# Human Resources Guidance

## Special Events Guidance

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Introduction

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service recognises that employees may wish to take time off from work at or around the time of major national or sporting events and that this may be very important to some individuals.

This document provides guidance for managers and employees on what arrangements may be accessed when a sporting or other special event is taking place, for example the 2012 Olympic Games, the football or rugby World Cup, or a wedding or funeral of national significance.

Any arrangements agreed for employees and/or flexibility in working hours implemented for the duration of the event will be temporary measures, and subject to service and operational requirements.

Time off work

Employees who wish to take time off work around the time of a special event should book annual leave in the normal way, as set out in the Annual Leave Guidance. Where possible it is advisable for employees to apply for such annual leave well in advance of the event.

Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service will, whenever possible, seek to grant the time off that employees request. However, employees should note that the service must maintain a minimum level of staffing at all times for both operational and safety reasons. It follows that if a manager receives a large number of requests for annual leave at the same time, some of them may have to be refused. In these circumstances, managers will endeavour to be as fair as possible to all staff.

For further guidance please see the [Annual Leave and Time Off](https://www.cumbriafire.gov.uk/annual-leave-and-time) page on the CFRS website

Flexibility in working time

During special events Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service will, subject to service and operational requirements, permit flexibility in the start and finish times for employees who wish it for the duration of a the event. For events that begin around midday, employees may request to take a longer lunch-break with working time being made up as appropriate. Similarly, if an event is scheduled to begin in the late afternoon/early evening, managers may permit employees to leave work earlier.

For further guidance please see the [Annual Leave and Time Off](https://www.cumbriafire.gov.uk/annual-leave-and-time) page on the CFRS website.

Employees may also request a shift swap. They can, with their line manager’s permission, swap one of more shifts with a colleague, subject always to health and safety provisions regarding working time.

Although flexibility in working time will be granted whenever possible, employees must understand that there may be business-based reasons why it cannot be granted. If that is the case, employees will be notified of this and required to continue to work normally.

Employees should note that any variations to working time, however minor, require the prior approval of their line manager.

Unauthorised Absence

Levels of attendance at work are monitored, and any employee who is absent from work without permission and who does not subsequently provide medical evidence or some other acceptable explanation for his/her absence may be subject to formal disciplinary action.

For further guidance please refer to the [Disciplinary Procedure](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cumbriafire.gov.uk%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2025-02%2FDisciplinary%2520Procedure%2520FINAL.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK).

Facilities for watching the event at work

A number of fire stations have access to a television which employees may also be able to view. In these circumstances employees must nevertheless always obtain permission from their line manager before leaving their workstation to watch the event at work. Time off to watch the event will be granted only where it does not cause any disruption to the service or operational requirements, or inconvenience to customers or other employees. Where employees are permitted to watch the event on television, they will be required to do so in their own time.

Similarly, employees may have the facility to watch live streamed media on their pc, subject to line manager approval. However, a substantial increase in users may increase the load on the network and have an adverse effect on the service’s IT systems. The ability to watch live streamed media may be withdrawn if critical systems are being affected and causing performance issues.

For further guidance please refer to [Cumbria County Council Information Systems Acceptable Use Policy](http://www.intouch.ccc/business-resources/ictpartnership/ict2011/Servicesagilisysprovide/default.asp).

Drinking or being under the influence of alcohol or substances at work

Where Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service has provided access for employees to a television in a communal area at the time of a major sporting tournament or other special event, employees will **not under any circumstances** be permitted to bring any alcoholic beverages with them to drink while watching the event.

The Substance Misuse policy confirms that being unfit for work through alcohol or substance use will be addressed through the disciplinary or performance management procedure.

Please refer to the [Substance Misuse Policy](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cumbriafire.gov.uk%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2024-01%2FSubstance%2520Misuse%2520Policy%2520-%2520FINAL.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)