

TO:	Governance Sub-Committee
PREPARED BY:	Linda Sichi (Deputy CEO)
SUBJECT:	SABBATICAL POLICY
DATE OF MEETING:	25 November 2024
APPROVED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)

SABBATICAL **POLICY**

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SABBATICAL POLICY

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1. MILNBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION (MHA) STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

MHA's mission is to provide excellent homes and services in a thriving community. We believe that people living in the MHA community should:

- Have warm, safe, and affordable homes, and receive excellent services from MHA.
- Live in neighbourhoods that are clean and well cared for, with real community pride.
- Have access to opportunities and services that promote a good quality of life.

2. MHA's VALUES

Working as 'One Milnbank' so that we offer the same quality of services, support and housing to all tenants and residents.

3. LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The Management Committee leads and directs MHA to ensure good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. MHA adheres to the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework Financial & Regulatory and to all relevant legal employment requirements associated with this policy.

4. POLICY INTRODUCTION

MHA recognises that many people, at some stage in their working life, wish to take time off work for several 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, if they have adhered to the terms and conditions of the agreement. The job the staff member returns will be of equal status but there is no guarantee of returning to the same post.

5. POLICY PRINCIPLES - 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 MHA's policy
- Have a satisfactory attendance record in line with MHA's policy
- Indicate a firm intention to return to work
- Have no live disciplinary warning.

Each case will be considered on its own merits considering 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.

6. 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.

7. **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

An application for a sabbatical must be made to the CEO at least 3 months before the requested start date of the sabbatical. (Appendix 1) 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.

8. **EFFECTS ON TERMS & CONDITION 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.	
<i>Death Benefit Scheme (DBS)</i>	If the employee is entitled to the DBS 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.
<i>Pension Scheme</i>	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 MHA'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.
<i>Professional Membership Fees</i>	During the period of unpaid leave of absence, MHA will not pay any professional subscriptions in respect of membership of professional bodies.
<i>Redundancy</i>	If redundancy should occur during a Sabbatical, the employee will be contacted, in writing, and the appropriate process will be used under MHAs redundancy procedure.
<i>Increments</i>	Staff returning from sabbatical will not be entitled to an incremental increase unless they have been back at work for 6 months prior to 1 st April. Staff, will however, be eligible to receive MHA'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 MHA 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.	

9. MAINTAINING CONTACT

Where possible regular contact should be maintained with MHA 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 or agreed email address.

10. 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.

11. POSTPONING THE DATE OF RETURN

By MHA:

If there are no suitable vacancies MHA may postpone the date of return for up to 28 days. The employee will be informed of the revised date in writing. If MHA 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 MHA 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.

12. RETURNING TO WORK

An employee must give 3 months' notice in writing, to the CEO 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. MHA 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 MHA, salary and holiday entitlement.

MHA reserves the right to alter or withdraw the scheme at any time.

13. EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

MHA's is committed to equal opportunities, and we will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals, and we will not discriminate against any individual for any reason outlined in Equality & Human Rights Legislation.

14. DATA COLLECTION

MHA will manage all personal data in accordance with our obligations under the GDPR regulations and the Association's Policy.

15. POLICY MONITORING & REVIEW

The Sabbatical Policy will be reviewed by the Governance Sub-Committee every 3 years or in line with EVH updates, or as otherwise deemed necessary

APPLICATION FOR A CAREER BREAK

FULL NAME:

START DATE:.....

PRESENT POSITION & FUNCTION

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 Milnbank Housing Association’s sabbatical scheme.

Signed:

Date:/...../.....