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| CAREER BREAK POLICY - FAQ |

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| **CAREER BREAK POLICY - FAQ** |

The Council provides a Career Break Scheme whereby, provided the terms explained in this guidance are met, an employee may take an employment break of up to two years.

**1. What is a Career Break?**

It is an agreed unpaid break in Council employment for a minimum period of six months to a maximum of two years.

A Career Break may be taken for various reasons, such as the care of children or other dependants, education or training or overseas travel.

**2. Who can apply for a Career Break?**

All Council employees who have a year’s continuous service with Enfield (except for those employed to work in schools, where such matters are under the control of the Governing Body).

Additionally, an employee should not:

* Be under disciplinary investigation or have current disciplinary warnings on his/her records
* Be currently subject to formal action under the capability procedure
* Be currently subject to formal action under the absence and attendance procedure
* Have been formally advised in writing that his/her job is at risk through redundancy

Consultants, casual, relief and agency staff are not eligible to apply.

**3. How do I apply?**

Firstly, you should discuss your Career Break proposal with your manager. Then three months before you wish to take a Career Break, you can make a formal application using the [Career Break Proposal Form.](https://enfield365.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/intranethr/EV1h3fshqbNPlPfoxvCB8KoB5POZZHHHMUrL40c3LOP7qg?e=rsmBSw)

In deciding whether you can take a Career Break and for how long, your manager will take into account the needs of the business and how your absence could be covered.

Career Breaks are not a contractual entitlement and are not guaranteed. If your request is agreed your manager will:

* Sign it and forward it to the Human Resources, who will retain it on your personal file and write to you to confirm the dates and arrangements for the Career Break.
* Take action in accordance with the ['Leaving the Council Policy'](https://enfield365.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/intranethr/EarG6AxV89tGuVso0S8Y_5sBvdhu_G7JkAvNlkrdP7GGag?e=wm36v8)

If your request is refused, your manager will confirm the decision and reasons in writing.

**4. What do I do if my Career Break request is agreed?**

You are leaving the Council so you will be required to submit your resignation and, before starting your Career Break, return any Council property in your possession and repay in full any outstanding loans or other monies due to the Council.

**5. What effect would taking a Career break have on my terms and conditions of employment?**

The following terms and conditions would apply:

A Career Break is a break in service, which does **not** count for pension purposes. Members of the local government pension scheme may wish to discuss the implications of this with the Payroll and Pensions Service.

During a Career Break all contractual benefits and entitlements cease to accrue.

Individuals on a Career Break (former Council employees) have no right to claim occupational benefits from the Council.

An individual who is on a Career Break would not be entitled to any form of consultation, redundancy or severance payment if there is a reorganisation that affects the former area of work.

When an employee’s application for a Career Break is approved, the manager would recalculate the employee’s annual leave entitlement as the employee would not be entitled to a full year’s leave.

The period of notice the Council would give you if ending your employment, and entitlement to annual leave and occupational sickness and occupational maternity leave / pay all depend on length of continuous service. Periods of continuous service before and after a Career Break count towards the total amount of continuous service. However, this would only apply if the individual starts working with Enfield immediately after the Career Break and has complied with the terms and conditions of the scheme. Other local authorities may have different terms and conditions and may not recognise continuous service following a Career Break with Enfield.

Continuous service before a Career Break does **not** count when calculating entitlement to a redundancy payment.

If the individual returns to his / her former substantive post s/he would return to the same incremental point that s/he was on immediately prior to the break.

**6. Can I work for the Council during my Career Break?**

No. A Career Break is intended to be a break in your Council employment and continuous service. Therefore, by taking a Career Break you are agreeing not to engage in **any** work for the Council (including through a hire arrangement with a temp agency), or any work with another Council or other local government body listed in the Redundancy Payments Modification Order (which is available from Human Resources). However, you may take up temporary work (whether paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time) with other organisations.

**7. Am I guaranteed a job after a Career Break?**

No. The Council cannot provide a guarantee of re-employment. For further information, see Question 9.

**8. Can I apply for more than one Career Break?**

Yes. However, there must be at least two years between the start of a future Career Break and the end of the previous one.

**9. What do I do if I want to work for the Council when my Career Break ends?**

A few weeks before your Career Break is due to end, you may contact your former line manager to discuss whether s/he has any suitable vacancies and if yes, confirm in writing that you are seeking re-employment. For what happens next, see question 12. You should also regularly check the jobs section on the Council’s Internet site. It will be your responsibility to apply for any suitable vacancies.

**10. What happens if I want to end my Career Break sooner than agreed?**

You may request an earlier end date, provided your employment break is for at least six months and you give three months’ notice of the revised date. However, this does not mean you will be guaranteed employment with the Council. It will be your responsibility to apply for any vacant posts.

**11. What do I do if I want to extend my Career Break?**

To apply for an extension, write to your former manager at least three months before your Career Break is due to end.

S/he may agree to an extension in writing (and notify Human Resources) provided the Career Break would not exceed two years in total.

**12. As a manager, what steps do I take if a former employee wants to return from a Career Break?**

You take the following steps:

* Acknowledge the written request to return
* Decide whether you have a suitable post available (the former substantive post or another post of the same grade for which s/he has the relevant knowledge and skills)
* If you have a suitable post, you must obtain your Director’s agreement to recruit. Then complete [Career Break Form A](https://enfield365.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/intranethr/EV1h3fshqbNPlPfoxvCB8KoB5POZZHHHMUrL40c3LOP7qg?e=DKM3Dq) (parts 1 - 2) and send the whole form to Human Resources [recruitmentcentre@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:recruitmentcentre@enfield.gov.uk) as soon as possible after receiving details of the individual’s request. Human Resources will update their records and the vacancy will be entered on the redeployment jobs bulletin, which is distributed to those on the Council’s redeployment list. Provided there are no applications from redeployees, the post will be released from the redeployment pool and the Recruitment Centre will send an offer of appointment letter to the individual who is on Career Break.
* If there is no suitable post available, you should advise the former employee to check the jobs section on the Council’s Internet site for any suitable vacancies. It will be his/ her responsibility to apply for vacancies in the same way as any other external candidate. Please complete form [Career Break Form B](https://enfield365.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/intranethr/EV1h3fshqbNPlPfoxvCB8KoB5POZZHHHMUrL40c3LOP7qg?e=DKM3Dq) and send to Human Resources. You may also use this form if the former employee has advised you that s/he is **not** seeking to return to work with the Council after the Career Break.

**13. I have received a letter offering me a job when my Career Break ends. What happens next?**

All Council jobs offers are subject to appropriate appointment clearances and you will not be able to start work until these have been received, and the recruiting manager confirms they are satisfactory.

The appointment would also be subject to an Induction and Assessment Period of up to 21 weeks.