

BUC Policy - Section 4

EMPLOYEES' WELFARE

(revised Jun 2025)

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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 Mar 2023)

1. PREAMBLE

The Seventh-day Adventist church recognises the contribution made by ministerial employees, Bible workers, departmental directors 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 Jun 2025)

In the event of an employee dying whilst in service of the employing organization before their 70th 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. The final decision is determined by the trustees of the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
4. Payment in this manner will in most circumstances be free from Inheritance Tax.
5. 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.
6. Entitlement to benefit will cease immediately upon termination of employment.
7. The employer reserves the right to amend or discontinue the Scheme at any time should circumstances make it necessary.

D. FUNERAL ALLOWANCE (revised Jun 2025)

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 an employee who dies during employment and the same allowance may be granted towards the funeral expenses of an employee's spouse or dependent children under the age of 18 who die during the employee's service.

2. PENSIONERS

The British Union Conference will pay an allowance, equal to 2.5% of the prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor for each full year of pensionable service credit within the BUC, up to 50% of the prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor, towards the funeral expenses of a recipient of a BUC or Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ireland (SDACI) workplace pension scheme. The same allowance may be granted by the British Union Conference towards the funeral expenses of such a recipient's spouse.

The minimum such funeral allowance will be 10% of the prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor.

E. PENSION (revised Sep 2023)

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 65th birthday may choose to defer commencing benefit until retirement OR chose to commence receipt of benefit at, or any point after, their 65th birthday. Such employees must make their decision known to their employing body a minimum of six months before their 65th 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 (revised Sep 2023)

Employees who qualify for pension benefit under a BUC or SDACI workplace pension scheme, and retire from active service, will receive a once-only lump sum "retirement transitional assistance" from their final employer. This will be made up of a proportional and a non-proportional component, as follows:

Year	Proportional Component as a percentage of the prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor	Non-Proportional Component as a percentage of the prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor
2023	5%	200%

2024	6%	160%
2025	7%	120%
2026	8%	80%
2027	9%	40%
2028+	10%	0%

The proportional component is calculated as a percentage of their prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor for each continuous full-time equivalent year of pensionable service credit within the BUC, as recorded on their service record, at the time of their retirement.

The non-proportional component is simply calculated as a percentage of their prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor.

The individual's prevailing monthly pensionable package salary factor = (Monthly Salary Factor) x Time% x Salary% x Package% at the time of their retirement.

Costs to be shared proportionally among previous employers based on the employee's service record.

3. WORKPLACE PENSION SCHEMES

From 1 January 2014 the BUC, and participating employers, set up workplace group personal pension schemes with Legal & General (UK) and New Ireland Assurance (Republic of Ireland). These schemes are known as the "Seventh-day Adventist Group Personal Pension Scheme" (SDAGPP) and the "Irish Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Group Retirement Plan" (IMSDAGRP) respectively, and are the only schemes that the BUC, and participating employers, will contribute to. All employees in continuing employment on 1 January 2014 were automatically enrolled into one of these two schemes. From 1 January 2014, all new employees who complete three (3) months employment have been or will be automatically enrolled into one of these schemes, providing their earnings meet the respective government's auto enrolment criteria for an eligible jobholder

If earnings are below those of an eligible jobholder the employee is still entitled to opt-in to one of the schemes and should discuss this with their employer.

Where applicable, the employer will make contributions into these schemes 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 schemes and if interested should discuss this with their employer's finance dept. The BUC reserves the right to alter the level of employer contributions but will always remain within the employer contributions level required by the respective 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 2023)

For all pension plans and schemes 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.