

# Career Policy

*We will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, on tape or in another non-written format.*

## **Introduction:**

Wheatley Care recognises that many people, at some stage in their working life, require to take time off work for a number of reasons.

The basis of a career break is that an employee is **guaranteed** re-employment with the organisation at the end of the break, provided that the employee has adhered to the terms and conditions of the scheme.

## **Eligibility:**

To be eligible for a Career Break employees' must

- have completed at least 2 years' continuous service
- have a satisfactory performance record
- have a satisfactory attendance record
- have a valid and substantiated reason for application
- indicate a firm intention to return to work

Each case will be considered on its own merits in light of personal circumstances and the organisation's operational needs and our ability to provide adequate cover for the post being vacated.

## **Length of Career Break:**

A career break is available for a minimum of **3 months** to a maximum period of **3 years**.

No more than two career breaks may normally be taken by any employee. Anyone who takes a career break must return to work at least 2 years between each break.

## **Application Procedure:**

An application for a career break must be made to the Section Head at least **3 months** before the date on which the career break is due to start. The employee should complete, in full, a Career Break Form, a proforma of which is attached to this policy.

The section head will discuss the application with the Director of Wheatley Care and confirmation of acceptance or non-acceptance will be made in writing, to the employee, within a reasonable timescale. The Director of Wheatley Care decision is final and there is no right of appeal.

Reasons for non acceptance will include not meeting all of the eligibility criteria

detailed above and the organisation being satisfied that the cover being provided for the vacant post is adequate to ensure that the organisation's operational needs continue to be met.

#### **Effects on Terms and Conditions of Employment:**

- a. During your period of leave of absence you have no entitlement to payment of salary, sick pay or other benefits. You are entitled to 5.6 weeks' statutory leave, 5.6 weeks' pro-rata for compressed hours' rotas and nine day fortnights in accordance with the working time regulations.
- b. This statutory holiday entitlement cannot be carried over to another leave year, nor payment made in lieu. To receive payment for holidays you must give notice to your line manager. The notice period must be at least twice as long as the period of leave requested. For example, if requesting two weeks leave, four weeks' notice must be provided.
- c. The period of unpaid leave of absence will not be considered as reckonable service under the occupational pension scheme. However, in the event that pension contributions are made for the period of unpaid leave of absence, it will be treated as reckonable service. On the employee's return to full time work continuity of employment will be recognised.
- d. Pension & Death Benefit Scheme - The Death Benefit shall continue to apply during your period of leave of absence and shall be calculated by reference to your earnings immediately before such period of absence commenced.

Upon return from a leave of absence the employee will be entitled to make good on contributions to the organisation's Pension & Death Benefit Scheme omitted during the leave of absence within a period agreed by the Scheme Trustees. In such case, the organisation shall also pay, over the same period, the contributions it would have been liable to pay during the leave of absence.

- e. Redundancy - If a redundancy situation should occur during a career break, the employee will be contacted, in writing, and the organisation's redundancy procedure will be followed.

### **Commitments while on the Career Break:**

- a. Employees who take a career break of 6 months-3 years must undertake at least 5 full working days within the organisation. These can either be worked in a block of 5 days or spread over 5 weeks.
- b. Employees will also be required to attend any relevant training courses or seminars within the career break.

Employees should advise their Section head, in writing, of their proposed work experience dates at least 10 days prior to returning to work.

Payment will be made through the monthly payroll on a pro-rata basis according to the actual number of hours worked. Payment will be based on the previous full-time salary, adjusted to take account of across-the-board awards only.

### **Maintaining Contact:**

Employees will discuss with their line manager what contact if any will be maintained. A monthly information pack containing any circulars, newsletters and other relevant material will be sent to any employee on a career break.

### **Alternative Employment:**

- a. The period of unpaid leave of absence is granted on the understanding that the employee will not take up any full time work during this period. If an employee considers taking up full time work during their career break they must have prior approval from their service/section manager. Failure to do so will result in this being dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedures.
- b. The employee may accept part-time work of 14 hours per week or less. However, prior to accepting this they must obtain written consent from the organisation. Failure to do so will result in this being dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedures.

### **RETURNING TO WORK:**

Every effort will be made to return the employee to their original service and post where possible upon returning from a career break.

Employees must give 8 weeks' notice, in writing, to the Service Manager/Section Head of their intended date to return to work.

Any request for an early return from a career break should be made by the employee to his/her section head giving at least one month's notice and explaining clearly the reasons behind the early return request.

Unless a postponement has been agreed, if an employee fails to return to work on the completion of their career break then this will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedures.

**Postponing the date of return:**

a. **By Wheatley Care:**

If there are no suitable vacancies the organisation may postpone the date of return for up to **28 days**. The employee will be informed of the revised date in writing. If the organisation postpones the date of return, this will not affect the date of continuous service.

b. **By the employee on Medical Grounds:**

The employee may postpone the date of return by a maximum of **28 days**, based upon medical grounds. If any employee is unable to return to work after this period, this will be dealt with under the organisation's promoting attendance policy and procedures.

**WHEATLEY CARE APPLICATION FOR A CAREER BREAK**

**FULL NAME:**.....

**DATE EMPLOYED:**.....

**PRESENT POSITION & SECTION:**.....

**I would like to start a Career Break on ...../...../..... and would like the break to last for ..... months / years\* (\*delete as appropriate)**

**The reason(s) for requesting a career break is:**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Signed:**..... **Date:** ...../...../.....

**Chief Executive's Decision:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Signed**..... **Date**.....