



# **East Herts Council**

## **Secondment Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 A secondment is the temporary transfer or temporary 'loan' of an employee to another service or organisation to complete other duties, responsibilities or projects. The duties or projects covered by a secondment will have an identifiable end date. Secondments can be arranged internally and externally.
- 1.2 Secondments are becoming an integral part of the modern workplace. They benefit the organisation and are a useful learning and development opportunity. Secondment arrangements are a tool to build capacity, inject new ideas, skills and perspective into the organisation and can aid workforce planning.

## **2.0 Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
- all employees excluding casuals,
  - all secondments taking place within the council and where appropriate, will apply to secondments outside the council

## **3.0 Benefits of Secondments**

- 3.1 Advantages are to be gained by both the council and the employee.

### **For the Council:**

- a) Allows the council to have a flexible and fluid workforce that can meet changing demands and direct expertise where it is most needed
- b) Assists in improving employee motivation
- b) Covers long term sickness absence, maternity leave etc.
- c) Provides a viable temporary alternative to recruitment of new employees
- d) Improves working relationships across services/specialisms and with outside partnership agencies
- e) Supports employee development and flexibility of employment
- f) Develops a multi-skilled workforce
- g) Provides a cost effective way of developing employees
- h) Aids retention of employees as they see development opportunities
- i) Supports workforce planning

## **For the employee:**

- a) Enables employees to develop and broaden their skills and knowledge that may not necessarily be available within the service or even the council
- b) Increases motivation
- c) Broadens knowledge and awareness of the council and its partners
- d) Develops skills and knowledge with 'on the job' work experience
- e) Supports personal development and career progression as identified in the employees PDRS.
- f) Can provide a temporary alternative to redundancy

## **4.0 Types of Secondments**

### **4.1 Internal secondment**

Within the council a secondment will normally constitute one of the following:

#### **Project work**

A secondment is useful in resourcing short term projects, particularly specific projects with an expected duration of 3-12 months as this allows an employee 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. Should the internal recruitment be unsuccessful the council will look to other similar organisations to fill this role.

#### **Temporary cover**

A specific vacancy that exists on a temporary basis, such as maternity cover which would allow an employee 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 processes and procedures that exist within the council.

### **4.2 External /outgoing secondment**

Secondments with partner organisations where the council will remain the employer and therefore the employee will continue to be subject to the council's policies and procedures.

### 4.3 **Incoming secondments**

From partner organisations where the council is the host organisation, not the employer.

## 5.0 **Process and Responsibilities**

### **Internal Secondments**

- 1) If a manager believes that they have a vacancy that would be suitable to advertise as a secondment, they should speak to HR in the first instance.
- 2) The manager must ensure that the vacancy procedure has been followed and the available post has the funding and authorisation to be recruited to. They must also ensure that the selection methods set out in the Recruitment Policy are adhered to.
- 3) Employees wishing to apply for a secondment must get approval from their manager before application. The learning and development need must be identified and recorded in the employee's PDR.
- 4) Secondments are to be encouraged. Considerations by managers when approving requests should include the costs of back filling the position; the resources available; the impact on the team, and objectives to be achieved.
- 5) If the substantive manager has any concerns that allowing a secondment will affect their service provision, this must be resolved before the secondment takes place and should be made clear in the authorisation process.
- 6) If the employee considers that they have unreasonably been denied an opportunity, they should raise the issue to HR.
- 7) Where an employee applies for, and is successful in being appointed to an internal secondment, Human Resources will ensure that the employee is sent a secondment agreement upon receipt of the signed recruitment paperwork from the host manager.
- 8) If the substantive manager chooses to backfill the secondee, this must be done on a temporary basis to ensure there is no increase in establishment.

- 9) Where the budget holder for the employee'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.
- 10) Host managers must provide an appropriate induction for the employee. PDR arrangements and development plans will be agreed with the host manager.
- 11) Substantive managers should maintain contact with the employee during the secondment regarding vacancies, training and key service messages to ensure that the employee is job ready on the return to the service.

### **External Secondments - Incoming**

- 1) If a manager believes that they have a vacancy that would be suitable to advertise as an external secondment, they should speak to HR in the first instance.
- 2) The manager must ensure that the vacancy has already been advertised internally first as per the council's Recruitment Policy. The manager must also ensure that the selection methods set out in the Recruitment Policy are adhered to.
- 3) Once a successful candidate has been appointed, the manager should contact HR to arrange for a secondment agreement to be prepared which should be signed by all parties, the employee and relevant managers before the secondment commences.
- 4) The substantive manager is responsible for liaising with Strategic Finance and identified individuals in external organisations to ensure that the financial agreement is signed by both parties. This will be arranged on a case by case basis depending on the length of the secondment and any other relevant factors.

### **External Secondments - Outgoing**

- 1) If an employee sees a position advertised at a partner organisation that they would like to apply for on a secondment basis then they should speak to both their line manager and HR in the first instance.
- 2) Employees wishing to apply for a secondment must get approval from their manager before application. The learning and

development need must be identified and recorded in the employee's PDR.

- 3) Secondments are to be encouraged. Considerations by managers when approving requests should include the costs of back filling the position; the resources available; the impact on the team, and objectives to be achieved.
- 4) If the substantive manager has any concerns that allowing a secondment will affect their service provision, this must be resolved before the secondment takes place and should be made clear in the authorisation process.
- 5) If the employee considers that they have unreasonably been denied an opportunity, they should raise the issue to HR.
- 6) If the employee is successful in applying for an external secondment, the substantive manager should contact HR to arrange for a secondment agreement to be prepared which should be signed by all parties, the employee and relevant managers before the secondment commences.
- 7) The substantive manager is also responsible for ensuring that HR and payroll is updated about the change of contract and for liaising with Strategic Finance and identified individuals in external organisations to ensure that the financial agreement is signed.

## **6.0 Terms and Conditions**

- 6.1 All seconded employees 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.
- 6.2 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 their substantive post (in accordance with the protection afforded in redeployment situations).

- 6.3 All annual leave taken during the secondment period should be signed off by the host manager and annual leave applied for outside of the secondment period should be signed off by the substantive manager.
- 6.4 East Herts Council policies will apply except for external secondments.
- 6.5 The maximum period of a secondment is normally 12 months. 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 HR before the position is advertised. Services need to track secondments to ensure they do not continue indefinitely.
- 6.6 Generally, a minimum of six months between each secondment opportunity would apply but exceptions may be agreed in order to ensure continuity of service.
- 6.7 The substantive manager can expect four weeks' notice prior to the employee taking up the secondment.

## **7.0 Health & Safety and Employers' Liability**

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

## **8.0 Indemnity**

- 8.1 The host organisation will keep East Herts and the seconded employee fully 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.

## **9.0 Conduct and Capability**

- 9.1 The host manager will deal with any concerns regarding conduct and capability under the Managing Performance or any other relevant policy. 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 of the host organisation will prevail.

- 9.2 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.

## **10.0 Confidential Information**

- 10.1 Confidential information will remain the property of the host service or organisation. The seconded employee should be aware that breaches of confidentiality will be taken seriously by the Council.

## **11.0 Returning to the Substantive Post**

- 11.1 Secondment opportunities should generally be allowed to run their course in line with the terms of the secondment agreement. However, the substantive manager reserves the right to recall the secondee prematurely, if required in exceptional circumstances. There may also be the occasion where a secondee is not meeting the requirement of the secondment and an early return to the substantive post would be beneficial to all. 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.
- 11.2 Secondees will have the right to return to their substantive post unless a redundancy situation arose during the period of secondment or in exceptional circumstances there is some other reason why it is not reasonably practicable to return to the original job. In such cases secondees will be fully consulted at the earliest opportunity.
- 11.3 It is recognised that in certain circumstances there may be organisational needs to fill the substantive post on a permanent basis. In these circumstances secondees must be consulted first and given the opportunity to return to their substantive post.
- 11.4 At the end of the secondment, if the employee is successful in gaining a consecutive secondment, or an extension to the secondment which takes the arrangement over 2 years, then they will no longer retain the right to return to their substantive post, but will retain their permanent employment status and in line with the

council's redeployment policy will be considered as an 'at risk' candidate for any applications made for posts at their previous substantive level or below, when their secondment ceases. HR will inform employees of the implications of extending their secondment past two years at that time.

- 11.5 When an employee finishes a secondment and returns to their substantive post, the substantive manager and employee should review the learning achieved and as service demands, allow the employee to use some part of their new knowledge or skills gained in their secondment placement if they want to.

## **12.0 Secondment becomes a Permanent Post**

- 12.1 If a secondment becomes a permanent post (for example an employee may be appointed to cover maternity and then the substantive post-holder may choose not to return to work) the post will be advertised internally unless the incumbent employee has gone through an open and fair selection procedure for the secondment as outlined in Recruitment Policy, then they may be made permanent without advertising the post again.

## **13.0 Policy Review**

- 13.1 This policy shall be reviewed after three years or sooner, in line with legislation and best practice to reflect the best possible level of support and management.

## Secondment Flow Chart – Internal Secondments

