

Document Control Page	
Name of policy	<b>Sabbatical Policy</b>
Date effective:	18 February 2025
Purpose of policy	To offer colleagues an opportunity to apply to take an extended period of absence to pursue personal projects.
Sustain department	Human Resources
Applicable legislation, guides, standards and references	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no statutory rights or legislation linked to sabbatical time off</li> <li>• The sabbatical arrangement is a private arrangement between the employee and the employer</li> <li>• Failure to return to work after an agreed sabbatical may result in frustration of contract and dismissal.</li> </ul>
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Consultation	non-contractual policy
Approved by	Kath Dalmeny, Chief Executive
Date last approved	N/A
Substantive changes since last update and reason for update	This is a completely new policy
Impact assessment by Sustain	This policy applied to all paid staff with a length of continuous service of 3 or more years.  If staff do not have the qualifying criteria, they may apply for annual and shorter periods unpaid leave, subject to approval.
Review cycle	Annually, or earlier if required by applicable legislation
Next review date	February 2026
Policy location	Sustain Intranet and shared drives for all staff
Policy Drive	HR Drive

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## Statement of policy

The Charity recognises that employees may wish to apply to take a longer than average period of **unpaid time off** to pursue personal projects, travel, training, fellowships, etc.

## Content, scope and eligibility

The Charity may, at its absolute discretion and subject to certain conditions being satisfied, permit employees to take a sabbatical and then return to work at the end of that break. The conditions that must be satisfied are:

- A sabbatical must be for an agreed duration which is between **1 to 3 months**.
- Sabbaticals will only be available to employees who have a **minimum of three years'** continuous employment with the Charity.
- Employees must make a request for a sabbatical at least two months before the proposed start date.
- The purpose of the sabbatical must be agreed with the Charity in advance and a sabbatical will not be granted where the intended purpose is to enable the employee to take up other paid employment.
- A sabbatical can be used for a variety of purposes, such as time off to undergo a college or university course, on account of family responsibilities, to allow an employee to pursue a personal interest or undertake voluntary work, for overseas travel or for any other purpose agreed with the Charity.
- Any sabbatical granted will be unpaid for the duration of the sabbatical for a maximum period of 1 to 3 months.

## Application process

Employees who would like to be considered for a sabbatical, should apply in writing to their direct line manager, copying in Head of Human Resources and the Head of Finance, stating the purpose of the sabbatical, the requested starting date, the intended length of the sabbatical and the proposed return to work date along with an assessment of the impact of the sabbatical on their current work and the wider team.

Applications should be made at least two months before the requested start date of the sabbatical.

There is no contractual right to take a sabbatical, and any requests made will be considered in line with the finances and funding arrangements and the operational needs of the Charity to meet its obligations and fulfil the employee's role during the period of the sabbatical.

Decisions to grant unpaid sabbatical leave will be made by Senior Management Team in consultation with Human Resources with input from the line manager.

Decisions will be made in writing to the employee within a reasonable time period and the Head of Finance and Head of HR will confirm changes to working arrangements, to and update and financial records and adjust pay accordingly.

There is no right of appeal.

## Application details

A request for a sabbatical must be discussed and presented with due consideration for the impact on, and relevant mitigation for, delivery of the employee and project workplan, funded objectives and the work of the wider team.

The employee and line manager must present a well-defined case for the sabbatical and how it will be managed in a way that can:

- Minimise impact on the Charity's business and delivery of the project's workplan, objectives and outputs;
- Offer agreed mitigating arrangements for any work that must be completed in advance of the sabbatical, ceased, postponed or covered by other means due to the employee's absence;
- Where necessary, address whether additional temporary staffing will be required to cover the period of absence, either internally or through external recruitment and how this might be arranged and paid for;
- Assess what key activities, events, routine checks, system updates, funding reports / funder stewardship, contribution to the work of internal and external groups, etc. need to take place during or shortly after the sabbatical period, and how these will be managed and/or how others will be enabled to fulfil these needs appropriately;
- Whether any occasional contact will be possible with the employee, if important needs arise, and if so on what basis;
- Share openly any concerns about this arrangement, so that these can be properly considered and addressed.
- Sabbaticals will not usually be agreed by the Charity during the period when fixed-term funding for the employee's work is either commencing or coming to an end, as these periods both usually require active and enhanced participation of the employee(s) most familiar with the work, funder, budget, partners and other matters.

## Terms and conditions

If a sabbatical is granted, continuity of employment will be preserved, and the contract of employment will remain in force.

The statutory annual leave entitlement will be preserved (but not contractual annual leave entitlement).

All leave accrued and untaken leave entitlement should be taken before the commencement of the sabbatical and the employee's return to work.

Holidays taken prior to the sabbatical will be paid at the normal rate of pay.

Employer pension contributions will cease to be paid during the unpaid sabbatical.

The period of the sabbatical will be unpaid.

Upon return to work, any cost-of-living increase on salaries made across the Charity will be applied to the employee.

## Returning to work

If the Charity agrees to grant a sabbatical, this will be on the basis that the employee agrees to return to work on a specified date.

Providing this and the other conditions for sabbaticals are met, the employee will be able to return to work with the Charity at the end of the sabbatical. This will be a return to the same job on the same terms and conditions as occupied before the sabbatical, unless a redundancy situation has arisen.

If, however, there is some reason other than redundancy why it is not reasonably practicable for the employee to be taken back into their original job, they will be offered alternative work on terms and conditions which are no less favourable overall than the terms and conditions of employment which applied immediately before the sabbatical.

On your return to work, the Charity may, at its absolute discretion, require the employee to undertake a period of retraining as necessary.

Except where the employee is ill and has followed the Charity's normal procedures in relation to sickness absence, a failure to return to work on the agreed return date at the end of a sabbatical, will forfeit the employee's right to return to work with the Charity.

The Charity reserves the right to request repayment of any monies paid out in terms of salary or annual leave accrued and taken during the term of the sabbatical. You will then not be able to return to work at a later date.