



Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL

APPENDIX 1

CAREER BREAK POLICY

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CAREER BREAK POLICY

1. Introduction

The Council recognises that there are times during an employee's life when personal commitments might need to take priority over work and offering a career break may be a means of retaining staff in whom the Council has invested significant time and training.

An unpaid career break can be used for a variety of purposes, such as time off to follow a college or university course, time off on account of child care or other family responsibilities, time off to allow an employee to pursue a personal interest or to undertake voluntary work, time off for overseas travel or any other purpose agreed with the Council.

There are no laws that deal specifically with career breaks. The Council may, in its absolute discretion and subject to certain conditions being satisfied, permit employees to take an unpaid career break and then return to work at the end of that break.

2. Conditions to be satisfied

The conditions that must be satisfied are as follows:

- a career break must be for an agreed duration which is between 3 months and 2 years
- career breaks will only be available to employees who have a minimum of 2 years' continuous employment with the Council
- employees usually must make a request for a career break at least 3 months before the proposed start date
- during the period of the career break, the employee will be required to keep in touch with the Council at regular intervals
- the purpose of the career break must be agreed with the Council in advance and a career break will not be granted where the intended purpose is to enable the employee to take up other paid employment.
- all accrued annual leave must be taken before the start of the career break and payment in lieu will not be allowed
- the career break will be unpaid.
- more than one career break may be granted provided that the combined length of the breaks does not exceed 2 years

3. Break in service

If you are granted an unpaid career break, your continuity of employment will be broken by that break and your contract of employment will terminate on your last

day of work immediately before your career break commences.

When you therefore return to work at the end of the career break, this will be a new period of employment with the Council and the career break itself will not count as part of your continuous period of employment with the Council.

You should also be aware that the loss of continuity of employment will have an impact on any statutory rights or contractual benefits that are linked to or dependent on continued employment or length of service. For example, you will not accrue statutory or contractual annual leave during the career break, or sick pay or redundancy payments or any other payments that are dependent on length or service such as a long service award. Your pension entitlement will be affected.

Employees can mitigate the loss of Pensionable service by considering alternative investment strategies such as AVC-Wise or similar.

4. Applying for a career break

If you would like to be considered for a career break, you should in the first instance speak to your Line Manager. You will be asked to confirm in writing the purpose for which you wish to take the break, when you would like it to start, the intended length of the break and the date on which you would propose to return to work at the end of the break.

You have no contractual right to take a career break and any request you may make will be considered in line with the operational needs of the Council's business at the time.

Line Managers must discuss the request with HR and a final decision will be made by GMT. The employee will be informed of their decision within 21 days of the request.

You do not have right of appeal if your request is refused for operational reasons.

5. Returning to work

For career breaks of less than a year, should your agreed return to work date change you must give your Line Manager 8 weeks' notice of the proposed return to work date. For career breaks longer than a year you must give 12 weeks' notice. If you want to extend your career break you must apply in writing at least 8 weeks before the agreed end date.

Every attempt will be made to support the applicant in returning to their original role. However, where this is not possible, employees will be offered up to 2 suitable alternative roles if available. If no suitable alternative roles are available to offer, there will be no re-engagement of the employee and their employment will terminate. If they decide not to accept any of the roles offered, there will be no obligation to provide any further offers by the Council Therefore there would

be no re-engagement of the contract of employment and redundancy would not apply.

Should the employees job role, service area or department be subject to restructure or possible redundancies, the Council will follow its Redundancy Policy including consultation. Should the employee be made redundant as a result, the calculation for redundancy pay will consider the career break length and deduct this from continuous service length.

Managers should agree a schedule of communication with the employee at the start of the career break to ensure that relevant employment information is discussed.

REFERENCE