

Career Break Policy

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

We can produce information on request in large print, Braille, tape and on disk. It is also available in other languages. If you need information in any of these formats please contact us on Freephone 0800 479 7979.

如果你向我們提出要求，我們可以為你提供本資訊的其他語言的版本，或者是盲文或磁帶。如果你需要本資訊的任何一種這些版式的版本，請聯繫我們，電話號碼是 0800 479 7979。

Si vous nous le demandez, nous pouvons vous remettre ces informations en d'autres langues, en braille ou sur cassette. Si vous souhaitez que ces informations vous soient fournies sous l'un de ces formats, contactez-nous en composant le 0800 479 7979.

چنانچه مایل باشید می‌توانید این مطالب را به فارسی یا زبان‌های دیگر و همچنین بریل و یا بر روی نوار کاست دریافت دارید. در صورت نیاز خواهشمندیم با شماره تلفن 0800 479 7979 با ما تماس بگیرید.

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰੋ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ (ਨੋੜਹੀਣਾਂ ਲਈ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ) ਵਿੱਚ, ਜਾਂ ਟੇਪ ਉੱਪਰ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ 0800 479 7979 ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Na Pana/Pani życzenie możemy zapewnić te informacje w innych językach, alfabetem Braille'a lub na kasecie. Jeśli chciał(a)by Pan(i) uzyskać te informacje w którejś z tych form, prosimy skontaktować się z nami pod numerem telefonu 0800 479 7979.

Haddii aad na weydiisato waxaanu warbixintan kugu siin karaa iyadoo ku qoran luuqad kale, farta ay dadka indhaha la' akhriyaan ama cajalad ku duuban. Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd in warbixintan lagugu siiyo mid ka mid ah qaababkaas, fadlan nagala soo xidhiidh telefoonka 0800 479 7979.

По вашей просьбе данная информация может быть предоставлена на других языках, шрифтом Брайля или в аудиозаписи. Если вам требуется информация в одном из этих форматов, позвоните нам по номеру 0800 479 7979.

Approval body	<i>Executive Team</i>
Date of approval	<i>27 September 2022</i>
Review Year	<i>October 2025</i>
Customer engagement required	<i>No</i>
Trade union engagement required	<i>Yes - For Consultation</i>
Equality Impact Assessment	<i>No</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHS is committed to attaining a positive work life balance for the staff group and ensuring arrangements for securing and retaining skilled staff.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This Policy and Procedure applies to all employees and staff with a minimum of 12 months continuous service with WHS.

2.2 The range of qualifying circumstances that this scheme may be used for includes bringing up children, elderly care, to care for a dependent person, to undertake an individual research project, travel or to undertake further educational qualifications.

2.3 However other reasons will be considered on their merits. This scheme allows the individual to return to their employment at a later date, whilst in the intervening period having a requirement to keep up-to date with their particular occupation.

2.4 In considering whether to grant a request for a career break, there may be service or operational requirements, which lead to an application being declined. These may relate to organisational factors as follows;

2.4.1 Burden of additional cost for replacement, such as training.

2.4.2 Ability to recruit replacement staff.

2.4.3 Planned organisational changes.

2.4.4 Detrimental impact on ability to deliver services.

2.4.5 Individual personal factors such as the employee's disciplinary record, pending investigations and sickness record (not taking into account any disability related absences).

2.5 This Policy and Procedure is non-contractual and may be amended or withdrawn at any time at the discretion of WHS, following consultation with the Trades Unions.

3. BASIC PRINCIPLES

3.1 The basic principles of this policy are :

3.1.1 To support WHS's commitment to maintaining all possibilities of a positive work life balance;

3.1.2 To provide all qualifying staff with the opportunity to leave their employment with WHS for a specific duration and to return to work at the end of the period as far as reasonably practicable, in the same role if returning within 12 months or to as similar a role as possible or any other agreed alternative if returning between 12 months and 5 years.

3.2 Taking account of these objectives, the policy has been developed in line with best practice and supports WHS's commitment to developing initiatives and practices that best promote work/life balance.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

General responsibilities are outlined in this section for:

4.1 Responsibilities of EMT and / or Board

The Board and Executive Management Team's responsibilities include, but are not to be limited

- reviewing this policy in line with the policy review dates and ensuring that it is reflective of WHS values and practice.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Line Managers

The line managers' responsibilities may include, but will not be limited to:

- Bringing any breach of this policy to the attention of the Human Resources department.
- Maintaining contact with employees who choose to take a career break.

4.3 Responsibilities of the Employees

The employees' responsibilities may include, but will not be limited to:

- Bringing any behaviour in breach of this policy to the attention of the line manager or where appropriate to the Human Resources department.
- Maintain contact with your relevant line manager as outlined in this policy.

5. POLICY

5.1 Duration

5.1.1 The length of career break shall be a minimum of 3 months and maximum 5 years.

5.1.2 Employees may take a career break(s) for a maximum period of 5 years spread between one or more breaks, however, there should be a return to WHS employment of at least 24 months between each career break period. The employee may take a maximum of two career breaks during the course of their employment with WHS. The maximum combined period of absence for two career breaks is 5 years in total.

5.1.3 Employees who wish to extend their career break provided that it does not exceed 5 years in total and meets the provisions laid down in clause 5.1.2 above or return earlier than the original agreed date may apply to do so by writing to their line manager requesting an extension or an early return to be considered. Employees must give at least 8 weeks' notice for breaks of 1 year or less and 6 months' notice for breaks greater than 1 year wherever possible. Where possible the line manager will arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss this extension. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

5.2 Procedure for requesting a Career Break

- 5.2.1 Employees wishing to apply for a career break shall be required to do so using the application form which is available on request from the HR Department.
- 5.2.2 Applications should be made to the employee's line manager setting out the reasons and duration of absence required giving at least 3 months' notice of commencement. In circumstances where situations arise unexpectedly, the notice period may be reduced or waived by agreement with the line manager.
- 5.2.3 The decision to accept or refuse a career break application shall be made by the line manager in conjunction with the appropriate Head of Service and the Director of People Services.
- 5.2.4 The line manager will meet with the employee and where appropriate a member of the Human Resources team within 14 days of the application date. The employee has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by union representative or a colleague.
- 5.2.5 The line manager will then announce a decision following the meeting. Adjournment may be necessary where there is a need to seek further clarification or information. This decision regarding the acceptance or refusal of the career break must be given to the employee in writing within 14 days of the meeting.
- 5.2.6 If an employee's request is accepted, the manager is required to send all paperwork to the Human Resources Department in order for a career break agreement to be organised and payroll informed.
- 5.2.7 If the decision is taken not to grant the employees request the applicant may appeal using the grievance procedure.
- 5.2.8 Where a career break has been agreed this should commence within 6 months from the decision date otherwise (unless previously agreed) the right to take the break will lapse and the application process should start again.

5.3 Entitlement and Pay

- 5.3.1 A career break is an extended period of unpaid leave
- 5.3.2 During the career break you will not be paid any salary or pay of any kind.
- 5.3.3 Sick Pay will not be paid during a career break.
- 5.3.4 In most circumstances a Career Break does not count as continuous service, nor does the absent period count for the calculation of sick leave, maternity leave or annual leave or public holidays accrual, except in the case of contact weeks.

- 5.3.5 Service prior to and following a career break will be linked and these two periods will count as continuous service for contractual purposes.
- 5.3.6 Staff should be aware that any service linked benefits can potentially be affected.
- 5.3.7 The career break is not counted as a break in service by WHS although it should be noted that other public bodies or local authorities may not recognise the period as continuous service and there is the possibility of a future ‘loss’ of service if the individual transfers to another registered social landlord or public body.

5.4 During the Career Break

- 5.4.1 During the career break period the employee should maintain contact with the nominated career break partner identified in their agreement on a regular basis and is responsible for updating HR and the employee’s line manager. Dependent upon the length of the break, contact intervals are as follows:

Length of Break	Maintain Contact Intervals
Up to 1 year career break length in any one period	Monthly
Over 1 year up to 3 years’ career break length in any one period	Quarterly
Over 3 years up to 5 years’ career break length in any one period	Half Yearly

- 5.4.2 The career break may include up to 2 contact weeks per annum. The contact weeks may be used for refresher training or updating knowledge on work practice. Employees will be paid for these weeks at the rate of pay they received for their position prior to taking the career break. The contact weeks may be used for training, keeping up to date with key changes in the workplace and covering peak periods of service requirement. Sufficient notice should be given to the employee of any contact weeks and the contact weeks are subject to discussion between the employee and the line manager. It is understood that contact weeks may not be possible in all circumstances e.g., if the employee is travelling abroad. If pension contributions by the employer have ceased by WHS in the course of the career break, they will not recommence for any contact weeks that are arranged.
- 5.4.3 The employee will be required to maintain professional registration, where this is a requirement of the role and the periods of work referred to in paragraph 9.2 will, wherever possible, facilitate this requirement. It may be necessary to contact the relevant registered body to determine the requirements and agree on a separate arrangement where it is not possible to attend work to maintain registration.

5.5 Pensions

- 5.5.1 All staff undertaking a career break agreement should make arrangements to discuss their particular pension situation with the appropriate pensions' advisor.
- 5.5.2 If a member of the Scottish Widows money purchase scheme wishes to take a career break, then they should contact them directly and they will be able to advise them. In general terms if someone takes a career break, they will be able to stop payments while on their break and restart their payments when they return. During the career break they will be able to contribute as they see fit or make no contributions during this period. Your Pension fund will remain invested during the period of your career break. WHS contributions to your Pension will cease throughout the period of your career break.
- 5.5.3 If a member of the LGPS scheme wishes to take a career break, then they should discuss this directly with the Pensions Department at D&G Council.

5.6 Terms and Conditions

- 5.6.1 Employees will be required to sign a Career Break Agreement in order to accept the terms and conditions of the break.

5.7 Returning from a Career Break

- 5.7.1 The employee should give his/her line manager at least 8 weeks' notice for breaks of less than 1 year and 6 months' notice for breaks of more than 1 year in writing, if returning earlier than the agreed date, otherwise they may forfeit the right to return on the desired date.
- 5.7.2 All employees may be subject to an Occupational Health check and an appropriate Disclosure Scotland check prior to their return.
- 5.7.3 The employee will have the same annual leave entitlement in place as at the beginning of the career break.
- 5.7.4 If contact is not maintained by the employee for a period of 12 months, then the contract of employment may be terminated.

6. GOVERNANCE AND REGULATION

- 6.1 This policy is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department.
- 6.2 The policy is due for formal review every three years.

7. SANCTIONS

- 7.1 Any breaches of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under WHS's Disciplinary Policy.

8. RELATED / REFERENCED POLICIES

WHEATLEY HOMES SOUTH – CAREER BREAK POLICY

- WHS’s Attendance Support Policy
- WHS Compassionate Leave Policy
- WHS Disciplinary Policy
- WHS Flexible Working Applications Policy
- WHS Grievance Policy
- WHS Maternity Leave Policy
- WHS Parental Leave
- WHS Paternity and Maternity Support Policy