

Sabbatical Leave

Employee and Manager Guide

Overview

There may be times when employees wish to take extended periods of time away from work during the course of their employment with the Council to pursue other interests eg spending time with family, further education, taking an extended holiday or participating in voluntary/community work. The Sabbatical Leave policy will give employees the opportunity to apply for between 1 month and 12 months unpaid leave without breaking their continuous service.

Key Principles

- A sabbatical will be an authorised, unpaid leave of absence
- A sabbatical does not constitute a break in the period of continuous service. When calculating the total length of service, the time taken on a sabbatical will not be counted.
- Sabbaticals are granted at the Council's discretion and will not be an entitlement.
- Any requests must be made at least 3 months prior to sabbatical commencing.

Eligibility

This scheme applies to all permanent Council employees with at least 12 months continuous service with the Council. Employees may apply for more than one Sabbatical during their employment, however, any previously agreed Sabbaticals may be taken into consideration before approving further requests.

Length of Sabbatical

A Sabbatical granted under this scheme may be for any length of time between 1 month and 12 months. Once agreed, the length of the period can only be varied by mutual agreement.

Why Offer Sabbatical Leave?

Sabbatical leave allows employees time away from work to pursue personal interests such as:

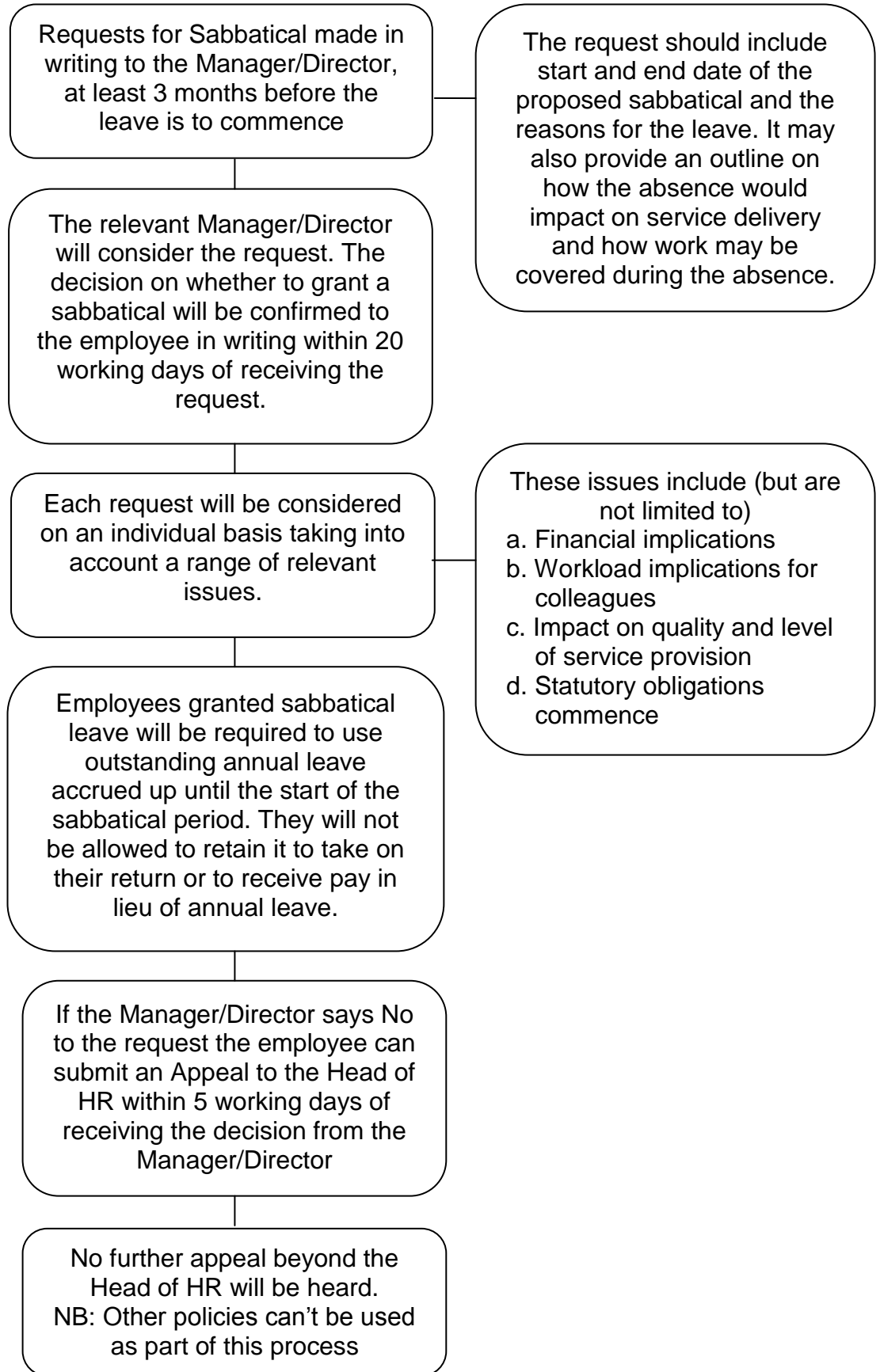
- Travel
- voluntary/community work,
- Study
- More time with family.

Please Note: Sabbatical Leave is not to be used for work purposes. Employees are restricted from acting as a consultant/contractor or working as an employee/director for any other organisation or individual unless they have the express written consent of the relevant Manager/Director.

In considering the request the Manager/Director will need to ensure that the work does not, in view of the Council, conflict with the Council's interest or in any way weaken public confidence in the conduct of the Council's business. This does not apply to casual work.

Sabbatical Leave

Approval Process



Example 1

Employee entitled to 26 days annual leave and works for 3 months of her/his leave year prior to starting a sabbatical therefore would be required to take the 3 months holiday entitlement = $26/12 \times 3 = 6.5$ days before starting the sabbatical.

Example 2

Employee is entitled to 26 days annual leave and works for 6 months of the leave year prior to starting a sabbatical. The employee has therefore accrued 13 days of leave, but has already taken 15 days leave. On return to work, the 2 days leave will be carried over and deducted from the new leave balance.

However, should the employee not return to work then they will be required to pay back to the Council the equivalent of 2 days leave.

Consideration	Issue	Solution
Contact	Methods and Frequency of Contact	These must be agreed between the employee and their line manager before the leave period begins.
	Organisational Change	Where organisational changes are proposed in the Council during the leave period which may affect the employee, every attempt will be made to contact them in a timely manner and treat them in the same way as other employees.
	Change of Employee Details	The employee is required to keep the Council informed of any change of address or change of circumstances that arise during the sabbatical.
Employee Terms and Conditions of Employment	Salary and Allowances	There is no entitlement to payment of salary, allowances, annual or bank holiday leave, occupational sick pay or occupational maternity / paternity pay during sabbatical leave.
	Council Property	All Council property should be returned prior to the start of the sabbatical unless otherwise agreed with the Manager
Pension Scheme		<p>You can elect to pay SCAPCs to cover 'lost' pension if you're absent from work due to authorised leave of absence on no pay.</p> <p>If you want to pay SCAPCs, you must elect to do so within 30 days of returning to work. You'll then pay one third of the cost while your employer pays two thirds. You can pay SCAPCs as a one-off lump sum or regular payments over a period of time.</p> <p>If you don't elect to pay SCAPCs within 30 days, you can still buy back the 'lost' pension, but you would have to pay the whole cost under a regular APC contract and your employer wouldn't pay any of the cost. This could make a big difference to how much you pay so act straightaway if you want to cover lost pension for this type of absence.</p>

Consideration	Issue	Solution
Pension Scheme	Death in Service Benefits	Employees on authorised leave of absence from the Pension Scheme will remain eligible for death in service benefits.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Response
1. What right of Appeal will there be if my manager refuses my request for a sabbatical?	As with the Flexible Working policy there will be a similar policy with a built in Appeal process to Chief Officer level.
2. Will the Council pay any tax or national insurance contributions during the Sabbatical Leave?	The Council will not be liable for any tax or national insurance contributions during sabbatical leave. As a period of sabbatical could affect the right to and payment of Statutory Payments such as SSP, SMP or Working Tax Credits - it is recommended that contact should be made with the local DSS Office for advice and guidance on this matter.
3. What will happen if there are any cost of living salary increases during the period of Sabbatical Leave?	Any cost of living salary increases that the Council implement during the period of leave will be applied accordingly once the employee returns to work.
4. Will I still be eligible to participate in the Child Care Voucher Scheme while I am on Sabbatical?	Participation in the Childcare Voucher Scheme will cease at the start of the sabbatical period and on return employees will be required to make a new application to re-join the scheme.
5. What will happen with my lease car?	Employees who have a salary sacrifice lease car must continue with their car payments during the period of sabbatical leave in accordance with the relevant agreement made.
6. When I return to work, will I return to my normal job?	<p>Employees returning to work following a sabbatical will normally return to the same job.</p> <p>However, if this is not reasonably practical then the Council will make every effort to redeploy the employee to a similar role on a similar grade.</p> <p>Should the employee wish to return to work early, they must make a request to do so in writing, allowing a minimum of one month's notice. The Manager/Director will consider the request and confirm the decision in writing to the employee, advising them of the revised return to work date.</p>
7. What will happen if I don't return to work as planned?	<p>If the employee fails to return to work on the agreed date, the Council will make every effort to contact the employee to confirm the situation and the reasons for this.</p> <p>If the Council is unable to contact the employee, it will be assumed that the employee has resigned and the last day of service will be recorded as the agreed date of return.</p>