

# **BUC Policy - Section 4**

## **EMPLOYEES' WELFARE**

(revised Sep 2019)

### **A. MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS** (revised Jun 2017)

#### **1. ALL EMPLOYEES**

At any time following their appointment or during their employment individuals may be required by their employing organisation to undergo a medical examination or an occupational health assessment, in accordance with denominational guidelines. The expense of this examination is the responsibility of the employing organization.

#### **2. PERIODIC HEALTH EVALUATION**

- (a) Periodic health evaluations conforming to a designated range of tests are available to employees upon their request, following consultation with the employing organization.
- (b) The normal frequency of authorised health evaluations shall be every three years from the date of employment.
- (c) The cost of authorised health evaluations will be met in full by the employing organization.
- (d) The procedural arrangements are as follows:
  - (i) In the case of non-medical scheme subscribers, the employee shall confirm the general practitioner's willingness to conduct the tests and to provide a quotation for same.
  - (ii) A letter of authorisation shall be provided by the employing organization who will request with the employee's consent, a written response from the examining doctor on the general health of the employee.
  - (iii) The examining doctor shall be requested to provide a written non-technical report to the employee.
  - (iv) Where the general practitioner under (d) (i) is not the employee's GP the examining doctor shall be requested to submit a more detailed report to the employee's general practitioner.
- (e) This provision is separate and independent from any arrangements to manage performance support.

### **B. SABBATICAL LEAVE** (revised Sep 2019)

#### **1. PREAMBLE**

The Seventh-day Adventist church recognises the contribution made by ministerial employees, Bible workers and administrative officers. It also recognises the benefit to such employees of a substantial break in the work pattern which gives them time to reflect on and evaluate the course and content of their ministry; and an opportunity to pursue some form of self-development that will benefit their future ministry.

#### **2. PURPOSE**

Sabbatical leave is designed to provide qualifying employees with a period away from the routine of pastoral ministry and administration for reflection and study. It is intended that this time should be used in such ways as will provide for the personal and professional development of the employee for future service

### **3. GUIDELINES**

Ministerial employees, bible workers and administrators who have completed seven years of continuous ministry within the territory of the British Union Conference, excluding periods of study leave, shall be eligible to be considered for sabbatical leave subject to the following conditions:

- (a) Requests for sabbatical leave are subject to the approval of the employing body's executive committee and are not an automatic right.
- (b) As the purpose of sabbatical leave is to provide opportunity for individual development that will also benefit the church, employees should ordinarily be expected to be able to continue in employment within the territory of the British Union Conference for three years following completion of a period of sabbatical leave.
- (c) The employee will have demonstrated an active programme of pastoral/evangelistic or administrative leadership.
- (d) Adequate arrangements can be made for the continuation of preaching ministry, visitation and pastoral care, and/or administration during the leave period.
- (e) The sabbatical period must be at least one month and should not be more than three months. This is to ensure that the benefits of a significant break from regular duties can be experienced.
- (f) The employee will agree to forgo one week of annual holiday entitlement for each month of sabbatical leave, pro-rated for periods extending beyond a month. Any remaining holiday entitlement will be taken separately and not concurrently with the sabbatical leave.
- (g) Employees who have been granted a period of sabbatical leave will need to complete seven further years of continuous service within the territory of the British Union Conference, excluding periods of study leave, before they can make a further application to benefit under this policy.

### **4. PROCEDURE**

- (a) Employees will seek, in writing, an informal meeting with their administrative officers to discuss their desire to benefit from the provisions of sabbatical leave. Alternatively, employees may be recommended for sabbatical by their employer in which case this informal meeting will be initiated by the administrative officers.
- (b) On receipt of provisional approval from their administrative officers, a formal application for consideration will be submitted to the employing body's executive committee/board nine months prior to any proposed commencement date. This application will include a draft plan indicating the employees' reasons for wanting the leave, the objectives he or she hopes to achieve, how this will be done and the perceived benefits for both the employee and the employer.
- (c) Following committee approval the employees shall submit, in counsel with their administrative officers, a detailed application, including a financial plan. This submission should be made six months in advance of the start of the sabbatical leave and should be approved by the executive committee of the employing organisation prior to the commencement of such leave. The Ministerial Association secretary will be willing to assist employees in giving advice on subjects, courses and venues amongst other matters relating to the drafting of the sabbatical programme.
- (d) An agreement will be signed between the employer and the employee, confirming the conditions of the sabbatical leave. This agreement will be filed as part of the employee's permanent personnel record.
- (e) Employees absent on sabbatical leave are required to keep in contact with their Human Resources department on a monthly basis and must not do any paid work without the prior approval of their administrative officers.
- (f) Employees are expected to complete a written report on their sabbatical of 1,500 words minimum. This process ensures maximum benefit by helping the individual to draw together and to reflect on the various strands of study, reading, research, or practical experience undertaken. This report must be submitted to the Ministerial Association Secretary no later than two months after the end of the sabbatical. Normally the last week of the sabbatical should be devoted to writing the report.

## **5. PROVISIONS**

- (a) While on sabbatical leave employees will continue to receive their regular monthly salary, but excluding travel budget reimbursement, except as the latter forms part of their approved financial plan for the leave period.
- (b) Employees away on sabbatical leave will remain under contract during their absence and all contractual benefits will continue to accrue and apply during sabbatical leave.
- (c) The costs of the short-term sabbatical programme will be met by the employing organization up to a maximum figure of 50% of the prevailing monthly package salary factor.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION**

Each administrative unit within the BUC, through its executive committee or board, will be responsible for implementation.

## **C. DEATH IN SERVICE** (revised Sep 2019)

In the event of an employee dying whilst in service of the employing organization before their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday a lump sum may be payable to the deceased employee's nominee(s) through a Group Life Assurance Policy issued to the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

1. All permanent employees between 18 and 64 at the time of eligibility who have completed 24 months continuous denominational service shall be eligible upon death.
2. The Life Assurance Benefit shall be an amount equal to four times (4x) the employee's annual pensionable package salary at the time of death (this excludes regional weighting, all allowances, travel expenses, etc.). If necessary, this benefit may be restricted to ensure that Inland Revenue limits are not exceeded.
3. The benefit is normally paid in accordance with an 'Expression of Wish' made in writing by the employee and filed with the trustees of the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Group Life Assurance Scheme. The final decision is determined by the trustees of the Seventh-day Adventist Group Life Assurance Scheme.
4. Payment in this manner will in most circumstances be free from Inheritance Tax.
6. If the employee is temporarily absent from work normal premiums will be continued by the employer so that the Life Assurance cover remains in force. The maximum period during which cover may remain in force is twelve consecutive months, unless absence is due to illness or injury. In the latter case premiums will be paid for as long as the employee continues to receive remuneration from the employer.
7. Entitlement to benefit will cease immediately upon termination of employment.
8. The employer reserves the right to amend or discontinue the Scheme at any time should circumstances make it necessary.

## **D. FUNERAL ALLOWANCE** (revised Nov 2018)

### **1. SPOUSE AND DEPENDENTS**

Employing organisations may pay an allowance, equal to 50% of the prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor, towards the funeral expenses of the employee's spouse or dependent children who die during the employee's service.

### **2. PENSIONERS**

The British Union Conference will pay an allowance, equal to two times (2x) the monthly pension benefit, up to 50% of the prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor, towards the funeral expenses of a recipient of pension benefit from the Seventh-day Adventist Retirement Plan. The same allowance may be granted by the British Union Conference towards the funeral expenses of such a recipient's spouse. Where both partners are recipients of pension benefits from the Seventh-day Adventist Retirement Plan, the allowance will be equal to two times (2x) their joint monthly pension benefits, up to 50% of the prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor. The minimum allowance towards

the funeral expenses of any recipient of pension benefit from the Seventh-day Adventist Retirement Plan will be 5% of the prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor.

## **E. PENSION** (Revised Mar 2018)

### **1. SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST RETIREMENT PLAN**

From 1998 the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (the Main Employer) operated a non-contributory, Inland Revenue Exempt Approved Retirement Plan for the benefit of Plan Members in its employment, or in the employment of other Participating Employers. This plan is known as the "Seventh-day Adventist Retirement Plan" (SDARP). The SDARP closed, to new members and continuing accrual for existing members, on 31 December 2013. Plan members with accrued benefit on 31 December 2013 are entitled to draw their preserved benefits in harmony with the Plan's Trust Deed and Rules. An Explanatory Booklet is available from the BUC Pension Plan Coordinator.

The default age for drawing benefit from the SDARP is 65. Employees who are Plan Members and who are terminating their employment with a view to retirement must submit their application to commence Plan pensions six months prior to the retirement date.

Employees who qualify for benefit under the SDARP and opt to continue working beyond their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday may choose to defer commencing benefit until retirement OR chose to commence receipt of benefit at, or any point after, their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. Such employees must make their decision known to their employing body a minimum of six months before their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Applications are first approved by the employee's executive committee and then forwarded to the BUC Pension Plan Co-ordinator for ratification by the BUC executive committee.

It is the responsibility of former employees with deferred benefit in the SDARP to provide the British Union Conference with up-to-date details regarding any changes to their name and address. They are also responsible for initiating an application to start receiving their pension benefit. Application should be made directly to the BUC Pension Plan Co-ordinator, British Union Conference, Stanborough Park, Watford, Herts WD25 9JZ, who will process the retirement application through the BUC executive committee.

### **2. RETIREMENT TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE**

Employees who qualify for pension benefit under the SDARP, and retire from active service, will receive a lump sum "retirement transitional assistance" from their final employer calculated as follows:

- (a) Employees whose employing organisation **HAS** adopted the new package salary structure and who have individually accepted their revised package salary structure:
  - (i) Two months' pensionable package salary factor, plus
  - (ii) 5% of the monthly pensionable package salary factor for each year of pensionable service with the Seventh-day Adventist Retirement Plan.
- (b) Employees whose employing organisation has **NOT** adopted the new package salary structure or individual employees who have not accepted their revised package salary structure:
  - (i) Two months basic salary and housing allowance (where the latter is received) plus
  - (ii) 5% of the monthly basic salary plus housing allowance (where the latter is received) for each year of pensionable service with the Seventh-day Adventist Retirement Plan.

Employees who continue to work beyond their default age will qualify for the "retirement transitional assistance" at the time of actual retirement from active employment.

### **3. SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST GROUP PERSONAL PENSION SCHEME**

From 1 January 2014 the BUC, and participating employers, set up a group personal pension scheme with Legal & General. This plan is known as the "Seventh-day Adventist Group Personal Pension Scheme" (SDAGPP). All employees in continuing employment on 1 January 2014 were automatically enrolled in the SDAGPP. Employees who commenced employment on, or after, 1 January 2014 and complete three (3) months employment will be enrolled in the SDAGPP providing their earnings meet

the UK Government auto enrolment criteria of an eligible jobholder. If earnings are below those of an eligible jobholder the employee is still entitled to opt-in to the SDAGPP and should discuss this with their employer.

Where applicable, the employer will make contributions into the SDAGPP based on the percentage of the employee's pensionable package salary that has been voted by the BUC Executive Committee. Every employee can opt to make personal contributions into the SDAGPP and if interested should discuss this with their employer's finance dept. The BUC reserve the right to alter the level of employer contributions but will always remain within the employer contributions level required by the UK Government.

#### **4. BUC INSTITUTIONS NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE SDAGPP**

Other employers who are not members of the Seventh-day Adventist Group Personal Pension Scheme (SDAGPP) are expected to follow the lead of the BUC Executive Committee and make equitable payments into their employees' pension schemes.

#### **5. RETIREMENT PLAN IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

Employees in the Republic of Ireland who are Irish Nationals, or who have never worked in the UK, will be enrolled in a group personal pension scheme that has been set up with New Ireland Assurance Co. plc. This plan is known as the "Irish Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Group Retirement Plan" (IMSDAGRP). Contributions on behalf of employees are made into this plan on the same basis as for those enrolled in the SDAGPP. Employees can obtain more information about this plan direct from New Ireland Assurance, for details contact the BUC Pension Plan coordinator.

### **F. RETIREMENT** (revised Jun 2016)

For all pension plans the employee's default age to commence retirement benefits is 65. The default age does not affect the employee's statutory right to consider when and how they draw their benefits and does not have to coincide with actual retirement from employment.

Between one year and no less than six months before the employee's default age, the employer will meet with the employee to discuss the employee's options and plans regarding pension and retirement.