

## Annual Leave Purchase Scheme

### Frequently Asked Questions

We hope the [Annual Leave Purchase Scheme](#) and the [FAQs](#) that run alongside the Scheme will help everyone understand the purpose of the scheme and various roles and responsibilities in relation to the purchase of additional annual leave.

To supplement this, we've developed a number of 'frequently asked questions' based on the queries received into People Support.

If there's something missing or a scenario that you think will be helpful to include, please contact us at [PeopleSupport.PHW@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:PeopleSupport.PHW@wales.nhs.uk)

#### FAQs

##### 1. What is the Annual Leave Purchase Scheme

The Scheme has been set up for employees to 'purchase' up to 10 additional days annual leave within a given financial year. Payback periods will be either 6 months, or 12 months. It is expected that additional annual leave will be purchased for a particular purpose, and you will be required to state the dates you wish to use the additional leave when you make the initial application, so that line managers may ensure the scheme is implemented fairly across the organisation.

##### 2. How much additional Annual Leave can I purchase?

You can apply to purchase up to 10 days additional leave (pro rata), based upon your contractual hours, which may be purchased in the number of hours required (i.e. in whole or half days).

*\* Part time who wish to apply for additional annual leave will be able to do so on a pro rata basis, where they may apply for the pro rata equivalent of 10 days additional leave.*

##### 3. Do I have to use all my annual leave before I can buy leave under this scheme?

No. Additional annual leave should be purchased as a one-off for a specific purpose, and all applications must be submitted by the due date. You are not, therefore, required to use all your contractual annual leave before making an application under this scheme. However, all of your ordinary and additional annual leave should be planned and utilised.

##### 4. What is the difference between additional purchased leave and unpaid leave?

Employees can request unpaid leave to cover short notice and unexpected situations, but additional annual leave is designed to enable staff to take time off for a specific, planned reason on a previously agreed date(s). The costs of purchasing additional annual leave are spread over a 6, or 12 month period, whereas unpaid leave is deducted in full from the next months' wages.

##### 5. What are the tax & NI implications?

You will pay Tax and National Insurance on the reduced pay.

##### 6. What are the pension implications?

Pension Contributions will be deducted on your normal full pay.

### **7. Who can apply for the Scheme?**

All employees can apply to purchase additional annual leave, as long as the duration of their contract exceeds the number of months over which the amount owed is to be repaid at the commencement of repayment. However, applications must be approved by your Line Manager before you can take the leave.

### **8. I am Speciality Registrar, can I apply?**

Although StRs within Public Health and Microbiology are on a 12 month contract, if you spend the entire period of the programme within Public Health Wales and do not move to another Trust/Health Board, the Annual Leave Purchase Scheme is open to trainees in Public Health.

If you move within different Trusts/Health Boards and therefore have less than a 12 month contract at the time of application, you are therefore unable to apply for the Annual Leave Purchase Scheme.

### **9. When can I make an application?**

The Scheme is open for applications any time of the year and applications are typically submitted January-February and July-August. There are 2 deadlines to be aware of:-

For deduction spread over 12 months – submit application by the last working day of February

For deduction spread over 6 months – submit application by the last working day of August

Send completed applications to [peoplesupport.phw@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:peoplesupport.phw@wales.nhs.uk).

### **10. How are deductions made?**

If the application is for instalments over a 12 month period (deadline last working day of February), the deduction will commence in April's salary and the additional leave will be added to ESR at that time.

If the application is for instalments over a 6 month period (deadline last working day of August), the deduction will commence in October's salary and the additional leave will be added to ESR at that time.

Once deductions have commenced from your salary, please ensure your ESR Annual Leave record has been updated.

### **11. What happens if purchased leave is not added to my ESR leave balance?**

NWSSP Payroll colleagues will update your ESR record to show the additional annual leave purchased. This is usually done by the end of April and the end of October.

If the hours have not been added to your ESR account by the end of April (for purchased leave over 12 months) and by the end of October (for purchased leave over 6 months), please contact the NWSSP Payroll Team on [NWSSP.Payroll.PHW@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:NWSSP.Payroll.PHW@wales.nhs.uk)

### **12. Do I have to take the leave all in one go?**

No. You are not required to take all of the additional annual leave in one block, as long as you specify the dates you want when you make your application, and your manager is able to accommodate your request.

**13. Can I 'bank' the additional annual leave to use at a later date?**

No. When you apply to purchase additional annual leave, you must tell your manager when you intend to use it to enable planning and cover for your absence.

**14. What if my plans change and I don't want the additional leave after all – can I sell it back?**

No. Once your application has been approved, you cannot sell back the approved additional annual leave.

**15. What if my plans change and I want to change the date of my additional leave after all?**

If you want to change the date of your additional annual leave, you should speak to your manager to see if this can be accommodated. Your request would not be unreasonably refused if it is possible for them to provide the necessary cover etc. but you should be aware that your manager is not obliged to agree to this change.

**16. What happens if circumstances outside of my control mean I cannot take the additional purchased leave?**

This will depend on the circumstances and will be dealt with on a case by case basis. If the circumstances change before the repayments have begun, the leave could be cancelled. Where the repayments have begun, the first suggested approach would be for the purchased leave to be reallocated. It must be noted, however, that the purchased leave cannot be sold back.

**17. Will my manager be able to call me into work during a period of additional annual leave?**

Your manager may need to call you into work in an emergency, which will depend on your role in the organisation in emergency situations. If this happens, and you are unable to take the additional annual leave as planned, you will be allowed to take it at another time, or carry it over into the next annual leave year.

**18. Can I carry over purchased leave if I haven't had the opportunity to use it?**

No. Additional annual leave is to be taken on previously agreed dates. If you do not use your additional annual leave for any reason, and you fail to take it within the annual leave year, the leave will be lost.

**19. Will the purchase of additional leave affect my sick pay?**

The 'payments' for additional annual leave will continue for the 12 months agreed period, whether you are in work or are on a period of sickness absence. If you go onto nil pay, you should contact Payroll for advice on how the repayments can be made.

**20. Will the purchase of additional leave impact on my adoption or maternity pay if I am pregnant or going through the adoption process?**

Potentially, yes. Your maternity or adoption pay is calculated on the basis of your average earnings during a two month period, ending 15 weeks before your due date, or date of placement. If your salary is reduced during this period as a result of purchasing additional annual, it will have an impact on your average earnings and, therefore, on how much maternity or adoption pay you are entitled to.

The effect will vary on an individual basis depending on the timing of your additional annual leave 'payments' in relation to the two month average earnings period referred to above. You are

therefore advised to seek guidance from the Central Human Resources Team as soon as you know you are pregnant, or will be adopting a child, as it may be beneficial to reduce or increase the number of payments for your additional annual leave, or to take the time as unpaid leave instead.

Further information about how maternity and adoption pay is calculated is available from Procedures for Pay and Leave - Maternity, Adoption, Paternity /Maternity Support and IVF Treatment.

**21. What happens if I want to apply for an employment break before I have made all the repayments for additional leave?**

Any additional annual leave purchased must be paid for before you can commence an employment break. If you have any outstanding payments, they will be taken from your final months' salary before your employment break starts.

**22. Can I apply if I am on a trial redeployment?**

Yes, you can apply to purchase additional annual leave, but you should be aware that if you have taken the leave and your employment with the PHW comes to an end before the money is repaid, it will be taken from your final months' salary.

**23. What happens if I leave the organisation and I haven't been able to use my additional leave?**

It is your manager's responsibility to inform NWSSP Payroll (by email) of any untaken purchased annual leave when an employee leaves the ESR organisation.

If no separate instruction detailing the amount untaken is received, NWSSP Payroll will assume all purchased annual leave has been taken prior to termination, and the relevant outstanding deductions will be taken from your final salary.