

**SECONDMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**



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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Recruitment and Selection Policy

### **Secondments**

1.2 Secondments are a temporary placement or a temporary 'loan' of an employee to other duties, responsibilities or projects. They provide a development opportunity for the individual involved and a means of advancing their career. Secondments also increase the skills base of the council by promoting flexibility, strengthening relationships and sharing skills and knowledge across the council.

1.3 The purpose of secondments is to provide personal development for the employee that is designed to be brought back into the section/team. Secondments are usually short term and allow the employee to develop new skills and abilities.

1.4 To avoid misunderstanding, and to ensure the success of the scheme, each secondment opportunity must be carefully chosen and clearly specified. All parties involved must be clear about the benefits that will be derived from the placement and the objectives must relate to the wider goals of the council, as well as the employee's development plan. The details of the placement must be agreed, put in writing, and attached to the secondment agreement.

### **Secondment to higher graded post/undertaking more senior work – "Acting Up"**

1.5 "Acting up" into a post arises when an employee is temporarily seconded and undertakes full or part time duties of a higher graded post/undertakes more senior responsibilities and duties for a consecutive period of at least 4 weeks. In this situation it may be appropriate to pay an "acting up" payment. See section 5 below.

## **2. Scope**

2.1 This procedure applies to all employees of the council including those on part time or fixed term contracts. This procedure does not apply to agency workers.

2.2 Employees with less than one year's service in their current position would not normally be considered for secondment/acting up opportunities.

## **3. Purpose of secondments**

3.1 Secondment opportunities may be full or part time and can arise for a variety of reasons such as:

- To carry out specific project work
- To cover maternity/adoption/shared parental leave
- To cover long term sick leave
- To fill a post temporarily pending permanent recruitment

- Directorate is being restructured and there is a requirement for someone to undertake responsibilities of the higher graded post in order to deliver the service temporarily
- 3.2 Internal secondments may offer a sideways move (where an employee moves from their substantive post to one on a same grade in another area) or the opportunity work at higher level (where the employee moves to a role that is a higher salary level)
- 3.3 External secondments are where an employee moves to a partner organisation. In these circumstances the council remains the employer and the employee will continue to be subject to the council's policies and procedures. External secondments are usually subject to cross charging in order to reimburse the remuneration and on costs for the employee.
- 3.4 Incoming secondments are where the council hosts an employee from a partner organisation. In these circumstances the partner organisation remains the employer and the employee will continue to be subject to their policies and procedures.

#### **4. Duration of secondments**

- 4.1 A secondment arrangement is by its nature temporary. The maximum period of a secondment is normally 12 months. The period of secondment must be agreed and clearly defined in the agreement signed by all parties.
- 4.2 In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to extend the period (providing there are clear business reasons for doing so) to ensure that the council continues to use skills and experience effectively and to maintain the development of the employee. Where a secondment may need to be extended, consideration should first be given as to whether the position is a permanent requirement in which case an appropriate recruitment and selection process should take place.
- 4.3 Any extension of a secondment must be discussed between the employee, host and home managers and be approved by the Director. Where a significant extension is requested (i.e. 6 months plus) or the secondment arrangement exceeds 18 months in duration, as a result of multiple extensions, the host manager should liaise with ODHR to determine whether the employee should be offered a permanent or fixed term contract, on the substantive salary grade for the position, as an alternative to extending the secondment. If the employee chooses to accept a fixed term contract, they would need to resign from their substantive post and there would be no right to return to their previous position.

#### **5. Salary during secondment and Acting Up**

- 5.1 It is expected that the majority of secondments will involve individuals transferring temporarily on the same grade and/or that the opportunity will provide for personal and career development. However if the secondment post requires a significant increase in duties and responsibilities and/or is to cover the work of a higher graded post it is usually necessary to pay an "acting up" payment in line with the principles of equal pay. Decisions on payment should be made at the discretion of the line manager and consideration should be given to;

- The nature and complexity of the responsibilities undertaken by the employee and their current spinal point
- Whether the employee is undertaking full or part responsibilities
- If the employee is placed into the post as a development opportunity

- 5.1 Where an “acting up” payment is necessary due to the nature of the secondment, the salary will commence at the bottom of the established salary level for the position being undertaken.
- 5.2 If the employee is not taking on all the duties of the position, the manager should liaise with ODHR to determine the appropriate salary level for the position being undertaken. In this situation an honorarium payment may be made at the completion of the secondment to reflect the partial undertaking of responsibilities of the post.
- 5.3 If the employee is undertaking the role as a development opportunity then there is no additional payment.
- 5.4 Where an “acting up” payment applies it should be paid as an adjustment to the secondee’s monthly pay.
- 5.5 If an employee chooses to be seconded to a position at a lower grade, pay protection will not apply as the employee has voluntarily sought secondment to a post offering a lower rate of pay.

## **6. Funding and authorisation**

- 6.1 When a vacancy arises, managers may consider if there are business benefits to offering the position as a secondment opportunity. Each case will need to be considered on its own merit with consideration of service needs, for example:
- Additional costs such as training
  - Ability to recruit backfill
  - Planned organisational changes/impact on services
- 6.2 It is essential to ensure that secondment funding is in place prior to seconding an employee from their substantive position. The receiving (host) department will be required to meet the costs of the secondment for the full duration.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the host Director or their delegated representative to decide if a secondment and any acting up payment arrangement would be appropriate.
- 6.4 Where a manager chooses to backfill the employee on secondment, they must do so on a temporary basis to ensure that there is no increase in establishment when the employee on secondment returns to their substantive position.

## **7. Recruitment and Selection**

- 7.1 Secondment opportunities will usually be open to all employees and advertised internally across the Council. In some circumstances, managers may have employees within their own section that have some of the skills, knowledge and experience for the opportunity. If so, managers will need to consider whether the advertising of the secondment should be restricted to these employees. However, consideration must still be given at this stage as to whether employees from outside the immediate section could benefit from the opportunity. When considering restricted internal advertising, this must be discussed and agreed with your HR Business Partner prior to advertising.
- 7.2 Council selection procedures must be used to recruit to a secondment opportunity. The process adopted will be determined by the nature and level of the secondment. For example, some posts may require a DBS check.
- 7.3 An employee applying for a secondment needs to have obtained the agreement of their manager prior to submitting an application. There will be a presumption in favour of allowing secondments unless there are compelling operational constraints that override this.
- 7.4 The line manager should respond to the request in writing, within 5 working days, providing the clear work based reason(s) for a refusal. Where a refusal is given the home manager should consider future and alternative development opportunities for the employee.

## **8 Secondment agreements and confirmation**

- 8.1 Following the selection process, a secondment agreement and accompanying letter will set out the terms of the secondment. The secondment agreement must be agreed and signed by the employee, the home manager and the host manager. Add link for Secondment Agreement Form.
- 8.2 The host manager is responsible for providing a secondment agreement, which must be signed by the employee and the relevant managers before the secondment commences. Once this has been done, it should be sent to the employee with an accompanying letter. ODHR can advise on all stages of this process.
- 8.3 The receiving manager is also responsible for ensuring that payroll is updated about the change of contract and for liaising with Finance and ODHR to ensure that appropriate cost code and/ or cross charging arrangements are in place if required.

## **9 Maintaining contact**

- 9.1 There is a dual responsibility on the employee and home manager to maintain regular contact during the secondment/acting up period. This will ensure the employee is kept informed on developments, changes and general information about their substantive service/team.

## **10 Returning to the substantive post**

- 10.1 In the majority of cases, the employee will return to their substantive post at the end of the secondment.
- 10.2 Should an employee's substantive post be affected during the secondment, for example due to organisational change, they will be fully consulted in line with the council's organisational change arrangements. Where the original position no longer exists, efforts will be made to secure a suitable alternative in line with the council's redeployment procedures.
- 10.3 It is recognised that in certain circumstances a secondment may need to be terminated early. Reasonable notice will be given to all parties, recognising that other existing backfill arrangements relating to the secondment will need to be considered.
- 10.4 An employee on secondment to an area that is affected by a reorganisation will have the choice of either returning to their substantive position or being considered for a position in the new structure, provided that this is not to the detriment of any substantive position holder. If the employee is partially covering the role rather than the full role, the seconding manager should seek advice from ODHR in respect of the appropriate way forward. Where a position is vacant (and being filled through a secondment arrangement) and the employee on secondment has been in the position for 12 months or more, then they will be eligible to be placed into the selection pool for the positions at the level they have been working to.
- 10.5 At least four weeks prior to the end of the secondment, liaison should take place between all parties involved to ensure a smooth return.
- 10.6 Upon returning to their substantive post, the employee should meet with their manager to be given an update on service developments during the course of their secondment. In addition, this is a good opportunity to evaluate the skills and experience they developed during the secondment and how these could further support the service area.

## **11 Secondment becomes a permanent position**

- 11.1 Secondments are temporary in nature and the employee should not expect it to continue past the expiry date outlined in the agreement. However if a decision is made to recruit to the position on a permanent basis the permanent position should be appointed to following a recruitment and selection process in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy. The seconded employee may apply for the position and will be considered equally with any other applicants.
- 11.2 The notice period should be mutually agreed between host and home manager.