



Hull

Human Resources

*Stepney Primary School*



*A Small School With Great Expectations*

# Career Break Scheme

Hull Council

Human Resources

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Updated: 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2000, 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2002

6<sup>th</sup> March, 2007

**HULL CITY COUNCIL**  
**CAREER BREAK SCHEME**

**OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME**

1. The Career Break Scheme enables an employee to take one period of up to 2 years' unpaid absence from work (but see paragraph 5(c)), with the option of returning to work and continuing in the same or similar post. (It should be noted that Heads of Service have authority to approve up to 3 months' unpaid leave, in appropriate circumstances, outside of this scheme).
2. The Scheme is part of the Council's commitment to equal opportunities in employment and is intended to help employees: overcome some of the problems caused by career interruptions when caring for a child or relative; to undertake a specific course of study, to participate in voluntary work which contributes to the good of humanity, or to embark on other activities which fall into the category of 'special circumstances'.
3. The Scheme will also enable the Council to retain experienced staff in whom valuable resources have already been invested.

**ELIGIBILITY**

4. The Scheme applies to all permanent employees of the Council (except teachers and non-teaching staff in schools, unless adopted by the Governing Bodies of the Authority's schools), having not less than 2 years' continuous service with the Council, or its predecessors.
5. The Scheme is open to those who wish to:-
  - (a) care for their young children;
  - (b) care for elderly or sick relatives;
  - (c) undertake a course of study which is relevant to, and will facilitate, career development within the Council. In cases where the duration of an appropriate course of study is more than the maximum length of career break i.e. 2 years, Heads of Service may extend the period of the career break to equal the length of the course of study.
  - (d) participate in voluntary work, for a period of between 3 calendar months and 2 years, which can be shown to contribute, significantly, to the greater good of society and humanity, in general (e.g. providing personal aid in a foreign country which has undergone a large scale disaster, natural or otherwise, such as earthquake or military oppression).
  - (e) embark on any other type of activity which falls under the category of 'special circumstances'. (e.g. an employee is invited to represent his/her country in a sporting event, at international level, and is required to train on a full-time basis for a prolonged period).

6. The employee must not take up any paid or voluntary employment (or in the case of a career break for the purposes outlined in paragraphs 5(d) and (e), any additional paid or voluntary employment) with any other employer during the period of the career break, without the written permission of the Head of Service, acting on the advice of the Head of Workforce Strategy.
7. Whilst recognising that there may be an economic need for the individual to take up part-time, or casual work, this Scheme is not intended to enable employees to look for other work, or work experience, whilst holding open their post with the Council. Any request to take up employment with another employer must be in writing, giving full details and valid reasons for the request. Such requests are to be carefully considered, sympathetically, by Heads of Service taking into account the economic needs of the employee.
8. Failure to notify the Council, in accordance with paragraph 7, may result in the employee being withdrawn from the Scheme and his/her employment being terminated.

## **TERMS OF THE SCHEME**

9. Subject to the Head of Service's approval, which should not be unreasonably withheld, the Scheme will allow for a break of up to 2 years (104 weeks) (but see paragraph 5(c)) with a guarantee to return to work in accordance with the following conditions:-
  - (a) During the career break, participants will remain employees of the Council and must not engage in any voluntary or paid work for any other organisation without the written consent of the Head of Service, prior to undertaking such work.
  - (b) Employees' posts will be kept available for their return to work, on completion of the career break. Arrangements to cover the vacant post will be through the normal recruitment procedures.
  - (c) The period of the career break will not count as continuous service for the calculation of leave entitlement and other service-related, contractual employment benefits. To calculate these, continuous service prior to the career break will be added to service from the end of the career break as though the break had not occurred.
  - (d) The employee is to return to the job in which he/she was employed under the original contract of employment, operative immediately prior to the commencement of the career break, and on terms and conditions not less favourable than those which would have been applicable at that time. The employee will return on the spinal column point, or its equivalent, which applied immediately prior to the start of the career break.
  - (e) The provisions in sub paragraph 9(d) may be waived to allow alternative employment where this is mutually acceptable to both parties.
  - (f) Where there is a redundancy situation which affects the career break post, the person on career break will be treated in accordance with the

Retraining and Redeployment Policy as though he/she were attending work normally.

- (g) If there are any other issues which affect the career break post, such as minor reorganisations, the employee will be informed and consulted as though he/she were attending work normally.
- (h) The career break will be without pay. In the case of employees who become eligible for maternity leave/pay or adoption leave/pay during a career break, the career break will be interrupted by the maternity or adoption leave and will resume at the end of maternity or adoption leave. The employee and his/her manager may agree changes to the original length of the career break in the light of such interruptions, if they so wish.
- (i) For employees who apply for a career break whilst on maternity or adoption leave, the 2 year period will begin from the commencement of the week in which their terms and conditions of service stated that they were due to return from maternity or adoption leave, regardless of when the application for a career break is received.
- (j) The provisions of the Maternity Scheme and the Adoption Leave Policy, which require the employee to return to Council employment for a period of at least three months, as one of the qualifying conditions for entitlement to maternity or adoption leave pay after six weeks' paid absence, will apply at the end of the career break.
- (k) The employee will be notified of any opportunities for temporary and/or relief work during the career break. Whilst pressure to take up such work will not be applied, the Council will expect some flexibility on the part of the employee, where possible, within the spirit of the career break scheme and dependent upon the urgency of the situation.
- (l) Two months' written notice of the employee's intention to return to work is required and, in exceptional circumstances, the Council reserves the right to delay the return to work by up to a further calendar month.
- (m) The scheme will be regularly publicised and, where appropriate, employees will be informed of it prior to maternity or adoption leave and at exit interviews.
- (n) The Council's normal grievance, disciplinary and other relevant employment procedures will apply throughout the Scheme.

## **THE PROCEDURE**

### **COMMENCEMENT OF THE CAREER BREAK**

10. Employees who wish to be considered for a Career Break must make application as far in advance as possible, but, in any event, at least 2 months before the actual date when they would wish their break to begin. This applies to all employees including those currently on maternity or adoption leave. In exceptional circumstances, for some domestic reasons, it may not be possible

to give 2 months' notice. Consideration may be given to waiving this requirement in such cases.

11. If eligibility is confirmed, then the application will be put to the Head of Service for approval. If approval is refused, employees have a right of appeal to the Head of Workforce Strategy. The appeal should be made in writing, within 14 days of the letter confirming the refusal.
12. Where approval is given, applicants will be given a copy of the Career Break application form for their records. The Shared Services Employee Services will keep a copy on the employees' personal files and details will be forwarded to the Head of Workforce Strategy for monitoring purposes.
13. Before the career break commences a pre-career break discussion should take place with the manager, in which the individual should receive information about the scheme and be encouraged to continue to study for exams, if appropriate. The discussion should also cover planned work experience, coaching and opportunities for self development. The service area must honour existing training fees so that the employee may complete the course of study, or the part of the course for which finance has already been committed from the service area's budget.

## **PENSION**

14. The implications for the payment of pension contributions should be discussed with the employee, who must be advised to seek further advice and assistance from Shared Services Employee Services.
15. If an employee chooses to pay contributions for the whole period of the career break then an option form should be signed to that effect before the break commences. Shared Services Employee Services will then deduct the first 30 days' contribution from the last salary payment. Following the employee's return to work, the contributions the employee would have paid over the career break period, had he/she remained at work, will be calculated. Recovery of these contributions would be in regular instalments over a similar period of time to the career break, subject to Inland Revenue requirements being observed. The Council will also make pension contributions for the same period.
16. If the employee elects not to pay contributions throughout the period, but subsequently reconsiders the original option and then decides he/she wishes to pay, he/she may do so. However, in any event, the election of the employee to make contributions on the period of approved leave of absence must be made within 30 days of the date of return to work.

## **DURING THE CAREER BREAK**

17. The manager should ensure that a regular communication channel is opened during the career break and that the employee is kept informed of any developments which may be relevant to, or have an effect on, his/her career. This might include sending the following to the employee:-
  - \* Hull Talk
  - \* Staff Bulletins

- Copies of global e-mails
  - \* Details of In-house Training Courses
  - \* Service area's In-House Journal
  - \* Pensions Newsletters
  - \* Invitations to social events
- and any other information as requested.

18. In addition, the employee should be invited to:-
- \* An annual meeting with the line manager
  - \* Specific, relevant training courses
  - \* Re-induction to the service area and, if necessary, dependent on the nature of the work and the changes which have taken place in the job, retraining during the month prior to the employee's return to work from career break.
19. Attendance at work for the meetings and training mentioned in paragraph 18 will be paid at the current hourly rate applicable to the employee's spinal column point, at the date of commencing the career break.

## **RETURN TO WORK**

20. Employees wishing to return to work should make a formal application by returning the relevant section of the career break application form to the Shared Services Employee Services at least 2 months before their intended return.
21. The Shared Services Employee Services will verify the details and confirm with the employee arrangements to return to work, in accordance with the terms of the Scheme.
22. In the year of return, annual leave will be pro-rata for the complete calendar months still to be worked. The employee must return to work before annual leave can be taken.

## **PERSON RESPONSIBLE WITHIN SCHOOL**

This is a Local Authorities Policy which was adopted at the Full Governing Body Meeting. Mrs M Codd will continue to monitor and update in accordance with the Local Authorities updates.

This policy was last monitored in Spring 2012 by Mrs M Codd, and no changes have been made by the LA.

## HULL CITY COUNCIL

<b>PART 1 – CAREER BREAK SCHEME – APPLICATION FORM</b>		
Surname	Other Names	Grade
Service Area	Post Title	Tel (Work)
Hours Worked (weekly)	Length of Service .....yrs	Tel (Home)
<b>REASON FOR REQUESTING A CAREER BREAK (Please tick relevant box)</b> (See Career Break Scheme Eligibility Criteria)		
(a) To care for my young *child/children *(Please delete as applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(b) To care for my *elderly/sick relative *(Please delete as applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(c) To undertake a course of study which is relevant to, and will facilitate, career development within the Council (Please state below how the course of study is relevant).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(d) To participate in voluntary work, which contributes to the greater good of society and humanity, in general.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(e) To embark on other activities which can be categorised as 'special circumstances'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>PLEASE GIVE FULL DETAILS OF REASON FOR REQUESTING A CAREER BREAK:</b>		
<b>CAREER BREAK PERIOD REQUESTED</b>		
I wish to apply for a career break from _____ (first day) to _____ (last day), a total of _____ years/months* *(Please delete as applicable)		
I have read the Council's Career Break Scheme and if my application is approved, I agree to abide by the conditions of the Scheme.		
Signature:	Date:	

**PART 2 –SHARED SERVICES EMPLOYEE SERVICES – PRE APPROVAL PROCEDURE**

The applicant meets the following criteria and is eligible for leave of absence under the Career Break Scheme:- \*(Please delete as applicable)

- \* is a permanent employee
- \* has not less than 2 years' continuous qualifying service
- \* wishes to care for his/her young children, OR
- \* wishes to care for his/her elderly/sick relatives, OR
- \* wishes to undertake a course of study which is relevant to, and will facilitate, career development within the City Council;
- \* wishes to participate in voluntary work in accordance with the Scheme
- \* has other special circumstances for consideration in accordance with the Scheme
- \* has given two months' notice (may be waived in exceptional circumstances).

**PART 3 – TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF SERVICE**

\* I agree to the proposed career break as requested overleaf, which is in accordance with the Council's Career Break Scheme. The dates of the Career Break are:-

from \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> day) to \_\_\_\_\_ (last day of career break)

\* I do not agree to the proposed career break as requested overleaf, for the following reasons (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):-

\* (Please delete as applicable)

Signature of Head of Service:

Date:

**PART 4 – SHARED SERVICES EMPLOYEE SERVICES – PROCEDURE FOLLOWING HEAD OF SERVICE'S DECISION**

**IF NOT APPROVED:**

- Write to the applicant advising him/her of the decision and of the right to appeal to the Head of Workforce Strategy, in writing, within 14 days of your letter.

**IF APPROVED:**

- Issue copy of completed application form showing Head of Service's decision to applicant (retain copy on personal file) and forward copy to Head of Workforce Strategy for monitoring purposes
- Ensure applicant has copy of the Scheme
- Advice re Pension arrangements (paras 14 – 16)

## HULL CITY COUNCIL

<b>PART 5 – RETURN TO WORK FOLLOWING CAREER BREAK</b>		
Surname	Other Names	Grade
Service Area	Post Title	Tel (Work)
Hours Worked (Weekly)	Length of Service ___ yrs	Tel (Home)
<b>PLEASE COMPLETE THE STATEMENT BELOW AND RETURN THIS FORM TO SHARED SERVICES EMPLOYEE SERVICES</b>		
<p>I have been on a career break from the Council since _____ (first day) and wish to I return to work on _____</p> <p>In accordance with the Career Break Scheme, please confirm the arrangements for my return to work.</p>		
Signature:		Date:
<b>NOTES FOR EMPLOYEES RETURNING TO WORK AFTER CAREER BREAK SCHEME</b>		
1)	Your service area must receive at least two months' notice of your intention to return to work. You should use this form for the purpose and send it to Shared Services Employee Services.	
2)	Shared Services Employee Services will write to you to confirm the arrangements for returning to work.	
3)	When you return to work you will be entitled to annual leave on a pro rata basis to the number of complete calendar months still to be worked in that leave year. The leave year runs from 1 <sup>st</sup> April to 31 <sup>st</sup> March.	
4)	If you opted to continue paying pension contributions during your career break, following your return to work, the contributions which you would have paid during your career break will be calculated. Recovery of these contributions will be in regular instalments over a similar period of time to the career break, subject to Inland Revenue requirements being observed. The Council will also make pension contributions for the same period.	
5)	If you elected not to pay pension contributions throughout the career break, but subsequently reconsider and decide that you would have liked to have paid, you may still do so. However, the election to make contributions must be made within 30 days of your return to work.	