

ANNUAL LEAVE PURCHASE SCHEME – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is this Annual Leave Purchase Scheme?

The Annual Leave Purchase Scheme allows staff to 'purchase' extra annual leave with the cost being deducted from their salary over an agreed period. 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 it on when you make the initial application.

Who is the scheme available to?

All members of staff can apply to purchase additional annual leave, whether they are full-time, part-time, temporary or permanent. However, applications must be approved by your Line Manager and the relevant Executive Director/Head of Operations & Delivery/Clinical Board Nurse before you can take the leave.

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.

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

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

What if my plans change and I want to change the date of my additional annual leave?

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. This 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.

I am interested in purchasing additional annual leave – when do I need to apply?

Applications for purchasing additional annual leave in 2023/24 must be submitted to your Line Manager on or before the following dates:

- **Friday 24 February 2023 for repayments over 12 months**
- **Friday 1 September 2023 for repayments over the remaining 6 months of the financial year**
- **Friday 24 November 2023 for repayments over the remaining 3 months of the financial year**

Applications made at other times of the year may be considered in exceptional circumstances but you need to be aware that if the dates you are requesting have already been allocated, your application is unlikely to be approved. All repayments must be made within the 2023/24 financial year (i.e. by 31st March 2024)

How much additional annual leave can I purchase?

You can apply to purchase whole or half shifts up to a maximum 2 weeks based on your own contracted hours in 2023/24. Additional annual leave should be requested in hours in line with the Annual Leave Guidelines.

Do I have to take it all in one go?

No. You are not required to take all 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.

Do you have to use all your annual leave before you can use additional annual leave purchased 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 dates. 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.

What is the difference between additional annual leave and unpaid leave?

Members of staff 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. The costs of purchasing additional annual leave are spread over a twelve, six or three month period whereas unpaid leave is deducted in full from the next months' wages.

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. 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.

What are the tax and NI implications of purchasing additional annual leave?

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

What are the pension implications of purchasing additional annual leave?

Pension Contributions will be deducted on your normal full pay.

What happens if we are given a pay award and it has not been implemented until after the salary deduction payments have been calculated?

The initial salary deduction calculations will have to be revisited to take account of any pay award and the amount of deductions will increase.

If I purchase additional annual leave, will my annual leave entitlement be increased on the ESR system?

Yes, but please note that due to the process followed by the Payroll Department, your annual leave entitlement showing in ESR may not be increased until just prior to the first deduction being made. Please do not contact the Payroll Department prior to this.

What happens, if circumstances outside my control mean that I cannot take the purchased annual 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. Where this is not possible, other options may need to be considered. It must be noted, however, that the purchased leave cannot be sold back to the UHB.

Will the purchase of additional annual leave affect my sick pay?

The 'payments' for additional annual leave will continue for the previously agreed period (i.e. 12, 6 or 3 months) whether you are in work or off sick. If you go onto nil-pay you should contact Payroll for advice on how the repayments can be made.

Will the purchase of additional annual leave impact on my maternity or adoption 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 personalised guidance from People Services 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 the Maternity, Adoption and New Parent Support Leave Procedures.

What will happen if I want to apply for an employment break before I have made all the repayments for additional annual leave?

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

Can I apply to purchase additional annual leave 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 UHB comes to an end before the money is repaid it will be taken from your final monthly salary.

Can I carry over additional annual 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 2023/24 annual leave year, the leave will be lost.

My application to purchase additional annual leave has been rejected. How can I appeal?

On receipt of your application your Line Manager will make a recommendation to the Executive Director/Clinical Board Director of Operations /Clinical Board Director of Nursing. This recommendation will be based on the likely impact additional annual leave will have on the needs of the service during the relevant period and whether or not backfill, temporary or agency cover would be required to cover your absence.

Consideration is then given to the application and your Line Manager's recommendation and the final decision is then made by the Executive Director / Clinical Board Director of Operations /Clinical Board Director of Nursing. This process effectively acts as a built-in appeal for rejected applications and as such there is no requirement for a separate appeal process.

Where can I find out more about the Annual Leave Purchase Scheme?

The rules and procedures, including the approval and request form, can be found on the link below. If you have any other questions you should speak to your line manager in the first instance or contact People Services Team on CAVHR_ActionPoint@wales.nhs.uk

