

Career Break and Sabbatical Procedure

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Career Break and Sabbatical Procedure

1 Introduction

The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) realises that, during their working life, staff will encounter times when personal commitments take priority over work in the short or medium term. The purpose of the career break scheme is to retain skilled and experienced staff, who wish to take a break from work, but who intend to resume their careers within the Trust at a later date. It is also intended that the scheme will offer support to staff who may need a break from employment in order to balance the demands of working, with home and personal responsibilities in order to help facilitate greater work-life balance.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a consistent and equitable approach to the management of career breaks and sabbaticals requests.

It also aims to inform staff and managers of when career breaks may be appropriate and the normal terms and conditions applying to such breaks.

3 Scope

This procedure applies to staff employed by the Trust.

The procedure does not apply to staff engaged through the Trust bank.

4 Definitions

Career break

An unpaid period of time away from work which can be for up to five years.

Sabbatical

Authorised paid leave that is awarded to give staff time and space to undertake research or developmental activities that have a positive impact on the Trust's reputation.

5 Duties and responsibilities

Staff are responsible for making timely applications for either a career break or to take a sabbatical. This is so that managers can carefully consider the request and plan how they might cover a gap.

Managers are responsible for considering applications and ensuring that the human resources department are notified in a timely way.

Directors will be responsible for approving, in consultation with the head of discipline, any requests for a paid sabbatical.

Human resources will process any approved applications for career breaks or sabbaticals and ensure that the appropriate contractual documentation is prepared and payroll is notified.

6 Procedures

Career Breaks

Eligibility

Anyone with 12 months continuous service with the Trust can apply for a career break. Eligible staff can take a career break for up to 5 years.

The break can be taken for any reason, but ordinarily the individual should not work for another employer. Volunteering and working overseas is permitted, however.

Contractual and statutory entitlements

Staff are not entitled to annual leave, sick pay, maternity / adoption related benefits, injury allowances while on career breaks.

Provided staff return to work, the period of career break will be counted towards continuous service for **statutory purposes**. Pension contributions will not continue but when staff return to work, they will be able to re-join the scheme and may purchase added years subject to arrangements and conditions of the NHS pension scheme.

Contractual annual leave accruals, redundancy payments, leave entitlements, increments are not statutory entitlements and will be suspended for the period of the break.

Even though an employee might satisfy all the criteria for applying for a career break, they should not assume that it will automatically be approved. Managers will need to consider, carefully, how the individuals post can be covered during the career break and what impact their absence might have be it for clinical continuity or other genuine business reasons.

To apply for a career break, staff will need to complete and sign the career break form. Please see **Appendix B**.

Returning to work following a career break

Staff who take a career break for one year or less will be entitled to return to the role that they held prior to the career break.

If a career break is to last longer than one year then the member of staff will be entitled to return to a role which offers suitable or alternative employment for them. This may not necessarily be the same role that they vacated.

When staff have return to work, they may be expected to undergo a period of refresher training. Managers should ensure that they discuss training needs with staff on their return.

Organisational change during career breaks

Where organisation change take places the Trust will ensure that any staff on career break are informed of the changes and given the opportunity to contribute to any consultation process. This will include having the opportunity to meet or speak with their line manager about the implications of the proposed change and what will happen to them on their return to work, if an appropriate post is available.

Sabbaticals

Sabbatical leave is valuable and important to the Trust both for specific projects, enhancing research or developing new models of care and to give a member of staff the opportunity to develop in their role.

Requests for paid sabbatical leave should be made to the relevant service line manager, head of discipline and a director who forms part of the management team using the form in appendix C. The three managers will consider the feasibility of the proposal and its relevance to the trust's overall strategy. The management team director will be responsible for authorising whether a sabbatical can be taken or not.

The maximum length of sabbatical leave that may be granted is one month. A timetable will be assigned to the proposal, and evidence of completed work or project will need to be submitted.

Sabbatical leave is available in addition to study leave and the main difference between sabbatical leave and study leave is that sabbatical leave can be used for work which requires a longer period of time set-aside to focus, alone or with a colleague, and is being completed for the benefit of the Trust. While this leave will also benefit the individual, the exact work being undertaken must directly benefit the Trust. Staff might apply for sabbatical leave in order to:-

- develop and write papers, e.g. for major conferences
- work on book chapters or to edit a book
- write up research findings
- write peer reviewed articles (for staff holding university appointments)
- collaborative work -writing, research, presentations
- as part of a contribution to the public profile of the Trust – this could be in the form of seminars or media events

At the end of the sabbatical period, in addition to any outputs from the work undertaken, the member of staff will be required to provide a brief report on the details of the sabbatical given and the benefits gained.

7 Training Requirements

There are no specific training requirements attached to this procedure, however, where managers are unclear about the application then they can speak to an HR adviser who will help with interpreting the requirements.

8 Process for monitoring compliance with this Procedure

The HR department will annually audit the number of staff on career break and ensure that these are monitored and managers are informed when breaks are due to come to an end.

9 References

NHS Employers (2016). *NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook [online]*. London. NHS Confederation. Available from: <http://www.nhsemployers.org/tchandbook> [accessed on 14 August 2017].

10 Associated documents¹

None

¹ For the current version of Trust procedures, please refer to the intranet.

Appendix A : Equality Analysis

Completed by	Craig de Sousa
Position	Director of Human Resources
Date August	14 August 2017

The following questions determine whether analysis is needed	Yes	No
Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?		X
Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how Trust services are delivered?	X	
Will the policy have a significant effect on how partner organisations operate in terms of equality?		X
Does the policy relate to functions that have been identified through engagement as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	X	
Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?		X
Does the policy relate to any equality objectives that have been set by the Trust?		X
Other?		X

If the answer to *all* of these questions was no, then the assessment is complete.

If the answer to *any* of the questions was yes, then undertake the following analysis:

	Yes	No	Comment
Do policy outcomes and service take-up differ between people with different protected characteristics?		X	
What are the key findings of any engagement you have undertaken?		X	
If there is a greater effect		X	

on one group, is that consistent with the policy aims?			
If the policy has negative effects on people sharing particular characteristics, what steps can be taken to mitigate these effects?		X	
Will the policy deliver practical benefits for certain groups?	X		It allows those with caring or parental responsibilities to take time away from work.
Does the policy miss opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations?		X	
Do other policies need to change to enable this policy to be effective?		X	
Additional comments			

If one or more answers are yes, then the policy may unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 –seek advice from Human Resources.

Appendix B : Career Break Application Form

Career Break Application Form

Name	
Department / Team	
Service Line	
Directorate	

I wish to apply for a career break which will be between:

From		To	
------	--	----	--

I confirm that by submitting this application that I have full read the career break and sabbatical leave procedure and understand that if this break is less than one year I will return to the role I vacated when the break commenced or if it is longer than one year that I will return to a suitable / alternative post.

By checking this box it acts as your signature	
--	--

For use by the line manager

I confirm that this career break application has been approved		
Name		
Job Title		
Date		

Appendix C : Sabbatical Leave Application

Sabbatical Leave Application Form

Name	
Department / Team	
Service Line	
Directorate	

I wish to apply for a sabbatical which will be between:

From		To	
------	--	----	--

The purpose of my sabbatical is to:

--

I can confirm that the information provided above is accurate and true.

By checking this box it acts as your signature	
--	--

For use by the line manager

I confirm that this career break application has been approved		
Name		
Job Title		
Date		