



EAST HERTS COUNCIL

SECONDMENT POLICY

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Council's Secondment Policy has been established to demonstrate our commitment to the development of all of our employees, both for their current roles and for the changes and challenges of the future, both individually and organisationally. Secondments can be advantageous to the employer and the employee. This policy provides the framework within which secondments will operate at East Herts Council.
- 1.2 The Secondment scheme will work in conjunction with other learning and development initiatives within the Council to offer internal and/or external opportunities for individuals to take up different posts for a specific period of time in order to provide temporary cover, i.e for maternity leave in another service.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to the principles of being a recognised Investor in People and seeks to consistently improve the development standards and opportunities for all employees in line with these principles.

2. What is a Secondment?

- 2.1 Secondment is defined as the temporary transfer of an employee to another part of the same organisation or to a different organisation for a set period of time, which is agreed between both parties. Various secondment options need to be considered, i.e part time, job share cover, whilst considering the needs of the service.
- 2.2 A Secondment must be viewed flexibly, such as no barriers to a part time secondment (less than 37 hours), which could be either as part of a full time substantive post, or a part time secondment in its own right. The main criteria being that it meets the learning needs and circumstances of the employee as well as those of the Council.

3. Secondment versus Acting Up

- 3.1 Generally both arrangements offer manager's the flexibility to make short term changes to their team either to cover a vacancy before a post is advertised permanently or to cover the absence of the postholder e.g. sickness, maternity, secondment or sabbatical (see also 4.3 below).

Staff have the opportunity to experience new areas of work; develop their skills and abilities and usually, depending on why they are accepting such an arrangement, to earn more for a limited period.

The length of such arrangements may vary but would be unlikely to last for more than 1 Year.

3.2 What is a Secondment?

- A secondment (at any level) is a move to a post *outside* the section/team/service area of the secondee's substantive post.
- Secondments must be advertised at the evaluated rate for the job and offered at in the same way as a permanent or fixed term appointment.
- Applications are acceptable from permanent and fixed term staff from within or outside the section/team/service area.

3.2 What is Acting Up?

- Acting up is an arrangement where an employee temporarily covers part or all of a more senior post *within* his/her section /team/service area for a limited period.
- Remuneration for Acting Up will depend upon what proportion of the post is being covered. Details on how to calculate this is set out in Appendix 5.
- Managers cannot use the arrangement as a mechanism to avoid paying someone the rate for the job so if it is used to back fill a post, for example a secondment, then the arrangement must be time limited to a year after which it should be reviewed on a three monthly basis to ensure it is equitable for all parties:- secondee; employee acting up and manager.

4. Principles

4.1 Secondment opportunities will be available to all permanent employees who meet the eligibility criteria, in line with the organisation's commitment to Diversity and Equalities Policy.

4.2 Secondment opportunities should be considered when vacancies arise. If the vacancy is considered appropriate as a secondment opportunity then it will be advertised to all employees via email and on the intranet. Managers should circulate details to all staff without internet access.

4.3 Temporary and specific project vacancies may also be best filled through a secondment opportunity.

- 4.4 The substantive manager of anyone wishing to apply for a secondment must have given approval to the member of staff concerned prior to any application being submitted.
- 4.5 Secondments are to be encouraged and therefore the onus will be on the secondee's line Manager to provide an objective business case as to why an employee should not be permitted the opportunity of a secondment.
- 4.6 If the employee considers that they have unreasonably been denied an opportunity, they should speak to their Director.
- 4.7 Secondments will normally be for a period of between 3 months and a year depending on circumstances. The time frame will be agreed and clearly defined in the secondment agreement. Any extension to the time frames must be discussed and agreed by both managers involved and Human Resources before the position is advertised.
- 4.8 Secondment agreements must be completed and signed by all parties; the substantive manager, the host manager and the secondee. The agreement constitutes formal advice to the employee of a temporary variation of contract, so as to avoid the need to issue a completely new contract for a short period. Copies of the forms should be held by all parties and a copy sent to Human Resources for the employees records.
- 4.9 All seconded staff will remain under the contract of employment with East Herts Council, retaining the majority of their substantive terms and conditions (except where the post to which they are seconded has a higher rate of pay and holiday entitlement); this may not include all special allowances unless relevant for the job such as, standby or other additional allowances. Continuity of employment will be protected and annual leave entitlement (where appropriate) will be adjusted accordingly for the duration of the secondment.
- 4.10 Appraisal arrangements and development plans will be agreed with the host manager completing the appraisal documentation from East Herts Council and ensuring all the relevant documentation and records are signed.

5. Types of Secondments

5.1 Internal Secondment

5.1.1 Within the Council a secondment will constitute one of the following:

5.2 Project work

5.2.1 A secondment is useful in resourcing short term projects, particularly specific projects with an expected duration of 3-12 months as this allows an individual to gain new skills and experiences whilst delivering an outcome on a project for the Council. Secondments are seen as a career development opportunity and for this reason will initially be advertised internally only at first. Should the internal recruitment not produce a suitable candidate. East Herts Council will look to other similar organisations to fill this role.

5.3 Temporary cover

5.3.1 A specific vacancy that exists on a temporary basis, such as maternity cover which would allow someone to move to a new role and develop skills and experience over a set period of time. These opportunities should be advertised internally and if not filled then offered through the normal Recruitment Guide and procedures that exist within the Council.

5.4 External Secondment

5.4.1 An external secondment could constitute a secondment within another Local Government organisation (e.g. County Council, Police and Health authorities) or to other not for profit organisations or private companies.

5.4.2 For all the parties involved, i.e. the host organisation, the employee and the seconding employer, the exposure to different work practices can be beneficial to all. However, it is essential that all three parties are clear about their obligations, responsibilities, expectations, accountabilities and performance objectives in this situation.

5.4.3 Legal Services must be involved in agreeing Secondment Agreement and advice should also be sought from Human Resources prior to formalising arrangements.

5.4.4 HR will confirm all secondments in writing to the employee, including written confirmation that where external terms are less favourable, the terms and conditions in the substantive contract will apply, for example sickness and holiday entitlement.

5.4.5 The Accountancy team will also need to be informed to ensure that appropriate recharging is established

6. Benefits of Secondments

6.1 Advantages are to be gained by both the Council and the employee.

6.1.1 For the Council:

- a) Assists in improving employee motivation
- b) To cover long term sick leave, maternity leave etc
- c) Provides a viable temporary alternative to advertising and recruitment of new employees
- d) Improves working relationships across services/specialisms and with outside partnership agencies
- e) Assists in furthering organisational and personal objectives
- f) Encourages employee development
- g) Develops a multi-skilled workforce
- h) Provides a cost effective way of developing employees
- i) Demonstrates a commitment to developing all employees by actively promoting and supporting the policy
- j) Ultimately it could be of benefit to our customers
- k) Aids retention of staff, as they see development opportunities. This can be cost saving for the Council as replacing staff when they leave costs money (recent estimates have shown that the cost of losing an experienced employee can be equivalent to approximately one years salary).

6.1.2 For the Employee:

- a) Enables employees to develop and broaden their skills, knowledge and competencies
- b) Increases motivation
- c) Broadens knowledge/awareness of the District Council
- d) Develops skills and knowledge with 'on the job' work experience
- e) May assist in enabling career progression
- f) May provide a temporary alternative to redundancy

7. Recruitment Process and Responsibilities

7.1 Generally

- a) The host department will usually reimburse additional expenses incurred by the substantive manager as a result of the secondment.
- b) Advice must be obtained from Finance on suitable mechanisms for recouping the pay of East Herts employees going to an external secondment or reimbursing external organisations for their employees from coming to East Herts on secondment. This will be arranged on a case by case basis depending on the length of the secondment and any other relevant factors.

7.2 Managers Responsibilities

- a) The host manager must ensure that HR is consulted on all potential secondment cases.
- b) The host manager must ensure that the vacancy procedure has been followed and the available post has the funding and authorisation to be recruited to.
- c) The host manager must ensure that the selection methods in the Recruitment Guide and procedures are adhered to.
- d) Host managers must provide an appropriate induction for the secondee and perform regular reviews of the development and performance, as well as maintaining the appraisal process with the secondee.
- e) Substantive managers considering a request from an individual seeking to be released to take up a secondment post must consider the costs of back filling the position; the resources available; the impact on the team, and objectives to be achieved. Where the budget holder for the secondee's substantive position faces the penalty of finding additional budget to cover the cost of recruiting to this position, a transfer of budget between the services might be required to offset this.
- f) If the substantive manager has any concerns that allowing a secondment will jeopardise their service provision, this must be resolved before the secondment takes place and where appropriate would form the business case for not allowing the employee to undertake the secondment opportunity. Advice can be sought on this from Human Resources if required.
- g) Substantive managers should maintain contact with the secondee during the secondment.

7.3 Employees/Secondee's Responsibilities

- a) Employees wishing to apply for a secondment post must obtain agreement from their substantive manager whose signature must be on the application form. (Appendix 2)
- b) Individuals on secondment must consider how this learning opportunity will develop and support their personal development in line with their aims, objectives and targets established during the Personal Development Review Scheme (PDRS).

7.4 Human Resources Responsibility

- 7.4.1 HR must work with managers to support the secondment policy and process.

8. Terms and Conditions

8.1 Policies

- 8.1.1 East Herts policies will apply except for external secondments.

8.2 Pay

- 8.2.1 A post offered as a secondment will be offered at the grade for the post. If the grade of the seconded post is a lower graded post, the seconded employee will continue to receive the pay for his/her substantive post (in accordance with the protection afforded in redeployment situations).

8.3 Notice Periods

- 8.3.1 The secondment agreement should stipulate an agreed notice period for all parties to notify of early termination of the secondment agreement, which should not exceed one month.

9. Health & Safety and Employers' Liability

- 9.1 The host manager/organisation is responsible for all health and safety obligations for the duration of the secondment.

10 Indemnity

- 10.1 The host organisation will keep East Herts and the seconded employee full indemnified against any claims which may be incurred as a result of carrying out duties for the host over the duration of an external secondment.

11 Conduct and Capability

- 11.1.1 The host manager (internal) will deal with any concerns regarding conduct and capability under **East Herts' Disciplinary or Capability policy and procedures**. The host manager must liaise with the substantive manager. If there are any concerns about work performance in the seconded post, consideration will need to be given to reverting the employee to their previous post. The host manager must ensure that adequate training and support has been provided to the employee. For external secondments, the policies and procedures for in place in the host organisation will prevail.

11.2 Code of Conduct

- 11.2.1 The East Herts Code of Conduct will apply to secondments within East Herts and the code of conduct for the receiving organisation will apply to external secondments.

11.3 Confidential Information

- 11.3.1 Confidential information will remain the property of the host department or organisation. The secondee should be aware that breaches of confidentiality will be taken seriously by the Council.

12. Provisions for Secondee

- 12.1 Secondees should consider what they expect to achieve for the duration of the secondment post to provide clear expectations and outcomes for the position.
- 12.2 On return to their substantive post, the line manager and secondee should review the learning achieved, and as service demands allow the secondee to use some part of their new knowledge or skills gained in their secondment placement.
- 12.3 Secondees are encouraged to keep in touch with their substantive team and manager and they should receive regular information and updates from their substantive manager.

13. Provisions for a Manager

- 13.1 Where possible the manager should identify a mentor to each secondee to support their personal and career development throughout the duration of the secondment.

14. Difficulties/Problems with Secondments

- 14.1 Secondees should first raise this with their host manager and consult HR for advice. Host or substantive managers should also consult HR. The aim will be resolve problems at an early stage. If employees feel that their substantive manager is unfairly refusing to support their application for a secondment position, then they may consult HR.

Calculating Acting Up Remuneration

1. No consideration can be given to requests for recompense for short term, emergency cover of less than a month's duration.
2. Where an opportunity to act up is identified managers must seek advise from HR to ensure consistency and the appropriateness of such an arrangement.
3. Any acting up opportunity must be offered to all members of team/section/service if the arrangement is to last longer than 3 months. However if the demands of the service allow managers should consider offering every opportunity to as wide a group within the service area as possible.
4. The remuneration for accepting an acting up position will be calculated as follows.
 - If all the duties of the post are covered then remuneration will be at the grade for the post and the employee will not be expected to undertake the duties of his/her substantive post for the duration of the arrangement.
 - If a proportion of the duties are required to be covered, managers must calculate the proportion by looking at the job description and duties and awarding a percentage for example 50%. It is for the manager to decide what tasks and therefore what proportion of the post will be allocated.
 - Remuneration will then be calculated by looking at the scale point the employee acting up is currently on and the scale point at the bottom of the grade of the acting up position. The rate will be 50% of the difference between the two.

Example:- An employee on £20,000 p.a. willing to act up for 50% of a post where the bottom of the scale attracts £25,000 p.a. will get £2,500 p.a.
 - If an employee is asked to act up in a post in another location from his/her normal place of work, he/she may also claim mileage for the difference travel from normal home to work and acting up home to work.