

Non-availability for full duties – posting policy

New policy number:	211
Old instruction number:	PER:H010:c1
Issue date:	16 December 1996
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Owner:	Assistant Director, People Services
Responsible work team:	Policy, Pay and Reward

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The policy sets out the Brigade's arrangements for an establishment control mechanism for the management of personnel unavailable for full duties on account of sickness and/or light duties for extended periods, i.e. 6 months or more (excluding maternity or fertility treatment related). This policy applies to watch-based operational staff up to and including the role of station officer. Other operational personnel may lose their base post after six months sickness and/or light duties, but will be dealt with individually.
- 1.2 This policy complements the supportive arrangements set out Policy number 1005 – Supporting health and wellbeing policy for staff, absent sick and assist a return to full duty
- 1.3 As a front-line emergency service, the Brigade must ensure that the services it provides to the public are not affected by the non-availability of personnel. The Brigade will therefore take appropriate resource management measures to ensure that appliances remain on the run and that service delivery is not jeopardised by the non-availability of personnel and that the need for temporary staffing cover is kept to a minimum.
- 1.4 This policy should be applied in line with the Brigade's values:
 - Service – We put the public first.
 - Courage – We step up to the challenge.
 - Learning – We listen so that we can improve.
 - Teamwork – We work together and include everyone.
 - Equity – We treat everyone fairly according to their needs.
 - Integrity – We act with honesty.

2 Non-availability for full duties - postings

Staff on extended sick leave and/or light duties

- 2.1 If you are absent from full duties for an extended period on account of sickness, light duties, or a combination of both, beyond 6 months, or who have been declared permanently unfit, you will cease to be held against your base posting and will be transferred, substantively, to the relevant area sick pool or area light duty pool.
- 2.2 The deputy assistant commissioner (DAC) will have the discretion to defer or not proceed with the transfer where there is information or advice available that a return to full duties is imminent or there are other substantial reasons why the transfer should not take place.
- 2.3 In the event that you returns to full duties within 6 months but resume sick leave or Light Duties within a short period, the aggregate period will be taken into account in deciding whether you will be transferred to the area sick/light duty pool.
- 2.4 Managerial responsibility for absence monitoring and management where you are transferred to an area sick/light duty pool remains with the station commander of the base station, unless it is decided by the DAC that the responsibility for maintaining regular contact, and managing the sickness case, should sit with another manager (e.g. the area team leader who manages LD cases) to aid with the management continuity of the case. When you are transferred from your base station, the line management responsibility should be formally agreed.
- 2.5 Where you are transferred to the area sick/light duty pool it will be necessary to ensure that your personal effects contained in lockers are kept secure. If it is not possible to store personal effects

at the same location a suitable alternative will be decided upon by the station commander. At this stage, you will be notified of that location and given the opportunity to collect your personal belongings. In the event that personal effects are relocated the appropriate steps to maintain security will be taken.

- 2.6 You will be formally notified by People Services when you are posted.
- 2.7 Once the transfer has been affected, the DAC will fill the ensuing vacancy at the substantive role wherever possible.

3 Return to duty

- 3.1 On return to full duties following a period of extended absence then you will be posted to a station or other permanent posting by the Establishment and Performance Team (EPT) taking account of your qualifications, skills and experience. You will have no automatic right of return to your former base posting.
- 3.2 When you have been on long-term sick leave and have been posted to the area sick pool, you are not to return to work to their previous base station. You are required to inform your contact manager (as outlined above) that you intend to return to work, giving as much notice as reasonably possible. The contact manager will make arrangements for you to return to work initially on light duties. When the contact manager is satisfied that you can return to full duties, they will contact EPT who will identify a suitable posting, and make the necessary arrangements for you to be posted.
- 3.3 Whilst consideration will be given to your wishes on your return to full duties, the requirements of the service will take priority in any decision regarding posting. Nothing in this procedure precludes you requesting that you be transferred back to your former base posting once a suitable vacancy arises. Such requests will be given sympathetic consideration taking into account the circumstances of the absence, and in so far as the exigencies of the service permit, and they should be forwarded to the DAC for consideration via your contact manager, in consultation with the EPT.

4 Records

- 4.1 Please send records by email to RecordsServices@london-fire.gov.uk. Records will be kept on your electronic personal record file (e-prf) and retained in accordance with Policy number 788 - Electronic personal record file. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with Policy number 351 – Data protection and privacy policy.

5 Help and support

- 5.1 Please contact the HR Helpdesk on extension 89100 option 3 and by email to IT.HR@london-fire.gov.uk.
- 5.2 This policy may also be available on request in other alternative accessible formats as set out in Policy number 290 – Guidance note on translation and interpretation. Please contact Communications on extension 30753 and by email to communications.team@london-fire.gov.uk to discuss your needs and options.
- 5.3 The Brigade invites your engagement so that it can learn so if you have a suggestion that can improve this policy then please submit your idea via the Staff Suggestion Scheme on Hotwire as set out in [Policy number 887](#) – Staff suggestion scheme. Any changes do need to go through the agreed engagement, consultation, negotiation or governance requirements.

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	25/04/24	SDIA	L – 06/05/25	HSWIA	02/05/25	RA	N/A
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Reference to Policy Number 712 has been added in place of the Absence control procedure as this has replaced PN209	02/06/2010
Pages 2 and 3 Paras 3 and 4	Sections rewritten in line with current procedures. Please read through these sections to familiarise yourself with the content.	23/12/2010
Page 4	SIA date added.	10/01/2014
Page 4	Subject list and FOIA exemptions tables.	28/10/2014
Throughout	Reflecting changes in Brigade absence management processes.	07/06/2017
Throughout	Role to rank changes made to content.	15/10/2019
Page 1	Owner title changed from 'Head of Human Resource Management' to 'Assistant Director, People Services'.	23/07/2020
Throughout	Changes made to team, department and organisation name due to the abolition of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.	
Throughout	This policy has been reviewed as current with no changes necessary.	23/10/2020
Throughout	All references made to being away from full duties for 3 months leading to a loss of a base posting, amended to 6 months.	01/10/2022
Page 1	A reference to the 'Managing Attendance Policy' replaced by 'Supporting health and wellbeing policy'.	28/03/2023
Page 4	SDIA and HSWIA dates added to this page.	02/06/2023
Page 2, para 1-2 Page 3 para 4-5	Introduction consolidated. Records and Help and support details added,	30/10/2023
Page 2 para 1.1, para 1.4	Reference to fertility treatment added. Values included.	25/03/2024
Page 3, para 4.1 Page 3, para 5.2	Data protection details added. Access to alternative policy format details added.	19/04/2024
Page 4	Equality impact assessment date updated.	26/04/2024

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Page 3, para 4.1 and para 5.3	Records Services and Staff Suggestion scheme details added.	30/05/2024
Throughout	Reviewed and updated against 2025 Grey Book 7th edition.	15/05/2025
Page 1, para 1.1	Resource Management Center removed.	10/07/2025

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Sickness	Light duties
Employment	Duties

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification