

Sabbatical Policy

The Bristol Methodist District. (Charity Number 1134873)

First Issued	January 2025
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 In offering the opportunity to take a sabbatical, we recognise the importance of employees' work-life balance and personal development, whether that be via life-long learning, charity work, leisure activities, travel or other interests. In turn, we recognise that staffing levels must at all times remain in line with business demands.
- 1.2 Long-serving employees are therefore eligible for sabbatical leave to, for example, fulfil caring responsibilities, undertake a university or college course, pursue a particular project, carry out some research or travel.
- 1.3 The policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend it at any time.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to employees employed by us. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

3 Length of sabbatical leave

- 3.1 Sabbatical leave is subject to a minimum period of one month and a maximum period of 12 months.
- 3.2 If you wish to take less than one month's leave, you should request holiday in the usual way.
- 3.3 Where you wish to take more than 12 months' leave, you should request a career break under our separate Career Break Policy. *Under our career breaks policy, an employee who wishes to take a career break is required to provide us with their written resignation prior to its commencement.*

4 Eligibility

- 4.1 Employees with five or more years' continuous service are eligible to request sabbatical leave. Both full-time and part-time employees with the relevant service are eligible.
- 4.2 Sabbatical leave may, at our discretion, be granted more than once during the course of an employee's employment but only in exceptional circumstances and only where a period of at least five years has passed since the employee returned to work following their previous period of sabbatical leave.

5 Requests for sabbatical leave

- 5.1 All requests for sabbatical leave should be made in writing to your Line Manager, stating the preferred start date of the sabbatical, duration of the sabbatical, and proposed objectives of the sabbatical.
- 5.2 You should also state how we might be affected by your proposed absence on sabbatical leave and how any potential problems might be overcome.
- 5.3 We will consider any request for a sabbatical, but the decision as to whether or not to grant the sabbatical will be entirely at our discretion. There is no right of appeal against the decision.

6 Terms and conditions during sabbaticals

- 6.1 During a sabbatical, you will not be paid any salary, nor be entitled to commission, bonuses and other benefits such as private medical insurance or the use of a company car.
- 6.2 However, all other terms of your contract of employment will remain in force. These, for example, include notice periods and the duty not to disclose confidential information.
- 6.3 If you have any accrued but untaken holiday, you may be asked to take it before the sabbatical begins.
- 6.4 You will continue to accrue statutory annual leave during the sabbatical.
- 6.5 An employee who wishes to take up any other paid employment during the period of sabbatical leave, or provide any consultancy services to other organisations on a self-employed basis, must obtain our agreement in advance.

7 Contact during sabbaticals

- 7.1 In advance of your sabbatical leave, your line manager should arrange to keep in contact with you during the leave. Typically, contact will be at least once a month, although this is a matter for agreement between you and your line manager.
- 7.2 Your line manager will also contact you to inform you of any important workplace developments, such as a reorganisation, job opportunities and upcoming training events.
- 7.3 Similarly, it is up to you to inform your line manager of any changes in personal circumstances of which our organisation should be made aware, such as a change of address.

8 Return to work

- 8.1 On completion of sabbatical leave, you will return to the same job as before or, if that is not reasonably practicable, to a job of equivalent seniority and on terms and conditions not less favourable than those that would have applied had the sabbatical not been taken.
- 8.2 Your period of service will be regarded as continuous for all statutory purposes. However, your period of service will be treated as paused for the purposes of service-related benefits, including long-service awards and contractual redundancy pay.

9 Review

- 9.1 This policy may be reviewed at any time at the request of any member of staff, but it will be automatically reviewed two years after initial approval and thereafter on a biennial basis unless organisational changes, legislations, guidance, or non-compliance prompt an earlier review.

10 Definitions

- 10.1 The Bristol Methodist District ("we", "us", "our")
- 10.2 The Employee ("you", "your")

Document control box

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