

Essential Reference Paper "B"

Policy Statement on the closure of council offices on 24 December where Christmas day falls on a Tuesday

Date agreed at Local Joint Panel:	21 March 2018
Date agree at HR Committee:	18 April 2018
Implementation Date:	18 April 2018

Statement

Whenever Christmas day falls on a Tuesday, the council offices will close on 24 December and all staff will be required to take annual leave on that day.

Date	Open/Closed	Comments
Friday 21 December	Open	Normal working day
Saturday 22 December	Closed	Weekend
Sunday 23 December	Closed	Weekend
Monday 24 December	Closed	Enforced closure
Tuesday 25 December	Closed	Public Holiday - Christmas Day
Wednesday 26 December	Closed	Public Holiday - Boxing Day
Thursday 27 December	Open	Normal working day
Friday 28 December	Open	Normal working day

Benefits of closing the office

- Potential of improved health and wellbeing - all employees will be able to have an extended rest break over the Christmas period;
- Promotes the council as a family friendly employer - 24 December is often a time spent with family;
- It will avoid any potential conflict amongst employees over who has annual leave approved on 24 December;
- All of the above could boost staff morale;

- Potential reduction in heating and lighting costs as the offices will not need to be heated/lit on 24 December for 1 day before being closed again for 2 days.

Risks of closing the office

- Potential reputational risk - there will be no face to face services available to customers for 5 consecutive days and on a day that customers might normally expect the council offices to be open;
- Potential complaints from those staff who do not wish to take annual leave over the Christmas period;
- Potential complaints from those staff who do not have annual leave to request and do not wish to be "required" to take leave;
- Some services will need emergency cover to be provided and there may be conflict in the team over who should cover this.

Emergency cover for services

The Leadership Team have considered the impact on services of closing on Christmas Eve and of having such an extended closure period. The usual emergency procedures will be put in place to cover the closure.

Procedure for taking leave on 24 December

In 2018

Where possible, staff should save 1 day of their annual leave entitlement to use on 24 December 2018.

Where staff have already booked, or taken, all of their annual leave entitlement and do not have current annual leave entitlement to take 24 December 2018 as annual leave they may choose one or a combination of the following options:

- Take 1 day from next year's leave entitlement;

- Accrue flexi time in the months preceding December and be able to 'bank' the hours to take 24 December off as flexi leave;
- Use accrued Time off In Lieu (TOIL) and be able to 'bank' it to take the time off on 24 December – this needs to be with the prior approval of the manager and must be in line with service requirements;
- Take unpaid leave.

Future years

For future years where Christmas Day falls on a Tuesday, staff will be required to save one day of their annual leave entitlement to use on 24 December.

Communication

In 2018

As much notice as possible will be given to staff regarding the closure on 24 December 2018 with regular reminders throughout the year.

Future years

Staff will be given a minimum of 10 months' notice of the closure to allow them sufficient time to manage their annual leave accordingly.

Public

The public will be given advance notice as appropriate e.g. notices in reception, on the EHC website etc.