

Sick pay and holiday pay

Sickness and holiday can happen at the same time. For example, an employee might:

- take holiday while on sick leave
- become sick while taking holiday

In these circumstances the employer and employee should talk with each other and agree whether:

- the time off will count as sickness or holiday
- the employee will get sick pay or holiday pay

If the employer has a policy on this, they should apply it in a fair and consistent way.

The employer and employee should put what they agree in writing, for example in a letter or email.

Taking holiday while off sick

An employee can use their paid holiday (annual leave) while off sick. For example, if they:

- are not physically able to work, but physically able to take a holiday
- have a mental health condition that might be helped by a holiday
- are off sick long term and a holiday might help with their recovery

It's up to an employee to request holiday while off sick. An employer cannot force an employee to take holiday while off sick.

If the employer approves the employee's holiday request:

- sick leave can be paused while the employee takes holiday
- the employee should get holiday pay while they are on holiday

After the employee has taken the holiday, sick leave can continue if they're still not well enough to return to work.

If an employee is sick on holiday

An employee must report their sickness to their employer if they want to take any holiday as sick leave.

In this case the employee can:

- get [statutory sick pay](#) for the time they were sick – as long as they are entitled to it
- keep the time they were sick to use as holiday another time

Building up holiday entitlement when off sick

Employees 'accrue' (build up) their holiday entitlement as normal when they're off work because of sickness or injury.

Employers can have different rules on how they pay for holiday and sick leave. Employees should check the employment contract or any policy the employer has.

Long-term sick leave

Sick leave is usually considered long term if it lasts longer than 4 weeks.

If someone has not been able to use their holiday because they've been on long-term sick leave, they can carry it over.

Employees on long-term sick leave can carry over 4 weeks' unused holiday entitlement, unless the employer allows more to be carried over. This holiday must be used within 18 months from the date it's carried over.

An employee might not need to carry over any unused holiday. For example, if they return from sick leave and still have enough of the holiday year left to use their holiday.

[Find out more about holiday entitlement](#)

Irregular hours workers and part-year workers

There are different rules about sickness and holiday for irregular hours workers and part-year workers.

Someone is an irregular hours worker if, under their contract in that year, the number of hours they work in each 'pay period' is wholly or mostly variable. A pay period is how often someone gets paid, for example weekly or monthly.

Someone is a part-year worker if their contract:

- says they are required to work only part of that year
- says there are periods of at least a week when they are not required to work and which they are not paid for
- is in place all year around, including when they're not working

[Find out more about holiday and sickness for irregular hours workers and part-year workers](#)

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