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Title	Work / Life Balance Policy
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Summary	This policy describes the practical help and assistance provided by the MPS to enable staff to manage a successful work/life balance.
Branch / OCU	Directorate of Human Resources
Date created	July 2008
Review date	July 2011

WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICY

Introduction

This new policy replaces previous Policies and Procedures on: Flexible Working, Carer's, Career Break, Special Leave, Maternity Leave, Business Interests, Secondary Employment and Political Activities, Armed Forces Reservists and the Keep in Touch Scheme. These have been brought together and updated under this one new policy.

The MPS understands that at various stages during an individual's working life domestic, family, community, educational and other public service commitments may mean that they wish to alter their Work/Life Balance. The MPS acknowledges these potential pressures and provides practical help and assistance through the Work/Life Balance Policy.

Application

All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family, and those working voluntarily or under contract to the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) must be aware of and are required to comply with all relevant Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) policy and associated procedures.

However, this policy applies in particular to officers and staff in the following roles:

- Operational Command Unit (OCU) Commanders and Heads of Branches
- Human Resource (HR) Managers
- Line Managers
- The Employment Tribunal and Grievance Unit
- Professional Development Unit
- Workforce Deployment Unit
- Finance and Resource Managers

All police officers and members of police staff should be aware of this policy.

Note – this list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable staff, supported by their managers, to consider the options available to adjust working arrangements when their personal circumstances may change. This will be managed whilst still ensuring that the needs of the organisation are met. This will enable the MPS to:

- Assist in attracting and retaining experienced and skilled individuals;
- Support the needs of our workforce;
- Improve staff motivation and morale;

- Increase productivity and contribute to the MPS Values;
- Meet legal requirements; and
- Make staff feel valued.

Scope

The Service is sympathetic to the demands that needs make on the individual and is aware that, at times, it may be difficult to achieve a work/life balance.

Flexible Working increases the opportunities for all members of the Service to work more flexibly. We encourage managers and individuals to think creatively so they can achieve a better balance between their work and home lives. Flexible Working should help us to recruit and keep a workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

The MPS allows individuals to take various forms of leave such as Carer's Leave, Special Leave, Maternity Leave and Career Breaks to address their immediate needs and those in the future. The policy also gives advice on activities undertaken whilst away from the MPS and for keeping in touch with individuals.

Unpaid leave, except for mobilised staff, maternity/adoption support leave and parental leave, is not reckonable for service and can affect pension and annual leave entitlement.

Those on leave such as Career Breaks are not permitted simply to take up alternative employment and qualifying criteria must be met.

Policy

- Requests for flexible working will be considered and requests will only be refused for valid business reasons. Part-time workers and those working other forms of flexible working will be given the same access to training and promotion as full-time workers;
- Special leave is not an entitlement and may only be granted at the discretion of line managers. Generally unpaid special leave does not qualify for reckonable service for pension or incremental purposes with the exception of special leave granted to armed forces reservists for mobilisation;
- A career break is a period of unpaid leave ranging from 3 months and up to a maximum of 5 years. Police officers and police staff may apply for more than one career break during their service provided that the combined length of breaks does not exceed the maximum of 5 years. On return from a career break members of the service will not necessarily return to their original post or OCU/Branch. Leave such as career breaks are not permitted simply to take up alternative employment;

- It is accepted that at various stages in an individual's working life there may be a need to balance work commitments with caring responsibilities. All issues raised by a carer will be treated as confidential. Individuals must not receive unfavourable treatment on the grounds of being a carer;
- Line managers and HR managers must keep in touch and support members of the Service when they are away from work. There is no minimum time after which the Keep in Touch scheme should be applied; it will depend on the circumstances;
- Reasonable time off will be granted for antenatal care and pregnant officers and police staff will be protected from risks to health and safety and from dismissal or disadvantage on the grounds of their pregnancy;
- All members of the Service will comply with the requirements to seek authority for pursuing a business interest, secondary employment or political activities;
- The policy aims to provide support to members of the Service who are members of the Armed Forces Reservists, especially in times of mobilisation; and
- Members of the Service will continue to be regarded as employed by the MPS when away from the Service and will therefore remain subject to Police Regulations, the Code of Conduct or Police Staff Conditions of Service.

Benefits

This policy aims to support the needs of everyone of our workforce while maintaining effective staffing levels.

The MPS encourages managers and individuals to think creatively so they can achieve a better balance between work and home lives.

This policy will help us to recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the communities we serve and will help us to be an organisation that is both family friendly and an Employer of Choice.

Responsibilities

This policy was commissioned by the HR Board. It was written by the Work/Life Balance Team who are also responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing this policy.

Associated Documents and Policies

Flexible working Standard Operating Procedure

Special Leave Standard Operating Procedure

Career Break Standard Operating Procedure

Carer's Standard Operating Procedure

Keep in Touch Scheme Standard Operating Procedure

Maternity Leave Standard Operating Procedure

Business Interests, Secondary Employment and Political Activities Standard Operating Procedure

Armed Forces Reservists Standard Operating Procedure

Working Time Regulations and managers' guidance.

Employment Act 2002

Police Regulations.

Guide to Police Regulations (part-time)

Working Away From the Office Standard Operating Procedure

Childcare Strategy 2004-2007

The following notices are hereby cancelled:

- Item 3, 07/98, 18 February 1998
- Item2, 48/01, 28 November 2001
- Item 2, 33/02, 14 August 2002
- Item 1, 12/2004, 24 March 2004
- Item 5, 16/2004, 21 April 2004
- Item 6, 16/2004, 21 April 2004
- Item 7, 16/2004, 21 April 2004
- Item 8, 16/2004, 21 April 2004
- Item 4, 35/2004, 1 September 2004
- Item 6, 48/2004, 1 December 2004
- Item4, Notices 29/2005, 27 July 2005
- Item 5, Notices 29/2005, 27 July 2005
- Item 1, Notices 13/07, 28 March 2007