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1. DEFINITIONS OF SECONDMENT

All types of secondment involve the temporary transfer of an employee from his/ her substantive post to a different post. They take place over a predetermined period, at the end of which the employee returns to his/ her substantive post.

The purpose of secondments is to provide learning and career development opportunities for employees, and to allow Services to access appropriate individuals to undertake temporary work.

Internal Secondment

An arrangement made with the mutual consent of the manager and the employee whereby an employee is released to work in another area of the Council. This is a valuable way of providing employee development opportunities, increasing the skill base within the Council, and resourcing short-term projects.

External Secondment

An arrangement made with the mutual consent of the manager and employee whereby the Council makes an employee available under specific agreed arrangements to work with another employer for a specific period of time. The employee will continue to be employed by the Council and will retain the main conditions of his/her employment.

Secondments are generally subject to VAT because HMRC see secondments as a taxable supply of staff. The exception to this rule is the secondment of a teaching professional to teach in another educational establishment or if the employee is jointly employed by both parties.

The burden of an additional charge (currently 20%) on top of employment costs can have an impact on an organisation’s ability to support a secondment if they are not able to recover VAT, therefore the organisation concerned needs to be aware of this prior to the secondment decision being taken.

Inward Secondment

An arrangement whereby the Council acts as host to a Secondee from an external agency. The Secondee will continue to be employed by his/her substantive employer but will work under the direction and control of the Council for a specified period and will undertake specific project work, or specific jobs, duties and responsibilities.
Reciprocal Secondment

An arrangement whereby the Council and an external organisation or two Services within the Council agree to the ‘exchange’ of two employees. The exchange will be for the purpose of developing the employees and bringing mutual benefit to the organisations/Services involved.

Where a Council employee is seconded to another organisation or vice versa, salary, allowances, pension contributions, travel & subsistence and out-of-pocket expenses will generally continue to be paid by the substantive organisation, with the costs being recovered from the host organisation. Training given in the secondment post will generally be funded by the host organisation.

Transfers of staff between equivalent posts within a team or section do not generally count as secondments. Advice can be obtained from Human Resources.

2. BENEFITS OF SECONDMENT

For the Council

- Create a more flexible organisation
- Increase employee knowledge, abilities and skills
- Enhance management development
- Broaden employee experience
- Develop partnerships with other organisations across both public and private sectors
- Provide opportunities for employees to gain experience within areas where certain categories of employee may be under-represented.

For the Employee

- Personal development
- Broaden experience and knowledge
- Develop the ability to transfer skills
- Develop confidence and flexibility
• Gain and test skill in a new environment.

For the Council as Host

• Exchange of information and ideas
• Enhance relationships with external bodies
• Plug short and longer term skills gaps
• Gain a fresh perspective on the operations within the Council
• Gain knowledge about other ways to do things
• Identify contacts for future use
• Development of Council employees.

All employees who have undertaken Secondment should be encouraged to disseminate what they have learnt to colleagues through formal reports to line management and Service management team. In certain circumstances it may be beneficial for articles to be prepared for Service newsletters or the Council’s in-house magazine ‘Accent’.

Services should put in place a system for evaluating the success of any Secondment and should monitor and evaluate both the benefits to the Council and the individual.

It is essential that there is sufficient budget provision to meet the costs of any Secondment, e.g. Training, temporary staff cover etc. Where an employee is seconded to a lower graded post he/she will retain his/her substantive salary, and costs need to be agreed between the substantive and secondment section/Service. Such matters must be suitably resolved before a secondment is made effective.

3. PROCEDURE

Please see the Resource Pack for details of the Secondment Process Flowchart.

Stage 1 - Post Advertised

Employees may seek a secondment into any temporary post advertised in the Council’s Vacancy List. There may be instances where the advertising of Secondment opportunities can be restricted to certain categories of Council employee. The means of publicising these opportunities should be discussed with Human Resources.
Managers are reminded to consider the following before advertising any post, and take the appropriate action: requirement to fill vacancy; accuracy of job description; appropriateness of person specification; need for job evaluation (grading); need for approval to establish new post. Please refer to the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Stage 2 - Employee Seeks Consent to Apply for Secondment

Employees seeking secondment must discuss this with their line manager - they may not apply for secondments without their manager’s consent. If consent is not secured, the post can still be pursued but as a temporary contract (with no right of return to substantive post), not on a secondment basis.

Line managers should consider the potential benefits of a secondment, as well as the need to cover the post. Possible cover arrangements include advertising as a temporary post or secondment, redistributing work, ‘acting up’ arrangements, and use of agency staff. Where the employee’s current post is temporary, managers should contact Human Resources for advice.

Employees should give some thought to the benefits the secondment would provide, and be prepared to make a case for the secondment to their line manager.

An employee who believes that his/her request to apply for a secondment has been unfairly refused may access the Council’s Grievance Procedure.

It is also appropriate for managers to highlight the availability of a secondment to their teams, and to indicate that they would be supportive of applications, where they feel that the post represents a development opportunity that would benefit their section. Managers must ensure that such opportunities are brought to the attention of the whole team.

Stage 3 - Employee Applies for Secondment

The Council’s Recruitment and Selection procedure is followed. If an employee seeking secondment is successful, preparations will be made for him/her to be seconded, including the drawing up of a Personal Development Plan. For external secondments a Secondment Agreement is also required. The development of the employee is seen as an integral part of any Secondment. Each employee offered a Secondment opportunity is required to have a Personal Development Plan, which details key areas with regard to the Secondment and includes details of key tasks and objectives as well as training and development opportunities. The plan is drawn up and agreed by the secondment manager, substantive manager, and employee.
If a Secondment is to last for more than 6 months the substantive manager should make an agreement with the host Service/ organisation for regular liaison visits to monitor progress in accordance with the agreed objectives within the Personal Development Plan.

Please see the Example Personal Development Plan, found in the Resource Pack.

In the case of an external Secondment a Secondment Agreement will also be prepared in consultation with the host organisation. This Agreement will cover:

- The maximum duration of the Secondment. (It is envisaged that Secondments should not exceed two years. In the case of Teachers this should be restricted to 23 months due to implications of their Conditions of Service.)
- Duties of the Secondee
- Conditions of Service of the Secondee
- Provision of Information by the Host Organisation
- Arrangements for Formal Discipline/ Grievance proceedings
- Health & Safety Issues
- Indemnity.

These general principles of External Secondment should be maintained in every case, however there may be an element of flexibility on the details in order to take account of particular circumstances, i.e. Circumstances within the Host organisation. Any variations must be agreed with the Secondee, the Manager within the Service, Human Resources and the Host organisation.

An example of a Secondment Agreement is attached in the Resource Pack.

Stage 4 - Employee is Seconded

Employee transfers to secondment post. An induction should be carried out on the first day, and subsequently any necessary training should be provided, and EAR/PDRS undertaken as appropriate.
Stage 5 - Contact Maintained Between Employee and Substantive Manager

Regular contact should be maintained between the employee and his/her substantive manager; this is especially important in the case of an external Secondment.

Communication can be maintained in a number of ways including the following:

- Passing on Core Briefs and notes of Team Briefing sessions
- Provide copies of ‘Accent’
- Send on copies of relevant circulars and correspondence, including the Weekly List of Staff Vacancies
- Maintain employee on E. Mail Circulation lists for relevant issues
- Maintain up-to-date- contact details on ‘Signpost’
- Maintain regular telephone contact. The manager should meet with or call the employee on a monthly basis.

Stage 6 - End of Secondment

At the end of the Secondment employees will be guaranteed a return to their substantive post and previous Terms and Conditions of employment. Salary progression in the substantive post will have been maintained throughout the Secondment period.

Immediately prior to return to substantive post the substantive manager will arrange to meet the secondee to discuss re-introduction to the post.

Stage 7 - Preparation of Reports on Secondment

Host Services and organisations are expected to prepare a report on the success of the Secondment, detailing whether the goals of the Secondment have been achieved, and the learning outcomes for the Secondee.

On return from a Secondment employees will prepare a report for their line manager and/or the Service management team on the value of the Secondment detailing the benefits both to themselves and the Council. An End of Secondment Report example of the suggested format is attached in the Resource Pack.
Manager and employee should use the reports as a basis for discussion of how the skills and experience gained by the employee whilst on secondment can be applied to benefit his/her substantive section. An action plan may be agreed to support the employee’s continuing development.

4. INWARD SECONDMENTS

The Council’s Recruitment and Selection policy will be followed, then the secondment manager will liaise with the substantive organisation to confirm the terms of the secondment (the Secondment Agreement may be adapted if required).

Inward secondees must be given any training necessary to their remit whilst seconded to the Council. The EAR/SDRS scheme will also be followed.

5. GENERAL

In some instances it may be appropriate for employees to be permitted to undertake more than one period of Secondment. This should be discussed with Human Resources prior to permission being granted.

If there are any changes to the substantive post (eg a Service Review is undertaken) the employee retains the same rights as if he/she had not been seconded. All rights would be retained in accordance with the Council’s Redeployment Policy and the Policy on Allocating People to posts.

If a secondment post is made permanent it must be advertised in accordance with the Council’s Recruitment & Selection Policy. Secondment to a post gives no favourable consideration for any permanent post.

Secondments will usually continue for the time initially stated, but can be extended subject to agreement from all parties and from Human Resources, and the completion/amendment of the related documentation (eg EMIS form, contract, Personal Development Plan and Secondment Agreement).

A secondee may choose to return to his/her substantive post earlier than planned (subject to the appropriate notice requirements). The substantive line manager must be advised so that he/she can make appropriate arrangements to terminate the contract of any individual covering the post, and to re-introduce the substantive post holder. Where an employee wishes to return to his/ her substantive post due to difficulties in the secondment, efforts should be made to resolve these difficulties.
Care should be taken with regard to the duration of a Secondment for Teachers. The Secondment of Teachers to a post covered by Teachers Conditions of Service should be restricted to a period not exceeding 23 months. This is due to the fact that Teachers Conditions of Service provides an entitlement to salary conservation following two consecutive years in a promoted post.

For further advice and guidance on any of the above please contact HR&OD.
# Secondment

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