

Leave year-end checklist

For UK employers. Works for any leave year end: 31 December, 31 March, 5 April or each person's start date.

Leave year ending:

Checked by:

8 to 12 weeks before the leave year ends

Find the problems while there is still time to book leave.

- ☐ **Run a balance report for everyone.**

List each person's allowance, leave taken, leave booked and what is left. You can't plan what you can't see.

- ☐ **Find the people with a lot of leave left.**

Unused leave is either lost or carried over, and a rush of bookings in the last month leaves you short-staffed.

- ☐ **Remind them, and their managers, to book it.**

If you don't give people a fair chance to take their leave and tell them it will be lost, they can carry up to 4 weeks into next year anyway.

- ☐ **Check your carryover policy.**

Your contract or handbook says whether none, some or all unused leave carries over, and whether carried days expire. Outside the cases below, only the 1.6 weeks above the basic 4 weeks (and any extra contractual leave) can carry over, and only if an agreement allows it.

- ☐ **Check who has been off sick for a long time.**

Leave they couldn't take because they were sick carries over: up to 4 weeks, to be used within 18 months of the end of the leave year it is for.

- ☐ **Check who has been on maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave.**

Holiday they couldn't take because of family leave must be allowed to carry into the next leave year, whatever your policy says.

- ☐ **Check your irregular-hours and part-year workers.**

For leave years starting on or after 1 April 2024 they can carry up to 5.6 weeks if sickness, family leave or you stopped them taking it. Leave earned in the last pay period needs a plan too: let them take it before it is earned, or agree to carry it.

4 weeks before

Decide what happens to the leave that is still left.

- ☐ **Tell staff to take leave on set days, if you need to.**

You can, as long as you give notice at least twice as long as the leave: 10 days' notice for 5 days off, unless the contract says otherwise.

- ☐ **Answer every outstanding leave request.**

To refuse a request you need to give at least as much notice as the length of the leave asked for, so a request left until the last minute may be too late to turn down.

- ☐ **Decide what you will do with leave that can't be taken.**

You can't pay staff instead of them taking their statutory leave unless they are leaving. It carries over or it is lost, under your policy and the rules above.

- ☐ **Talk to anyone on long-term sick or family leave.**

Agree roughly when they will take their carried leave and put it on their record, so it isn't forgotten when they come back.

In the last week of the leave year

Close the year and write the figures down.

- ☐ **Work out and record each person's carryover.**

Unused leave, capped at your limit, plus any days the law says must carry. This is the figure they start the new year with.

- ☐ **Write down why anyone carried more than your limit.**

Sickness, family leave or a business reason. The note shows the extra days were the law or agreed, not a mistake.

- ☐ **Deal with anyone who has taken more leave than they had.**

You can only take it out of their pay if their contract or a written agreement allows it. Otherwise decide whether to take it off next year's allowance or let it go.

- ☐ **Settle holiday for anyone leaving.**

Leavers must be paid for statutory leave they have earned and not taken, even if they are dismissed for gross misconduct.

When the new leave year starts

Set everyone up so their first booking is against the right figure.

- ☐ **Set everyone's new allowance.**

Include anyone whose days or hours changed, part-time staff, and anyone starting or leaving part-way through the year.

- ☐ **Check the bank holidays in the new year.**

Christmas, New Year and Easter can fall in a different leave year from last time, which changes how many come out of the allowance. Pro-rate them for part-time staff so nobody gains or loses because of the days they work.

- ☐ **Set an expiry date on carried leave, if your policy has one.**

Put the date on each person's record, and remember that carried sickness and family leave follow the legal rules, not your expiry date.

- ☐ **Tell everyone their new balance.**

Their allowance, any carried days and when those expire, so nobody books against a figure they have guessed.

- ☐ **Keep last year's holiday records for 6 years.**

Leave taken, leave carried over, holiday pay and any payment in lieu, kept for at least 6 years from the date they were made.
