

## Use it - don't lose it!

A survey carried out by YouGov, on behalf of Acas, found that staff at both small businesses and large organisations were likely to have taken less time off since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**New findings by Acas** show that almost two-fifths (39 per cent) of UK staff have taken less paid time off since the pandemic began, with Acas encouraging staff to use up their holiday. This was more prevalently seen among employees at small to medium-sized businesses, with almost half (44%) reporting they were either a "little less likely" or a "lot less likely" to have taken paid time off. However, this was similarly seen at large organisations too, with over a third (35%) stating the same.

Conversely, just 5% overall felt they had taken more time off compared to the same period in an average year. Acas has advised that taking time off work is beneficial, allowing employees to be well-rested and maintain their physical and mental health. The body has urged workers to use their holiday entitlement within their current leave year, where possible.



In response to the pandemic, the government introduced a law allowing employees and workers to carry over up to 4 weeks' statutory paid holiday into their next two holiday leave years.

This law applies to any holiday that staff do not take due to Covid-19. However, Acas has advised that staff try and make paid holiday requests throughout their holiday year. It states that this should be done as soon as possible to allow employers to plan for staff cover.

In addition, if holiday plans do change unexpectedly due to Covid-19, the public body states staff should be encouraged to contact their employers immediately to organise alternative time off.

Susan Clews, Acas Chief Executive, said: "Our poll findings are unsurprising as many workers may have taken advantage of a new law introduced last year, which allows them to carry over most of their paid time off into this year."

While easing pandemic restrictions is good news for many businesses, many staff will be keen to use up the leave they have saved up to take advantage of the summer season – which could cause a potential headache for employers if they end up with a backlog of staff wanting to take leave at the same time.

Employees should therefore agree to any holiday plans with their managers, so that any necessary staff cover can be arranged, and also keep the employer updated on any Covid-related developments that could impact work – such as travel quarantine or being asked to self-isolate.

**For further guidance, contact the IHRS team today and take the worry out of your day. Email [HRhelp@ihrsolutions.co.uk](mailto:HRhelp@ihrsolutions.co.uk), call 01604 709509 or visit the [website](#).**

## About the Author

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Laura is a HR professional with 20 years' experience with Financial Services, the majority of which has been within insurance. In her role with UKGI Group, Laura provides objective support to firms on employment law and HR issues. She uses her interpersonal skills and knowledge to work with firms to help them develop strong and resilient HR strategies and establish healthy organisational cultures. Laura's clients receive personalised support with a real can-do approach.

Laura is an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). She holds a Diploma Professional Development Scheme.

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