

POLICY

SABBATICAL

POLICY REVIEWED JANUARY 2023

Wellhouse - The Place To Be

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1. Vision and values

Wellhouse – the Place to Be.

This simple statement is our vision of Wellhouse as an attractive place where people feel happy and safe, benefit from having a good home and an attractive environment and feel proud to be part of a vibrant community.

We believe that our values of **Trust, Honesty and Integrity, Excellence, Accountability and Sustainability** supported by a comprehensive policy framework will help make our vision a reality.

2. Governance

Wellhouse HA is a community controlled registered social landlord and is managed by a group of local people who are elected onto the Management Committee. Their role is to make sure that the Association is well run, meets the needs of the local area and is responsive to what is important to local people.

The Management Committee appoints senior staff, agrees all the Association's policies and takes all the key decisions. The Director and the senior team support the Committee in these responsibilities.

3. Policy Aims

The purpose of sabbatical leave is to enable members of staff to pursue initiatives related to education and/or other career development activities in order to achieve objectives that have been agreed with their line manager. Sabbatical leave releases staff from day-to-day duties for a specified period of time. Sabbatical leave may be used for travel in connection with the purposes for which it has been granted.

4. Equal Opportunities, Diversity & Human Rights Statement

We aim to ensure that all services, including the delivery of this policy, provide equality of opportunity.

We will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals. We will not discriminate against any individual for any reason, including age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or other status.

5. Introduction

Wellhouse Housing Association recognises that many people, at some stage in their working life, wish to take time off work for a number of reasons.

A sabbatical which may also be referred to as a career break, is when an employee is guaranteed re-employment with the organisation at the end of the break, provided that they have adhered to the terms and conditions of the agreement. The job the staff member returns to will be of equal status but there is no guarantee of returning to the same post.

6. The Policy

Eligibility

To be eligible for a Sabbatical an employee must

- Have completed at least 2 years continuous service
- Have a satisfactory performance record in line with Wellhouse Housing Association policy
- Have a satisfactory attendance record in line with Wellhouse Housing Association policy
- Indicate a firm intention to return to work
- Have no live disciplinary warning.

Each case will be considered on its own merits in light of personal circumstances and the businesses operational needs. The commencement and time allowed for each career break will be dictated by the needs of the business.

Length of Career Break

A sabbatical is available for a minimum of 3 months to a maximum of 12 months.

An employee can take a maximum of 2 sabbaticals. If an employee wishes to apply for a second sabbatical, they must have a further 2 years continuous service from the first break.

Application Procedure

An application for a sabbatical must be made to the senior officer at least 3 months before the requested start date of the sabbatical. The employee should complete a Sabbatical Form which is attached to this policy.

Confirmation of acceptance or non-acceptance will be made in writing, to the staff member, within 30 days of the application.

Effects on Terms and Conditions of Employment

During the leave of absence employees will have no entitlement to payment of salary, holiday or sick leave or any other mandatory benefits.

Death Benefit Scheme – If the employee is entitled to the Death Benefit Scheme as per their terms and conditions it shall continue to apply during the employee's period of leave of absence and shall be calculated by reference to their earnings immediately before such period of absence commenced.

Pension Scheme – Employer pension contributions will be suspended for the duration of the leave and the period will therefore not count towards the pensionable service.

Upon return from the employees leave they will be entitled to make good all contributions to the Association's Pension Scheme omitted during the leave of absence within a period agreed by the Scheme Trustees. The employer will not however invoke contributions for that period.

Professional Membership Fees - During the period of unpaid leave of absence, Wellhouse Housing Association will not pay any professional subscriptions in respect of membership of professional bodies.

Redundancy - If redundancy should occur during a Sabbatical, the employee will be contacted, in writing, and the appropriate process will be used under Wellhouse Housing Association redundancy procedure.

Increments – Staff returning from sabbatical will not be entitled to an incremental increase unless they have been back at work for 6 months prior to 1st April. Staff, will however, be eligible to receive the Wellhouse Housing Association's cost of living rise in place at the time of their return to work.

Failure to return to work will be treated as a resignation.

The period of the sabbatical will not count towards calculating any statutory or contractual benefits.

If the organisation makes any changes to the employee's post/grade/salary or any other conditions during the sabbatical break, they will write to the employee informing them of any changes.

Maintaining Contract

Where possible regular contact should be maintained with the organisation throughout the break. The frequency and method of contact will be agreed between the employee and their line manager. A monthly information pack containing any circulars, newsletters and other relevant material will be sent to any employee on a sabbatical by their line manager. Any relevant information will be sent to the employee's home address.

Alternative Employment

The period of unpaid leave of absence is granted on the understanding that the employee will not take up any paid work during this period. If they should do so then they will automatically lose their right to return to work unless previous approval is granted by the senior officer and confirmed in writing.

Postponing the Date of Return

By the Organisation:

If there are no suitable vacancies the organisation may postpone the date of return for up to 28 days. The employee will be informed of the revised date in writing. If the organisation postpones the date of return, the employee will not be paid any salary or other benefits during the postponement. However, the period of postponement will count towards the continuous service.

By the employee on Medical Grounds:

The date of return may be postponed by the employee on medical grounds only. The maximum period of postponement allowed is 28 days. If an employee is unable to return to work after this period the organisation may review the right to return to work. The employee will not be paid any salary or other benefits during the postponement but the period of delay will count towards continuous service.

Returning to Work

An employee must give 3 months notice in writing, to the senior manager of their intention to return to work. Failure to do that will be treated as a resignation.

If a member of staff fails to return to work after their sabbatical they will lose their right to return to work. Wellhouse Housing Association will assume that the employee has resigned from their post which will be effective from the end of their sabbatical.

When the employee returns to work their line manager will conduct a re-entry meeting and cover areas such as changes within Wellhouse Housing Association, salary and holiday entitlement. Wellhouse Housing Association reserves the right to alter or withdraw the scheme at any time.

Monitoring the Policy

The policy will be reviewed 3 yearly with the amendments being made as appropriate and communicated to all staff and relevant stakeholders.

General Data Protection Regulations

The organisation will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own policy GDPR Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Wellhouse HA's employee privacy notice

Freedom of Information

As at November 2019, the Association is subject to FOI and all enquiries with respect to Notifiable Events will be handled strictly in line with FOI and confidentiality policies.

APPLICATION FOR A CAREER BREAK FORM



APPLICATION FOR A CAREER BREAK

FULL NAME:

START DATE:

PRESENT POSITION & DEPARTMENT

I would like to commence a Career Break on/...../..... and would like the break to last for months.

I am requesting a career break for the following reason:

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I have read the organisations Sabbatical Policy and understand and accept the terms and conditions of Wellhouse Housing Association’s sabbatical scheme.

Signed: **Date:**/...../.....