

Appendix C

Sabbatical Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose this policy is to outline the Council's sabbatical provisions for those employees that wish to take an extended leave of unpaid absence.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Council employees with the exception of teachers directly employed by the council and all staff appointed by schools operating under local management of schools, which have their own policy. The policy does not apply to agency workers or contractors working in the Council.

3. General Principles

The aim of this policy is to promote a healthy work life balance as well as to encourage employees to have a long term career with the Council. This policy sets out how employees have an opportunity to leave their current post for an extended period of time with the intention that they can return to work with no detriment to their career.

For employees who want to take a break of less than 3 months then please refer to the Leave and Time Off Policy as a break of less than 3 months is not defined as a sabbatical.

Sabbaticals are available for employees who wish to: (this list is not exhaustive)

- Travel or volunteer abroad;
- Care for dependants;
- Study full time (where study leave is not appropriate);
- Undertake activities beneficial to their career development.

4. Eligibility

Employees who wish to apply for a sabbatical must fulfil the following criteria:

- i. Have completed at least 2 years' continuous service with Haringey Council. Continuous service from another local authority does not count.
- ii. Have a clear disciplinary record with no live warnings in place or current employment relation cases outstanding.
- iii. Have a satisfactory attendance record with no absence triggers being hit in the preceding 12 months prior to application. Exceptions to this may be agreed by the Head of Service taking into account the employee's personal circumstances.
- iv. Have no documented management concerns regarding their performance.
- v. A sabbatical can only be applied for once in every 5 years of continuous service with the Council up to a maximum of 3 times in total over the course of employment.

5. Applying For a Sabbatical

5.1 Application

Applications can only be made by using the form on Halo. Those with no access to Halo can request a paper form from HR Operations. The completed form must be sent to the employee's direct line manager outlining the reasons for the application, the proposed duration of the sabbatical, and the application must be made at least 3 months before the period of absence is due to start.

The line manager will consider the application and make a recommendation to the Head of Service who will have the final approval on whether the application is agreed. If the application is not approved a reason must be given and the applicant notified by their manager.

Sabbaticals can be taken for a period of between 3 months and 12 months.

5.2 Appeal against decision not to approve application

If the line manager and Head of Service cannot agree to an employee's career break then they must give the employee a written reason within 3 weeks of application. The employee then has the right to appeal this decision to the Assistant Director of their service. This must be done no later than 10 working days after the refusal was received. The Assistant Director will review the written response given to the employee by the manager and the employee's application and appeal and make a decision. They may wish to speak to the employee or Head of Service as part of the appeal process, but this may also be a paper based exercise. This decision is final and there is no further right of appeal.

5.3 Notifying HR of Leave

If the application is approved it is the responsibility of the line manager to send the approved form via Halo to the HR Operations Team for processing. The absence will be recorded as a sabbatical and the employee will not be paid for the duration of their absence. If you have any accrued but untaken holiday, you will be asked to take it before the sabbatical begins.

5.4 Keeping in Touch during Period of Absence

The employee's line manager is responsible for informing the employee if their post is subject to any organisational change or restructure during their absence. The Organisational Change policy gives details of how to deal with absent employees during a period of restructure. If during the period of absence the employee finds another post they must submit a formal notice of resignation from their role with the required contractual notice period.

The employee would need to give a minimum of 4 weeks' notice prior to returning to work.

Employees on sabbatical must notify both HR and their line manager if their home address or contact details change during their absence.

6 Changes to Terms & Conditions

For the duration of the sabbatical the employee will not be entitled to the following:

- Occupational annual leave entitlement for the duration of the sabbatical;
- Occupational sick pay;
- Occupational parental pay for pregnant employees (statutory pay is payable);
- Incremental progression;
- Employer pension contributions;
- All outstanding loans i.e season ticket loans must be paid in full prior to sabbatical commencing;
- All Council property must be returned prior to commencement of sabbatical.

An employee on sabbatical will retain their entitlement to the following:

- The right to return to their substantive post (or the opportunity to apply for an alternative post if their post is subject to an organisational restructure, or to redeployment. See Organisational Change Policy);
- The right to maintain and continue to accrue both continuous service and statutory annual leave;
- If an employee wishes to take up paid employment during a sabbatical then prior approval must be obtained from the Head of Service. Employment that is considered to be similar to the employee's substantive post will not be approved.

During the sabbatical, the employer and employee pension contributions will not be paid. However, providing the employee contacts the Pension Team within 30 days of their return to work, and elects to pay additional pension contributions to cover the "missing" period of employee contributions, the Council as the employer will pay two thirds of the additional pension contributions (APC). If an election to pay APC is made after the 30 day limit, the Council will not be liable to make an contribution to the payment.

In the sad event of an employee dying whilst on sabbatical leave, the LGPS pension benefits payable would be the same as those that would have been paid before the sabbatical began.

Employees should contact the Haringey Pensions Team before making an application for sabbatical to determine the effect that taking a period of unpaid sabbatical leave will have on their pension and on their rights under the LGPS. Anyone who opts to take a sabbatical and who is not a member of the LGPS but is paying into the NHS or other scheme must contact their pension provider for details.

7 Returning to Work

An employee returning from a sabbatical reserves the right to return to their substantive post. They must give their line manager at least 4 weeks' written notice of their intended date of return. If the employee is asking to return earlier than planned, the line manager may delay the return by 8 weeks if there is a business need or to manage existing staff who are covering the post.

You will continue to accrue statutory annual leave (which includes bank holidays), but not contractual annual leave, during the sabbatical. Ideally this accrued leave will be taken at the end of the sabbatical.

However, if the employee's substantive post is subject to organisational change their post will be dealt with in accordance with the Organisational Change Policy on the pay, terms & conditions that applied before the sabbatical began. The employee will be treated the same as other employees and will be entitled to the normal period of redundancy notice if no suitable post is available.

8 Links to Other Policies

- Recruitment Policy
- Organisational Change Policy & Practice Notes

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