with the Reserve Force during mobilisation and not the department. Before and after mobilisation, departmental annual leave will need to be recalculated. The Reservist should contact Shared Business Services for help recalculating their annual leave entitlement.
- 6.26 There is no entitlement to any departmental annual leave, bank holidays or privilege days whilst an employee is on unpaid special leave during mobilisation. Public holidays and the King's Birthday privilege day are accrued with the Reserve Force when they fall during mobilisation.

## **Demobilisation**

- 6.27 When the tour of duty is complete, documentation will be provided detailing the last day the Reservist will be paid by Reserve Force, also known as the last day of whole time service. This should be made available to the manager on or before return to work. Managers should note that demobilisation is not confirmation of a Reservist's fitness to return to work.
- 6.28 During the demobilisation process the Reservist must contact the manager and attend a return to work meeting. If appropriate this may take place over the telephone. If, due to injury or illness, the Reservist is not able to contact the manager, the Reservist's next of kin should contact the manager on their behalf.
- 6.29 At the meeting, the following should be discussed:
- the Reservist's fitness to return to work and any support they may need on return,
  - any issues the Reservist wishes to raise,
  - an update from the manager about key events in the Reservist's absence,

- the work the Reservist will be doing, and any upskilling/retraining required,
- confirmation of the date the Reservist will return to work.

6.30 Where the Reservist fails to make contact during demobilisation and does not return to work after the last day of whole time service, the department will allow the Reservist to remain on unpaid special leave for a period of up to three weeks after the anticipated demobilisation date. During this period, the manager must use the agreed keeping in touch arrangements to contact the Reservist. If after three weeks it has not been possible to make contact, the manager must follow the [Attendance and Wellbeing Policy](#).

See the [summary flowchart](#) for an overview of the demobilisation and return to work process.

## Return to Work

- 6.31 Return to work will normally be the day following the last day of whole time service with the Reserve Force. Unpaid special leave will cease, and managers should log a call to notify Shared Business Services of the Reservists return to work.
- 6.32 If the Reservist has any outstanding departmental annual leave accrued prior to mobilisation, they may request to take it before physically returning to work. In this case, the first day of the leave period should be treated as their official date of return to the department.
- 6.33 If the Reservist is not fit to return to work immediately, the procedures in the [Attendance and Wellbeing Policy](#) should be applied in the normal way and should consider individual circumstances. This should include an assessment for ill health retirement, where necessary.
- 6.34 Managers should provide Reservists with support to help their transition back into the workplace. This may include the provision of reasonable [Workplace Adjustments](#) if appropriate.
- 6.35 Soon after the Reservist returns to work, the manager must have a further meeting with the Reservist to discuss:
- issues arising since the initial return to work meeting,
  - performance objective setting and exploration of how to make best use of the Reservist's transferable skills in the workplace,
  - formal training completed during mobilisation,
  - introduction to any new team members.
- 6.36 Managers must agree a detailed induction plan including post mobilisation support, following the return to work meeting.
- 6.37 The section is supported by a range procedural documents which can be found in the resources section (Section 7).