

**SHCG‌ ‌Leave of Absence‌ ‌Policy‌ ‌**

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1. **Purpose‌ ‌**

SHCG‌ ‌recognises‌ ‌that‌ ‌trusteeships‌ ‌are‌ ‌voluntary‌ ‌opportunities‌ ‌however‌ the organisation is committed to enabling ‌trustees‌ ‌to‌ ‌balance‌ their personal ‌life‌ ‌with‌ SHCG responsibilities.‌ ‌The‌ ‌Leave of Absence ‌policy‌ is a guidance document for all trustees to refer to as required. ‌

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1. **Definition‌ ‌**

Leave of Absence is a period away from the trustee’s commitments to SHCG in one of the following circumstances:

1. Parental leave\*
2. Sickness absence
3. Compassionate leave
4. Dependency leave
5. Career change
6. Unexplained absence

\**Parental‌ ‌Leave‌ ‌is‌ ‌time‌ ‌off‌ ‌commitments‌ ‌to‌ ‌SHCG‌ ‌if‌ the trustee and/‌or‌ their ‌partner‌ ‌are‌ ‌having‌ ‌a‌ ‌baby‌ ‌or‌ ‌adopting‌ ‌a‌ ‌child.*‌ *The trustee ‌can‌ ‌take‌ ‌up‌ ‌to‌ ‌52‌ ‌weeks‌ ‌/‌ ‌1‌ ‌calendar‌ ‌year‌ ‌off‌ ‌without‌ ‌affecting‌ their term of appointment.‌ ‌*

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In all other circumstances outlined above, the period of leave will be for an initial 6 calendar months, with a review at 3 months and then again at 6 months.

The trustee will be able to take ‌an authorised‌ ‌‘break’‌ ‌for‌ ‌the‌ ‌duration‌ ‌of‌ their leave of absence‌ ‌and‌ ‌re-join‌ ‌SHCG‌ ‌committee‌ ‌at‌ ‌the‌ ‌next‌ ‌AGM.‌ The trustee ‌may‌ ‌be‌ ‌in‌ ‌the‌ ‌same‌ ‌or‌ ‌different‌ ‌role,‌ ‌depending‌ ‌on‌ ‌mutual‌ ‌agreement‌ with ‌the‌ ‌Chair‌ ‌and‌ ‌the‌ individual ‌covering‌ the ‌role‌ ‌for‌ ‌the‌ ‌duration‌ of‌ the leave of absence.‌ ‌

1. **Notification‌ ‌**

In the context of *2. a) Parental Leave Cover* - SHCG requests that the trustee informs the ‌Chair‌ of their ‌changes‌ ‌in‌ circumstances‌ ‌4‌ ‌months‌ ‌before‌ ‌the‌ ‌baby’s‌ ‌expected‌ ‌due‌ ‌date‌ ‌or‌ ‌at‌ ‌a‌ ‌similar‌ ‌relevant‌ ‌juncture‌ ‌in‌ ‌the‌ ‌adoption‌ ‌process‌. There should be a check-in/review process at 6 and then 9 months.

In the context of *2. e) Career change* – Where possible, the trustee should notify their intention to take a leave of absence at least 1 month in advance of the date of commencement to the Chair, subsequently communicated to the committee at the appropriate point.

The above instances allow ‌time‌ ‌for ‌discussion and appropriate decisions to be made to manage the‌ ‌trustee’s absence and the implications‌ on the individual (s) covering their role‌ ‌and responsibilities.

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In all other contexts outlined in **2. Definition**, the trustee should notify the Chair of their circumstances at the earliest opportunity to enable the Chair to support the trustee as appropriate and work with fellow trustees to minimise the impact on committee activity.

1. **Leave of Absence ‌Cover‌ ‌**

The SHCG‌ committee ‌will‌ ‌seek‌ ‌a fellow trustee to cover the trustee’s leave of absence. This will be discussed with the Chair and the committee before an appropriate decision is made and plan to manage the leave of absence is agreed.

1. **Membership**

The trustee must maintain their membership (individual or institutional) of SHCG during their leave of absence.

1. **Term of appointment**

It is the decision of the individual in question whether they would like to take leave of absence or step down from their trusteeship.

***SHCG Constitution Clause 16: Reappointment of charity trustees***

*Any person who retires as a charity trustee by rotation or by giving notice to the CIO is eligible for reappointment. A charity trustee who has served for three consecutive terms may not be reappointed for a fourth consecutive term but may be reappointed after an interval of at least three years.*

1. **Return‌ ‌to‌ ‌Committee‌ ‌**

The trustee has a duty to ‌notify‌ ‌the‌ ‌Chair‌ ‌of‌ their intention ‌to‌ ‌return‌ ‌to‌ ‌committee,‌ ‌or‌ ‌to terminate their appointment,‌ ‌before‌ ‌the‌ ‌closing‌ ‌date‌ ‌of‌ ‌the‌ ‌annual‌ ‌committee‌ ‌nominations‌ ‌in ‌the‌ ‌year‌ ‌following‌ the period of leave of absence. Where applicable, the following steps should be taken:‌

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1. Preparation‌ will ‌be‌ ‌made‌ accordingly ‌for‌ ‌the‌ trustee on leave of absence ‌to‌ ‌decide‌ ‌on‌ ‌whether‌ ‌or not they‌ wish ‌to‌ continue their term of appointment‌
2. If a trustee wishes to complete their term, appropriate steps will be taken to support the trustee to ‌balance trustee commitments‌ ‌with‌ their personal circumstances. *‌*

*N.B. ‌SHCG‌ ‌cannot‌ ‌guarantee‌ ‌that‌ the trustee ‌will‌ ‌return‌ ‌to‌ ‌the‌ ‌same‌ ‌role*‌

1. A‌ ‌period of handover‌ will ‌be‌ implemented where required‌
2. If a trustee’s period of absence ends before their term of appointment ends but they wish to step down, this will become effective following the next AGM.
3. The outgoing trustee’s role will continue to be covered from the end of leave of absence until the next AGM when a new trustee is appointed. The outgoing trustee is expected to support a smooth handover of duties.

*N.B. For reference, current government policy outlines the following:*

**Employee rights when on leave**

Employee rights are not usually affected when they take maternity, paternity, adoption, parental, parental bereavement, or Shared Parental Leave.

**Returning to work**

Employees have the right to return to their job if they take:

* Paternity Leave
* only 26 weeks of Maternity or Adoption Leave
* only 26 weeks of Shared Parental Leave (between both parents)
* 4 weeks or less of unpaid Parental Leave
* Parental Bereavement Leave

**If employees take more leave**

If the employee takes more leave, they’ll have the right to their job or a similar job (if it’s not possible to give them their old job).

Similar means the job has the same or better terms and conditions. If the employee unreasonably refuses to take the similar job the employer can take this as their resignation.

1. **SHCG’s‌ ‌Commitment‌ ‌**

SHCG‌ is ‌committed‌ ‌to the provision of the following:‌ ‌

* Leave of Absence‌ ‌for‌ trustees when required‌ ‌‌
* Role‌ ‌cover‌ or support in other forms ‌for‌ ‌the‌ ‌duration‌ ‌of‌ the ‌period in question
* An‌ ‌opportunity‌ for the trustee ‌to‌ ‌re-join‌ ‌committee‌ following leave of absence‌ ‌
* Support for a‌ ‌returning‌ trustee ‌to‌ ‌undertake a ‌role‌ ‌which‌ ‌accommodates‌ ‌balancing‌ ‌personal/family life‌ ‌with‌ trustee ‌responsibilities

Policy written by the Chair and formally adopted by the Board of Trustees on **3rd April 2020**.

Policy to be reviewed every 12 months, in advance of AGM.