

Career Break

1. The Purpose

A career break is a voluntary, unpaid extended break from work and this policy set out the key features of the FC's Career Break Scheme (CBS).

2. The Principles

The principles of the policy are to:

- support a healthy work/life balance culture at the FC, where employees can take time off for caring responsibilities or personal and professional development activities;
- support the FC's equality and diversity agenda;
- allow the FC to retain skilled and experienced employees, increasing the FC's return on the resources invested in recruitment and training; and
- ensure that business requirements are taken into account when applications for career breaks are considered.

3. The Policy

Any permanent employee can apply for a career break providing they have at least three years service and have achieved a good performance, conduct and attendance record during the year prior to the application. Applications will normally only be considered for the following reasons:

- caring for a dependent;
- undertaking a relevant course of study or other skills development activity; and
- voluntary work or some other personal development activity.

Eligible employees may apply for a career break of between six months and 2 years. Extensions beyond 2 years will only be considered in wholly exceptional circumstances. The employee remains under the management responsibility of their Unit during the career break.

There is no entitlement to a career break. Applications will be considered with regard to business requirements and the employee's circumstances. Applications should be made via [HR Procedure – Career Break](#).

Time on a career break from the FC does not count as effective service for the purposes of pension, pay progression, sick absence or annual leave. A "Stop the Clock" principle is applied to career breaks whereby the unpaid leave does not accrue benefits, however, those already accumulated are preserved and built upon on return to work. [HR Procedure - Career Break](#) provides further details of the effect on terms and conditions.

There is no guarantee of a job to return to at the end of the career break. The employee returns from unpaid leave when a suitable job becomes available across the wider FC. Their manager may be able to keep their previous post available for them to return to by recruiting temporary cover during the break. If an employee rejects the offer of a suitable job across the wider FC to return to, this will in most circumstances constitute resignation from the FC. Normal reasonable application of the mobility clause will apply to staff in relevant pay bands.

3.1 Your responsibilities as an employee

You are expected to:

- understand that your job may not be held open for you to return to, and that you could be offered a post in any wider FC location;
- understand the affect of the career break on your terms and conditions;
- seek consent from your manager if during your career break you want to work for another organisation/company; and
- keep in touch, as agreed, with your manager during a career break.

3.2 Your responsibilities as a Manager

You are expected to:

- consider career break requests with regard to business requirements and the employee's circumstances;
- consider filling the employee's post temporarily whilst they're on career break or factor the employee's career break into your Unit's future staffing plans so that a career break employee has a job to return to, where possible;
- inform HR Services when a career break application is approved;
- keep in touch, as agreed, with the employee during the career break; and
- work with HR Services to undertake a FC-wide search for a suitable vacancy if you are unable to find a post for the individual to return to within your Unit.

3.3 Human Resources responsibilities

Human Resources have responsibility for:

- giving advice and guidance on the application of this policy and associated procedure;
- keeping employee records up to date including payroll;
- assisting the search for a suitable vacancy within the FC if the employee's 'home Unit' doesn't have a job for them to return to; and
- monitoring and reviewing the policy in consultation with the FC Trade Unions.