

Career Break



How do I?

- Fill out Application Form ([Career Break Application Form](#)). Ensure that the conditions for Career Break are met.
- Criteria that Managers use to assess applications is below.
- If approved, career break is to be logged under 'My Leave Requests' in ESS by the employee

Summary

The Council is committed to supporting work-life balance. The aims of the Career Break Policy are to attract, retain and motivate staff by demonstrating a commitment to their long-term career and personal development. This policy sets out the process for employees who want to take the opportunity of an extended period of unpaid leave. A career break can improve retention rates of skilled and experienced employees, who are happier and more productive in the workplace on their return.

Career break conditions

All employees are eligible to apply for a career break provided that:

- they have completed at least a year's service
- they are not currently subject to formal action under capability, discipline or absence procedures
- they confirm that they intend to return to their post at the end of the career break
- their post has not been formally identified as "at risk" due to reorganisation

All career breaks will be subject to operational requirements and should be agreed at Director level and in discussion with the relevant HR Business Partner for your directorate.

Employees may apply for a career break of between 1-12 months. Very exceptionally, an extension beyond the 12-month period may be possible by mutual agreement.

A career break may be taken in addition to family leave.

Taking up paid employment with another employer is not allowed during a career break, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If this condition is breached, the career break will be terminated and the employee will be required to resign or return to their post.

An employee may apply to take more than one career break period, but there would normally be at least three years between each period.

Possible reasons for a career break might include:

- Childcare responsibilities
- Eldercare responsibilities
- Travel
- Study
- Personal or professional development
- To pursue a personal interest
- Voluntary work
- Accompanying a partner who has been temporarily relocated for work purposes

Terms and Conditions during a career break

For the duration of the career break, the employee will benefit from a continued contractual relationship by being "retained as an employee", with the right to maintain unbroken service and the right to return to the same post at the end of the career break.

The following terms and conditions will apply:

- Continuity of service
- Notice periods
- Statutory redundancy rights
- Statutory parental leave pay
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures

Career breaks are unpaid and will not count towards the following contractual rights:

- Annual leave
- Sick leave
- Step ups
- Long service leave
- Family Leave and pay (Periods of unpaid leave can potentially affect family leave pay. Please contact the IBC to check whether your entitlement is affected)
- Calculation of continuous service for contractual redundancy

- Pension contributions

If you have an outstanding season ticket loan, it must be repaid prior to the start of a career break.

As annual leave is automatically calculated by IBC each year and allocated to an employee in April, this will need to be **manually adjusted by the manager** to show the revised leave quota as leave is not accrued whilst on a career break. The revised leave quota will not be automatically recalculated on IBC. Managers need to be aware that a career break may span two leave years so this action may need to be repeated.

If a career break is agreed, there is no automatic entitlement to an extension of the break. A fresh request will need to be made and considered by the line manager.

Pension

A career break does not qualify as recognisable service for pension purposes and will affect future pension entitlements. Unpaid contributions during this period may affect your pension benefits.

On your return to work you can elect to pay pension contributions to maintain continuity of service. You will need to pay employee and employer's contributions. Please contact the IBC within 30 days of your return for more details of how to do this.

Keeping in touch

Your manager is expected to keep you up to date of any relevant information, usually by email or telephone. We recommend you discuss with your manager before commencing your career break, the level of contact that you wish to have during your break.

Organisational changes during a career break

If organisational changes occur while you are on a career break, your manager will ensure that you are involved in any consultation process on the same basis as all other affected employees.

Returning to work

A predicted return date must be agreed between employee and line manager before the career break starts.

Employees have a right to return to the same post held before the career break, subject to any organisational change that may happen during the career break.

You can request to return early or extend the career break but this will be at the discretion of the line manager, taking into account service needs and the effect on any employees covering the role. You must give 8 week's notice, in writing, if you wish to change your return to work date to enable the necessary arrangements to be put in place. If agreed with your manager, you can amend the return to work date via the My Leave History tab.

When you return to work your line manager will:

- Hold a return-to-work meeting with you, and undertake a training needs analysis where appropriate,
- There is no need to take any action with IBC unless the date of return to work changes.

Resignation during a career break

If an employee decides to resign during a career break, they must submit their resignation to their line manager. The contract of employment will normally cease from the date when the resignation is received, i.e. it is not expected that a notice period will be worked.

Application procedure

Applications for career breaks should

- be submitted in writing, using the Career Break Form, to your line manager,
- give 3 months notice prior to the requested leave,
- clearly outline in the application the reason for the career break and provide supporting evidence where relevant.

Your Manager will take into account the following:

- Circumstances of the request
- Current and projected needs of the service
- Length of period requested
- Consideration of any outstanding work commitments
- Potential benefits to the council e.g. avoidance of burnout/retention of employee, potential increase in skills and experience
- Ability to cover role while the employee is absent, impact on others and on the service,

You will be notified of the outcome of your application, or will be requested to provide further information to support your request, within 14 days of submitting the request; Where a request is refused, you will be given clear reasons for the refusal.

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