

CAREER BREAK

INTRODUCTION

1. A career break is an extended period of unpaid absence from work after which an employee can return to the same, or similar, job.
2. This policy offers employees the opportunity to take a career break with their Contract of Employment and continuity of service maintained throughout.
3. As a member of the Dignity at Work Partnership¹, SYFR is committed to promoting a positive working environment where the dignity and respect, to which all employees are entitled, is not undermined. No employee should be treated less favourably on the grounds of race, gender or gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or spiritual belief, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, marital/parental status, family ties, trade union or political belief, hours worked, or any other reason, either directly or indirectly.

QUALIFICATION

4. A career break may be taken for a number of reasons, examples of which are:-
 - a. To care for a child or other dependant relative (please see the Parental and Carers Leave policy for further information on short-term leave)
 - b. To attend full-time education
 - c. To perform unpaid voluntary work
 - d. To pursue/research education or development activities that will value/ benefit the individual and the organisation
 - e. To pursue extended travel

N.B. This list is not exhaustive.

ELIGIBILITY

5. Employees are eligible to apply for a career break provided they have completed five years' service with the organisation.
6. Where an employee has completed less than five years service and wishes to submit an application for a career break, the discretion of the Head of Human Resources will apply.
7. Eligibility for subsequent career breaks will depend on a return to work of at least two years since the previous break. The Head of Human Resources will consider waiving this requirement in cases of genuine emergency.

¹ The Dignity at Work Partnership is a partnership between the Government, Unite (the UK's largest union) and major public and private sector organisations. For further information on the Partnership, see www.dignityatwork.org

CAREER BREAK

CONDITIONS

8. The employment relationship will be maintained and service for the duration of the career break will be regarded as continuous. All contractual provisions affected by continuous service will be accrued as normal.
9. For the duration of the career break, the employee will continue to be subject to the appropriate SYFR protocol, including Discipline and Grievance policies and the provisions of the Employment Rights Act 1996.
10. Following a career break employees will return to the same or similar post. SYFR cannot guarantee that this will be the post originally vacated.
11. Following a career break operational employees will be subject to a programme of refresher training. For support staff, refresher training will be at the discretion of the line manager giving consideration to the demands of the role and the needs of the individual.

SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

12. The purpose of a career break is not to allow employees to pursue alternative paid employment. Applications to pursue secondary employment during a career break will be treated in the same way as if the employee remained in employment. Such requests will be considered in accordance with the Secondary Employment Policy on the basis that the employee is fulfilling their normal duties.

PENSIONS

13. Employees should take account of the effect of their absence on their individual pension situation before applying for a career break. Advice and confirmation of the pension implications should be sought from the administrators of an employee's particular pension scheme.
14. Employees must indicate on the Application for Career Break Form (see Career Break Procedure – Appendix A) that during the period of the career break, provision has been made with regard to pension contributions.

***If you require any further guidance on this Policy please contact the
Human Resources Function.***