

## **Guidelines for Major Sporting Events**

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### **Appendices**

#### **Appendix 1 - Volunteers for the 2012 London Olympics**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 These guidelines should be used when there is a major sporting event which attracts the interest of large numbers of staff. Football's World and European Cup tournaments and the Olympic Games typically fall into this category.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that such events are important to some employees and will aim to accommodate their needs so that they can enjoy watching their chosen sports. It is also recognised that other staff have no interest in sport, and that their preferences should also be respected.
- 1.3 The Council expects all staff to be committed to the delivery of high quality services. Nothing in this policy should compromise this commitment, and service delivery will always take priority over time off, if a choice has to be made between the two.
- 1.4 This document sets out rules and guidance for all staff on what is expected of them and what concessions may be granted when a major sporting event is taking place.
- 1.5 The special concessions offered to employees in this document are temporary measures which are a privilege, rather than a right, for staff, to be granted at management's discretion. This document is non-contractual and the Council reserves the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

## **2. Annual leave**

- 2.1 Employees who wish to take time off work to watch a sporting event may apply for annual leave in the normal way. Employees are advised to book their leave well in advance of an event and may wish to carry over up to five days' annual leave into the leave year when the event takes place, in order to maximise that year's entitlement.
- 2.2 The Council may, at its discretion, consider late requests for time off work, including half days, although requests made at short notice have more chance of being refused, as they leave less time for cover to be found.
- 2.3 The Council will, whenever possible, grant requests for time off. This will be done on a first-come, first-served basis. Employees should, however, note that the Council must maintain a minimum level of staffing at all times for both operational and safety reasons.

## **3. Unpaid leave**

- 3.1 Managers can consider requests of up to five days' unpaid leave, providing this does not interfere with service delivery.

#### **4. Flexibility in working time**

- 4.1 The Council will, subject to service requirements, permit employees flexibility in their working arrangements so that they can watch part or all of a major sporting event.
- 4.2 Employees may, for instance, wish to take a longer lunch-break, start later or finish earlier, with working time being made up as appropriate. Alternatively, they may wish to swap shifts or work compressed hours so that they can watch (or avoid) a sporting event.
- 4.3 Employees wishing to work in this way must (i) obtain their manager's permission in advance, (ii) agree to make up any lost time within two weeks at a time designated or approved by their manager, or use flexitime already built up (see also Flexi time scheme).
- 4.4 This type of variation in working arrangements will be short-term, as it is limited to the duration of a sports tournament. It should not, therefore, be regarded as a formal request for flexible working.

#### **5. Watching sport at work**

- 5.1 The Council may, at its discretion, provide access to televisions or radios in designated areas or allow staff to keep track of events on the internet. Employees must always obtain permission from their line manager before leaving their work station to watch an event. Time off to watch the event will be granted only where it does not cause any disruption to the employee's work, or inconvenience to customers or other employees.
- 5.2 Time off in this context is not a right. Managers should decide what the best approach is in the circumstances and may, for instance, take a zero-tolerance approach, be happy for staff to have the event on 'in the background' or allow staff to take a minute off every half hour to get an update. Decisions should be communicated clearly in that service area and enforced consistently.
- 5.3 Where these facilities are allowed, consideration should be made for (i) staff who have no interest in sport, who may get distracted by those who do and resent having to cover for them; (ii) any potential health and safety risks arising from members of staff who don't have their full attention on their duties.
- 5.4 Staff may take prolonged periods of time off to watch the television if (i) their manager agrees that it will cause no detriment to service provision; (ii) agreement is reached in advance between the employee and manager about when lost time can be made up.

## **6. Possible travel disruptions**

- 6.1 Employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend work. It is, however, recognised that a major sporting event taking place in South East England may result in transport difficulties. This may, in turn, affect the ability of employees to get to and from work.
- 6.2 Managers should use their discretion when considering individual cases, and may agree that their staff can:
- take annual leave;
  - take unpaid leave;
  - take half or whole days' flexi-leave;
  - take time off in lieu owed;
  - make time up in the near future;
  - bring forward annual leave if their current year's entitlement has been exhausted;
  - work from home, if this is feasible.
- 6.3 Any decision to allow all staff to arrive late or leave early as a result of transport difficulties will be taken by the Head of Organisational Development or their representative. This decision will be taken in the light of current information on road, rail and other traffic conditions.

## **7. Equality**

- 7.1 Managers should consider all requests for time off equally and not make assumptions that, for instance, only men, young people or people of certain nationalities will want to watch particular sporting events.

## **8. Unacceptable conduct**

- 8.1 The Council hopes that staff will enjoy watching their favourite sporting events and are taking the above measures to help facilitate this. Staff must, however, remember that they are still bound by their contract of employment, which includes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- 8.2 Staff are reminded that the following acts of misconduct, which can occur when major sporting events take place, are not acceptable and can result in disciplinary action:
- 1) drinking or being under the influence of alcohol at work;
  - 2) taking unauthorised absence from work or wrongfully claiming ill health;
  - 3) committing a criminal act and/or bringing the Council's name into disrepute when watching a sporting event, e.g. hooliganism or being drunk and

disorderly (this can apply even when employees are away from Council premises and off duty).

## **Volunteers for the 2012 London Olympics**

### **Dates of the London Olympics**

The London 2012 Olympic Games run from 27 July 2012 until 12 August 2012, and the London 2012 Paralympic Games run from 29 August 2012 to 9 September 2012.

### **Why Thurrock Council supports volunteers**

Employees who volunteer to work during the Olympic Games can use the skills which they have developed at work to:

- help the community and local area;
- learn new skills, for example leadership qualities;
- improve their morale, physical health and breadth of experience outside work.

### **Volunteering for the Olympic Games**

There are two types of volunteering role:

- 1) specialist (for example, doctors, nurses, sports specialists, doping control officers and press operations staff);
- 2) generalist (for example, stewards, radio operators or athlete escorts).

If an employee has volunteered for a "Games Maker" role, they will be required to attend a 30 minute interview some time between February 2011 to February 2012. They will find out if they have been successful towards the end of 2011.

Successful applicants will need to attend at least three training sessions prior to the Games (from February 2012 onwards).

Games Makers must be available for the duration of the Olympic Games (27 July 2012 to 12 August 2012) and/or the Paralympic Games (29 August 2012 to 9 September 2012). They must volunteer for a minimum of 10 days at either the Olympic Games or the Paralympic Games, or for a minimum of 20 days if they want to volunteer at both.

### **Notifying the Council**

Employees must inform their manager as soon as possible if they have applied for a Games Maker role. This is so that an early discussion can take place about whether a request for time off to attend can realistically be accommodated and if so, how the Council can support the volunteer during the Games.

### **Requests for time off to attend a selection event or training session**

Employees who apply for a Games Maker role will be expected to use their annual leave entitlement to attend the selection interview and any subsequent training sessions prior to the Games.

All annual leave dates must be approved in advance, as per the normal procedure. The employee's manager will endeavour to agree to such requests, subject to the needs of the service.

To avoid disappointment, employees should apply for annual leave as soon as possible after they have been invited to attend selection and training sessions.

### **Requests for time off to volunteer during the Games**

Employees who successfully apply for a Games Maker role will be allowed unpaid leave to cover up to half the number of days they are volunteering for, up to a maximum of 10 days. For example, if an employee is volunteering for 10 days, they will be able to take five days' paid leave out of their normal holiday entitlement, but will be given an extra five days' unpaid leave to complete their volunteering assignment. Alternatively, they may take all of this time off as annual leave, subject to their manager's authorisation.

Employees are required to provide evidence that they have been chosen as a volunteer in order to be granted time off.

To avoid disappointment, employees should apply for annual leave as soon as they receive confirmation of the dates when they are required as volunteers.

### **Carry over of holiday**

Employees who successfully apply for a Games Maker role should be aware of the Council's policy of allowing employees to carry over a maximum of five days' holiday from one holiday year to the next with the approval of their line manager.