

## Policy

# Volunteer Release Scheme for 'Addenbrooke's Abroad'

### 1 Scope

The Volunteer Release Scheme applies to all staff who wish to participate as a volunteer with 'Addenbrooke's Abroad'.

**Quick link:** to Volunteer Release Scheme application form – Appendix A

### 2 Aim

The aim of the policy is to set out the arrangements for employees who express interest in participating in, and are then subsequently selected as a volunteer with, 'Addenbrooke's Abroad'. Trust staff may also wish to refer to the Special Time-out or Career Break Schemes.

### 3 Introduction

- 3.1** Addenbrooke's Abroad has been established within Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust (ACT), a registered charity which operates entirely independently from Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust). Any employee of the Trust who participates as a volunteer with 'Addenbrooke's Abroad' does so in a personal capacity and not as an employee of the Trust.
- 3.2** 'Addenbrooke's Abroad' can be found on the Trust website or information obtained at [www.addenbrookesabroad.org.uk](http://www.addenbrookesabroad.org.uk)
- 3.3** To enable Trust employees to become involved in 'Addenbrooke's Abroad' the Trust has introduced a Volunteer Release Scheme (the Scheme) that provides unpaid leave of absence specifically for this purpose. The application process for volunteers is through 'Addenbrooke's Abroad' but release from the Trust under the Scheme is granted at the discretion of the individual employee's manager/Clinical Director.
- 3.4** Employees choosing to apply as a volunteer may take up to three months unpaid leave. Alternatively, or in addition, employees may use up to two weeks of their annual leave entitlement. The Trust does not permit employees to use more than two weeks of their entire annual leave allocation in this way in the interests of providing adequate opportunity for the employee to take rest periods during other times of the leave year.

- 3.5** Voluntary activity is not normally considered suitable for study leave. However, in the case of consultant medical and dental staff their special professional leave allowance, which forms part of their national terms and conditions of service, may be utilised for this purpose. In addition it is permissible for this staff group to take study leave for the days on which they are delivering lectures, provided it falls within their agreed study leave allowance.
- 3.6** For other staff groups the Trust provides eight places per annum for non-medical staff to apply to take five days (part time pro-rata) paid voluntary release leave. This paid leave can be added to the leave arrangements outlined above. Contact: [evelyn.brealey@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:evelyn.brealey@addenbrookes.nhs.uk) for details of, or to express an interest in, 'paid voluntary release leave'.
- 3.7** Addenbrooke's Abroad has a grant scheme that disburses small grants to support the exchange of skills between Trust staff and healthcare institutions in resource-poor countries. Details of the grant scheme and the application procedure may be obtained by e-mail from: [evelyn.brealey@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:evelyn.brealey@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

## **4 Eligibility**

- 4.1** Subject to the terms of this scheme, all employees with a minimum of two years' continuous service whether part or full time, are eligible to be considered for release as a volunteer for 'Addenbrooke's Abroad'. The Trust will not be involved in the process and arrangements surrounding application, interview and selection of volunteers. Decisions to offer places rest entirely with 'Addenbrooke's Abroad'. However, once a volunteer place has been offered by Addenbrooke's Abroad there is no automatic entitlement to be released as a volunteer (refer to 4.1.2 below).
- 4.1.1** Employees must:
- notify their line manager/clinical director prior to expressing interest in volunteering
  - seek the permission of their line manager/clinical director prior to accepting a place as a volunteer.
- 4.1.2** Managers/clinical directors will consider the following issues when deciding whether to approve an application/placement:
- the proposed duration of release as a volunteer
  - the needs of the service at the time of the application/release and anticipated future requirements
  - current and anticipated skills/qualification shortages

- the Trust's ability to secure appropriately qualified cover for the employee's post for the duration of the release
- the anticipated impact on colleagues/service delivery throughout the duration of release
- the general performance and attendance of the employee
- past investment in training/skills/knowledge of the employee.

## **5 Duration**

- 5.1** The Trust will consider granting unpaid voluntary release for up to a maximum of three months. (Note: The Trust's Career Break and Special Time-Out Schemes provide for breaks of one year; junior doctors may apply for an out of programme experience).
- 5.2** An employee can have more than one period under the voluntary release scheme during their employment with the Trust, although they must work for at least two years continuously with the Trust between each break. In addition to this the manager/clinical director will need to re-consider the issues detailed in section 4 for each separate application.

## **6 Exceptions**

The Trust may, at its own discretion, or on the advice of the Foreign Office, decline applications for visits to particular countries where there is a risk.

## **7 Employer and employee obligations during voluntary release**

**This section applies to all volunteers and includes periods of unpaid release and periods of annual leave**

- 7.1** Since Addenbrooke's Abroad is a registered charity that operates entirely independently from the Trust, any work for Addenbrooke's Abroad is not work for or on behalf of the Trust and the Trust is not responsible and accepts no liability for actions of or incidents that happen to employees of the Trust who volunteer and are released under this scheme.
- 7.2** During any period of release the employment relationship between the Trust and the employee continues to exist, but during periods of unpaid release the Trust's obligations regarding pay and benefits and the employee's obligation to perform work are suspended. All other terms and conditions of employment continue to apply except where varied as set out in this policy. Refer to paragraph 8.1 for further details.

### 7.3 The Employee's Obligations

The extent to which the following obligations apply will depend on the duration of the release, but are set out in full below:

#### 7.3.1 Insurance

- Employees are advised that the Trust's public liability insurance will not apply during their voluntary release under this scheme. Therefore the employee is required to obtain personal insurance to cover injury to themselves, injury to third parties and/or damage to any equipment/facilities used whilst participating as a volunteer
- Clinical staff must ensure they have adequate insurance cover in respect of medical negligence

**Travel/Occupational Health Advice** It is the employee's responsibility to access appropriate travel and occupational health advice prior to departing for their volunteer placement. Travel advice is not currently provided by the Trust's Occupational Health department. Travel advice can be obtained from General Practitioners or specialised travel clinics. If volunteering to perform clinical work in an area where access to local occupational health facilities is limited, particularly where HIV is endemic (see [www.who.int/entity/hiv/](http://www.who.int/entity/hiv/)), an assessment of the risks of infection should be made prior to departure. The University of Cambridge Occupational Health service (Tel 01223 336594) are experienced in providing such advice for medical students travelling for their electives and can assist in providing travel and occupational health advice for clinical placements. This may involve the prescription of a starter pack of post-exposure prophylaxis for use in the event of a HIV positive needlestick injury. This service will incur a cost payable by the volunteer.

**Trust property** - Trust property and equipment may not be taken or used while on placement with 'Addenbrooke's Abroad'

**NHS Pension Scheme** For members of the NHS Pension Scheme, pensionable benefits can be maintained for the duration of the release period but employee contributions to cover the release period are the employee's responsibility. The amount will be deducted over a phased period equivalent to the duration of the release period.

**Contact details** Employees must provide a contact address for the duration of their leave and advise their manager of any changes to personal circumstances during this time

**Professional membership/registration** Where applicable, employees must maintain their professional membership and/or state registration

**Medical clearance on return to work** – The return to their post will be subject to medical clearance by Occupational Health. Employees are

required to notify Occupational Health of any changes to their health (for example, significant exposures to infectious disease) on their return, in advance of or on their first day of their return to work. Employees will be required to update their occupational health record and a fitness certificate will be issued. The Trust may require the employee to see a consultant Occupational Health physician and/or undergo further infection screening tests if clinically indicated

**CPD/PREP** - to maintain up to date skills, knowledge and expertise and to ensure a smooth transition back into employment at the end of the release period staff must ensure that, where applicable, they keep knowledge and skills up to date with professional journals and, where applicable, they have attended a minimum number of training sessions for the purpose of Continuous Professional Development and Post Registration Education and Practice (PREP).

## **7.4 The Trust's Obligations**

The Trust will:

- as a rule, and where circumstances allow, enable the individual to return to either their original post or another post which is suitable and appropriate on no less favourable conditions
- where appropriate keep the employee informed about developments/ changes in the department
- in the event of organisational change occurring during the release period, consult with the employee about proposals in accordance with Trust policy.

## **8 Terms and Conditions of the Scheme**

**Section 8 applies to periods of unpaid release exceeding 4 weeks.**

### **8.1 Continuous service**

The duration of the voluntary release will be regarded as continuous employment for statutory purposes.

Where periods of unpaid voluntary release exceed four weeks, other contractual provisions which are service dependent will be suspended for the period of the release, for example contractual redundancy payments, leave entitlements and incremental credit. This means that such unpaid periods of release exceeding four weeks will not count as service for these purposes and therefore these benefits will not continue to accrue during such periods.

## **8.2 NHS Pension scheme (see section 7.3.1)**

Maintaining pensionable benefits and continuing contributions during or on return from the leave is the responsibility of the employee.

## **8.3 National Insurance Contributions**

National insurance (NI) will not be paid by the Trust for periods of unpaid voluntary release. Employees can continue to pay NI contributions during their leave but must arrange this via their local Department of Social Security. On return to work after the release period, entitlements to statutory sick pay, statutory maternity pay, state pensions and unemployment benefit can be affected if there has been a break in NI contributions.

## **8.4 Car loan/bicycle loans/lease cars/rent allowances**

Arrangements for the repayment of any benefits where the Trust facilitates loans/payments direct from salary will be suspended during the period of unpaid leave. The schedule for repayment must be discussed with the employee's manager and the payroll department informed accordingly.

## **9 Conditions on return to work**

**9.1** Employees who take advantage of the Voluntary Release Scheme must, on commencement of the leave, make a commitment to return to work at the end of the leave for a minimum of three months.

**9.2** The employee will have the right to either return to their original post or another post which is suitable and appropriate on no less favourable terms and conditions.

**9.3** The employee must secure health clearance from Occupational Health by their first day of return to work. The Trust may require the employee to see a consultant Occupational Health Physician and/or undergo further infection screening tests if clinically indicated.

**9.4** There may be a requirement to undergo a re-induction course/training period prior to returning to work. The manager/clinical director following discussion with the employee will assess this need.

**9.5** Failure to return to duty on the agreed date without giving a justifiable and reasonable cause may leave the Trust with no option but to assume that the employee has resigned from their employment. Nevertheless, prior to any such decisions being made, the Trust will endeavour to make contact with

the employee by writing to the address provided as their correspondence address, allowing a reasonable time for a response.

## **10 Procedure for Application**

Employees should ensure that they have read Sections 7, 8 and 9 of this Policy to confirm that they understand all requirements.

Employees should apply to their managers for volunteer release using Volunteer Release Scheme Application Form at Appendix A (note: Special Time-out and Career Break Schemes are available which allow a longer period of leave than the 3 months provided in this Policy)

If employees wish to apply for one of the eight places of '5 paid voluntary release days' they should first contact: [evelyn.brealey@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:evelyn.brealey@addenbrookes.nhs.uk) to check availability prior to making a formal application to their manager. A confirmatory e-mail will be forwarded to the employee and a copy of this must be attached to the employee's formal application to their manager. Confirmation of availability does not count as authorisation to take the leave. This is obtained from the employee's manager following consideration of their application. An employee must provide a copy of their Application Form, signed by their manager to confirm authorisation of leave, to Evelyn Brealey, ACT office, Box 126 within 21 days of confirmation of availability to secure the '5 paid voluntary release days'.

## **11 Monitoring the compliance with and effectiveness of the policy**

Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust reserves the right to amend the rules of the Volunteer Release Scheme to reflect the changing needs of the Trust. Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust will monitor the take up of the eight annual paid voluntary release days. The Organisational Development Directorate will monitor uptake of unpaid voluntary leave using information provided by managers using form P5.

## **Equality and Diversity Statement**

This document complies with the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust employment Equality and Diversity statement.

## **Disclaimer**

It is your responsibility to check against the electronic library that this printed out copy is the most recent issue of this document.

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust takes no responsibility for and accepts no liability for employees of the Trust who volunteer and are released under this scheme nor does the Trust accept liability for the consequences of any of the volunteer's actions or omissions while on release.

## Document management

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Draft 3	HR	HR	30 January 2006	Medical Director	
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## Appendix A

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

### Volunteer Release Scheme Application Form (Addenbrooke's Abroad)

*(Employees should check availability of 'paid voluntary release days' prior to completing this application. Note: confirmation of availability does not guarantee authorisation of voluntary leave by employee's manager)*

<b>NAME:</b>	<b>JOB TITLE:</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>BOX NO:</b> <b>EXT:</b>
<b>CONTRACTED WORKING HOURS:</b>	
<b>HOME ADDRESS:</b>	<b>HOME TEL NO:</b>
<b>MOBILE:</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>
<b>PREFERRED METHOD OF CONTACT WHILST ABROAD:</b>	
<b>DETAILS OF VOLUNTARY ROLE TO BE UNDERTAKEN:</b>	
Country within which this role is based:	
<b>DETAILS OF ABSENCE</b>	
Leave to commence from:	
Planned date of return to work:	
<b>Breakdown of period of absence</b> <i>(complete 1-3 as applicable):</i>	
1. Unpaid voluntary release days: <i>(max 3 months)</i> : Number of working days:	
2. Annual leave <i>(max 2 weeks)</i> : Number of days/hours to be taken: first day of leave                      last day of leave:	
3. '5 paid voluntary release days': first day of leave                      last day of leave: <i>(e-mail confirmation from Evelyn Brealey must be attached to this application if this leave has been granted)</i>	

**Provide details of the benefits of you undertaking this voluntary role:**

- personally including skills and development
- to your workplace within the Trust
- to the organisation/country you propose to volunteer with

**How will your duties be covered whilst you are away?**

**If your role includes management of staff/services, how will your absence (if agreed) affect your delivery of:**

Supervision

Performance appraisal

Training

Communication

Staff support

I confirm that I have read the Volunteer Release Scheme for 'Addenbrooke's Abroad' Policy (in particular sections 7, 8 and 9)

Applicant's signature:

Date: .....

**For completion by applicant's manager**

I have read sections 4 'eligibility' and 7 'employer and employee obligations during voluntary release' contained in the Volunteer Release Scheme Policy and have considered the impact of this absence.

Application approved/declined (*delete as applicable*) Date:

I have completed and forwarded to Payroll a P5 to confirm period & purpose of leave

NAME:

DESIGNATION:

SIGNED:

- Copy of this form: on personal file (together with copy of completed P5)
- Copy of this form to Evelyn Brealey of the ACT office, Box 126 **only if** '5 paid voluntary release days' have been confirmed and manager has approved application