

Secondment Scheme

1. Introduction

Secondment is the temporary transfer or temporary “assignment” of an employee to another role with other duties, responsibilities or projects and an agreed end date.

When the agreed secondment period comes to an end the secondee will resume their original role unless agreement is made to extend.

The main purposes of secondment might include:

- enabling employees to be deployed to areas requiring short-term or temporary resource
- providing flexibility to provide specific skills or expertise where it is needed
- supporting “joined up” working and service improvement
- supporting development, progression and flexibility by allowing employees to broaden their experience and skills
- strengthening a culture of flexibility to facilitate improvement and change
- developing and sharing skills and knowledge within and across the Council

2. Scope

This Scheme applies to all employees excluding staff in locally managed schools.

3. Key Principles

A permanent employee applying for a fixed term or temporary post internally will automatically be considered as a secondee.

All fixed term and temporary vacancies will be advertised first (agree timescales) as secondment opportunities unless there are exceptional circumstances. If there are no appointable internal candidates, the vacant post will be advertised externally.

Where an application has been made and the individual is successful the secondment request will be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Consideration must be given to how the request can be facilitated such as varying the length of secondment, start and finish date or other terms before a request is rejected.

Where a secondment cannot be supported, the manager must explain the rationale and discuss what other development opportunities might be available to support the individual’s personal and professional development.

4. Types of Secondment

The Scheme applies to:

- **Internal secondments: Sideways moves** - from an established post to another post on the same grade
 - **Internal secondments: to a higher grade** – a secondment/”acting up” to a more senior post
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- **External secondment to partner organisations** - where the Council remains the employer
- **External secondment from partner organisations** - where the Council is the host not the employer

5. Advertising a Secondment

All temporary and fixed term vacancies should be advertised internally first as suitable for secondment. Permanent vacancies may also be suitable for a secondment for a set period of time, where it supports the development of employees to be able to meet the requirements of hard to fill posts and should also be considered by services as part of their succession planning.

All secondment opportunities will be advertised on our vacancy site in line with the Council's policies and procedures and will be supported by a job description and person specification. Additional pre-employment checks may be required. e.g., posts requiring a DBS check.

Where a new project or team is being developed, secondees may be transferred to support and enable flexibility and provide development opportunities. If the project or team extends beyond six months, job descriptions and team structures should be finalised, evaluated and roles advertised in the normal way.

6. Duration

A secondment by its nature is temporary with the minimum period is expected to be 6 months and the maximum not exceeding 18 months. There may be exceptional circumstances where the duration may not meet these expectations.

If an extension is agreed then agreement must be between all parties and the revised end date confirmed. The host manager must also discuss the proposed extension with the original manager and seek advice from HR on any contractual implications before confirming an extension.

7. Permanent appointment to the post

If the post covered by the secondee needs to be recruited to permanently the post will be advertised in the usual way, ensuring all applicants are shortlisted and interviewed. It is important that the secondee has received feedback during the secondment as to their performance and areas for development to inform their decision as to whether they should apply for the permanent role. Secondees will generally be well-placed to do well at interview because of the experience and skills gained during their secondment

If the secondee applies and is successful they will be required to give the required notice to their original post, although the parties may agree immediate release.

If the secondee is unsuccessful, then the host department will give notice to the secondee, informing the original manager, and the secondee will return to their post within the timescales agreed. In addition, it will be important that the secondee receives good support from both the manager of the secondment and their original manager. This should include feedback as to why they have not been appointed, discussion and agreement as to what further development and support can be provided and careful management of a return to their substantive role.

8. Secondment Application process

Employees should discuss their intention to apply for a secondment from their manager before they submit an application. It is expected that managers will agree to the secondment unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Considerations for line managers:

- How will the secondment support the individual's personal development plan?
- What is the development value and benefit to the Council?
- What's the impact on the service of releasing the employee and how will the post be covered?
- What are the consequences of not supporting the secondment?

Advice can be sought from your usual HR representative in respect of options for filling the post:

- by an existing employee "acting up" or being seconded into the post
- "Acting up"/secondment arrangements must be advertised
- an agency worker/temporary employee may be engaged/recruited subject to agreement
- the post could remain vacant (the impact on the team/workload should be considered)
- the start date/ duration must be agreed between the original and host departments
- secondments may be full/part time or on a job share basis
- all parties must be clear about responsibilities and expectations before the secondment begins

This Scheme should be used as guidance where an external secondment is planned. The HR Service should be contacted to ensure that a secondment agreement is in place between all parties.

9. Review of Decision

The possibility of a secondment as a development opportunity should be part of regular discussions between the manager and employee as part of the Council's Performance, Wellbeing and Development Scheme.

Where a manager does not agree to releasing the individual, the manager will notify the employee in writing setting out the reasons for the decision. The employee can request a review of the decision via the informal route provided within the Council's Employee Resolution Procedure. The decision will then be reviewed by the appropriate Head of Service (or more senior officer). The review must be undertaken immediately following the manager's decision. The review decision will be final and notified to the employee in writing within 7 calendar days of the completion of the review.

10. Approved Secondments

When an employee is offered a secondment, the original and host manager should meet to discuss the arrangements to clarify, for example, the start date, day to day supervision, absence management and appraisal. Whilst the original manager may be reluctant to release the secondee until the vacated post has been filled, however, a time period of no more than 4 weeks should be given to release the employee.

The manager of the host department will notify HR of the terms and duration of the secondment by completing an Appointments Form on the MyView (HR) system.

All seconded employees should have a personal development plan agreed at the outset which will be used to set out clear objectives and support their development in the secondment.

Fixed term or Temporary Employees

Where a fixed term or temporary employee is successful in obtaining a secondment and their contract is due to expire before the end of the secondment, the following process should be taken forward by contacting your usual HR representative:

- The original manager will meet with the employee in advance of the end date to begin the process to end the contract.
- The original manager will discuss the contract status with the host manager and ensure that the secondee is transferred into the seconded post on a fixed term basis until the end of the agreed secondment period.

11. Financial Considerations

Financial considerations should be discussed by the original and host managers in advance as part of the approval process and agreed before the secondment begins, e.g., who is going to fund the salary, on-costs and replacement cover of the employee whilst on secondment. There are several options depending on the type of secondment, the potential benefits to the employee, the original/host department and/or the Council. All recruitment including secondment opportunities should be agreed by CLT before progressing to advert.

- **Host department funds** - the host department is responsible for paying the employee's salary and on-costs against identified staffing budgets. This is likely to be the normal position.
- **Parent and host department part fund** - where the secondment will benefit both the original and host department/organisation.
- **Original department funds** - and continues to pay the employee's salary and oncosts where the secondment is solely to benefit the employee's development.

Managers are advised to seek advice from the HR Service and their relevant Finance Business Partner.

If an employee is seconded into a higher graded post they will receive the appropriate salary for the duration of the secondment. Additional expenses incurred to meet the requirements of the role, e.g., travel allowances, will usually be borne by the host department/organisation.

12. Managing the Secondment Arrangement

The host manager will be responsible for day to day line management.

Where the employee is seconded to an external organisation, overall management remains the responsibility of the Council but discussion should take place with the host manager. Performance/absence/disciplinary matters should be managed by the original manager with input from the host manager.

It is important that both the original and host managers meet with the secondee regularly to review the secondment. It is essential that there are clear lines of communication, objectives are agreed, the support to be offered is communicated and that any concerns can be addressed at the earliest opportunity. Care should also be taken by the original manager to keep the secondee updated about their permanent work area, any

developments or changes and to keep the secondee in touch with their team, and to consult the secondee where appropriate on any matter that might impact on their substantive role. The secondee must be consulted if a restructure or redundancy situation arises in the original department and impacts on the secondee original post.

A secondment is expected to be for between 6 months and not exceed 18 months.

The Host Manager should discuss and agree with the secondee the development needs and induction and training that will be required at the start and throughout the secondment to ensure its success.

13. Ending the Secondment

Managers should:

- Contact HR to ensure that the return is carried out in accordance with agreed process and to ensure that changes are made to return the secondee to their original post, salary, terms and conditions etc
- Arrange an appraisal meeting to evaluate the learning experience and to explore how any new skills and experience can be best utilised in the original role.
- Ensure an appropriate re-induction is carried out to cover any changes in policies and procedures and any changes to individual and teamwork priorities and projects.
- Review the employee's job description to ensure it continues to accurately reflect the requirements on return from secondment, e.g., changes in working practices.

14. Terms and Conditions during Secondment

All secondment arrangements will require a variation to the contract of the secondee. Since the secondee will have applied for the post advertised the recruiting manager will need to complete an Appointments Form on MyView to advise the HR Service. The HR Service will issue a temporary variation to the secondee's contract which will include any changes to salary, leave entitlement and hours/working arrangements.

The secondee will generally be paid the rate for the role to which they are being seconded and be expected to undertake all the duties of the role, but is likely to need support and training to do so, in much the same way as any new starter. If it is intended that less than the full duties will be undertaken, the host manager should discuss with HR whether an honorarium might be more appropriate and the advertisement for the opportunity should make this clear.

The Contract will also specify that the employee has the right to return to their original post at the end of the secondment. The secondee will continue to be paid through the Council payroll with usual deductions, as appropriate.

Once the secondee begins their placement, they will be added to the host manager's MyView profile so that annual leave, sickness absence etc can be notified and managed.

The secondee will accept and work within the host department's/organisations health and safety policies, procedures and guidance.

For external secondments a separate Secondment Agreement will be agreed by all parties in consultation with the HR Service. The Council's HR policies and procedures will continue to apply to an employee during an external organisation unless varied by agreement between all parties.

Continuous service will continue to accrue during the secondment period.

Your usual HR representative should be contacted if there is a proposal to end the secondment before the agreed date. The secondment can be terminated by the secondee, original and/or host department. A notice period of 4 weeks will usually be given by and to all parties which must be in writing following consultation with HR.

15. Review of the Scheme

The Scheme will reviewed and refreshed on a regularly basis to ensure it is effective for both staff and services.