

Freedom of Information request: Reference number FOI2026/00628

Date of request: 02 June 2026

Request:

I am writing to request information regarding LFBs policies, procedures and statistical data concerning the application of compassionate leave across all staff categories.

Specifically, I am seeking data to understand how line manager discretion is monitored to ensure fairness and consistency across different stations, role and departments.

For each of the last three financial years (2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26) please provide the following information:

What was the total number of compassionate leave requests submitted by staff, and how many were approved?

Please provide a breakdown of the average number of compassionate leave days granted per approved request, categorized by uniformed operational staff vs non uniformed staff.

What was the highest number of compassionate leave days granted for the death of a relative and the lowest days granted for compassionate circumstance during the last 24 months?

How many requests for compassionate leave were refused by line managers in the last 3 financial years?

For all refused requests, how many requests were due to manager discretion?

How many formal grievances, or internal disputes have been logged by LFB personnel on compassionate or special leave since 2023?

Is there a centralized HR review or audit process to monitor line manager decisions on compassionate leave for fairness and consistency?

Response:

By way of background, LFB's Special Leave and Public Duties Leave policy is published online and can be accessed using the following link:

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/q4bhw1qv/pn0512-020426.pdf>

Our People Services department have let me know that 'compassionate leave' categories are those listed in the table in Appendix 1 of this policy as (a), (b), (c) and (f).

Based on the above, please see the response to each of your requests in turn below:

For each of the last three financial years (2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26) please provide the following information:

What was the total number of compassionate leave requests submitted by staff, and how many were approved?

LFB's Data and Improvement team have let me know that they are limited in what they can provide in relation to this request. This is due to the way in which Special Leave is currently recorded. LFB's Data and Improvement team can only report on the number of periods of compassionate leave taken which has been recorded on StARS (the LFB roster system). They have no means of capturing data on how many requests have been submitted in total, as only those that are approved are recorded on StARS.

The data below represents the total of periods of compassionate leave that have commenced in each Financial Year, recorded as special leave on the LFB Roster System (StARS). Compassionate Leave is defined by Special Leave recorded under the following categories: death of a close relative / next of kin; funeral of a close relative / next of kin; serious illness of a close relative / next of kin; cancer screening (operational staff only):

Occupational Group	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Operational Staff	1,533	1,627	1,384	4,544
Control Staff	17	24	42	83
FRS Staff	154	235	209	598
Total	1,704	1,886	1,635	5,225

Please provide a breakdown of the average number of compassionate leave days granted per approved request, categorized by uniformed operational staff vs non uniformed staff.

The data below represents the average length of any periods of compassionate leave that have commenced within each Financial Year.

Occupational Group	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Operational Staff	1.34	1.31	1.26	1.30
Control Staff	2.12	1.58	1.64	1.72
FRS Staff	1.88	1.96	2.02	1.96
Total	1.40	1.39	1.37	1.39

What was the highest number of compassionate leave days granted for the death of a relative and the lowest days granted for compassionate circumstance during the last 24 months?

The data below represents the maximum length of any periods of compassionate leave due to death of close relative / next of kin which have commenced within each Financial Year.

Occupational Group	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Operational Staff	5	4	4	5
Control Staff	9	5	4	9
FRS Staff	8	26	12	26
Total	9	26	12	26

How many requests for compassionate leave were refused by line managers in the last 3 financial years?

LFB's Data and Improvement team can only report on the number of periods of compassionate leave taken which has been recorded on StARS (the LFB roster system). They have no means of capturing data on how many requests have been refused, or rejected, in total, as only those that are approved are recorded on

For all refused requests, how many requests were due to manager discretion?

LFB People Services department have let me know that all requests are subject to managerial approval.

How many formal grievances, or internal disputes have been logged by LFB personnel on compassionate or special leave since 2023?

LFB's PSU (Professional Standards Unit) have let me know that they are unable to run a report, from their system that can identify and grievances raised that specifically relate to compassionate or special leave requests. To obtain the information you have requested they would have to manually check all grievance cases to locate and extract any data that relates to compassionate or special leave requests.

PSU have a record of around 370 total grievance cases since 2023. PSU have let us know that to locate and review a grievance case manually to see if compassionate or special leave request information was recorded, then extract that data you have requested, would take a minimum of 10 minutes per grievance case.

If PSU used a minimum of 10 minutes (370 cases), it will take 61.7 hours (10 minutes times 370 records, divided by 60 minutes equals 61.7 hours) to review all the relevant records, retrieve and extract the information. I therefore confirm that the cost of providing the information you have requested is in the cost range of £1,542 which is greater than the "appropriate limit" of £450 as defined the FOIA fee regulations. In setting this out in full this now serves as a formal 'refusal notice' for this part of your request based on section 12 of the FOIA. As you may be aware, if the cost exceeds the appropriate limit to comply with a request, a public authority is not obliged to comply with it. If you can further refine this part of your request then please let us know however, please do bear in the mind the manual nature of any search that may need to be carried out to obtain this information as detailed above.

Is there a centralized HR review or audit process to monitor line manager decisions on compassionate leave for fairness and consistency?

LFB People Services department have let me know that LFB Area Teams support the managers with the application of the special leave policy for fairness and consistency. Please note that a new HR review process is being introduced as part of a wider policy review.