

# STAFF SECONDMENT SCHEME

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This note provides a guide to the Council's internal staff secondment scheme. It is aimed at managers seeking to arrange secondments into their sections and at managers from whose section staff are seconded. Guidance covers:

- benefits of the scheme;
- identifying secondment opportunities;
- funding secondments;
- selecting and appointing secondees;
- managing secondees;
- rights of employees;
- reviewing secondments.

Checklists for host and donor section managers summarising the main tasks required by the secondment scheme are included in appendices A and B.

1.2 The secondment scheme has been developed to improve the Council's corporate management arrangements and support for departmental and corporate special projects by:

- establishing arrangements for transferring staff to and from the centre on a secondment basis and establishing arrangements to facilitate secondments generally, at all levels of the organisation, between departments;
- formalising arrangements for special temporary project teams where necessary, to which staff would be seconded (on a full time or part time basis) for a defined ~~and~~ ~~short~~ period of time. Such teams might be based in the centre or in departments.

The basic principles underlying the scheme are listed in Appendix C.

## 2.0 Benefits Of The Scheme

2.1 Secondment can offers benefits in the following ways.

- **The host section:** acquiring skills and knowledge not already available within the section; supplementing available resources; fresh ideas and approaches; drawing together multi-skilled teams with a range of perspectives.
- **The secondee:** utilising and developing existing skills and knowledge; obtaining new skills and knowledge; opening of new career paths and opportunities.
- **The donor section:** opportunity for staff to gain new skills and experiences; remotivation of staff whose career development has become blocked or limited.

## 3.0 Identifying Secondment Opportunities

3.1 There are a wide variety of circumstances in which the possibility of secondment can arise.

Examples include:

- a project or piece of work requiring skills, experience or knowledge not available within a section;
- permanent staffing levels insufficient to cope with a temporary increase in workload
- a need to cover long term absences, such as long term sickness or maternity leave (though only where the earliest date of return is known)

3.3 In all cases it is up to the manager of the potential host section to demonstrate the need for a secondment. A Director or other designated manager must agree all secondments, and the intention to second should be notified to the local trade union representative.

3.4 Note also that:

- secondments can be either part or full time;
- secondments can last for up to two years and can if necessary be extended;
- there is no prescribed minimum period for a secondment;
- part time secondments should be for a minimum of one day per week (as an average over the period of the secondment);

#### **4.0 Funding of Secondments**

4.1 Secondments should normally be funded from existing departmental resources. In certain circumstances, bids can be made against the Council's internal management budget to fund secondments. Such bids can be made where the secondee will be:

- working on corporate projects led or sponsored by the Chief Executive or Directors;
- providing assistance on a range of corporate projects or picking up an ongoing workload within a section in order to free others to carry out corporate projects;
- enabling departmental staff to take responsibility for the implementation or development of corporate strategy within their department through part-time participation in corporate working groups or project teams;

4.2 Applications for funding from the internal management budget should be made in writing to the Head of Strategy and Review and copied to the Chief Executive. Applications should state:

- the purpose of the secondment;
- the planned length of the secondment;
- the grade of the 'post' to which the secondment is being made (confirmed by job

evaluation);

- the value of funding being sought.

4.3 The following should be borne in mind in preparing an application for funding from the internal management budget.

- The maximum value of funding which may be claimed will be equal to the job evaluated grade of the 'post' to which the secondment is being made (pro-rata for part-time secondments). If the secondee is protected on a higher grade (for example because the seconded 'post' is graded at a lower level than the secondee's substantive grade) the difference between the internal management budget funding and the secondee's normal pay must be funded by the host department.
- In the event of a secondment finishing at an earlier date than that for which funding has been allocated, any unspent money will need to be notified to the Head of Strategy and Review.
- Funding for any extension to the secondment will require a new application which will be considered on its merits.

4.4 If you would like to discuss possible funding for secondments before making a formal request, please contact the Head of Strategy and Review, on Ext 42216 or DDI 0181-758 8040.

## **5.0 Selecting And Appointing Secondees**

5.1 Once a suitable secondment opportunity has been identified and funding secured or earmarked, the potential host section needs to select a secondee. There are two methods available

- 'open' selection modelled on the Council's recruitment procedures, *which should apply in all but the most exceptional circumstances*;
- 'selection by nomination', which *should only apply in exceptional circumstances*, for example:
  - where a rapid response is necessary to address a specific problem;
  - where an individual is already working closely with staff in another section without being formally seconded;
  - where a project team is being formed to pursue a specific objective which requires the skills and knowledge of a particular member of staff;
  - where the secondment is for a maximum period of six months.

5.2 For 'open' selection the method described below would represent a reasonable selection process.

- i) The service manager should draw up a job description based on the anticipated duties, and a corresponding person specification. The job description and person specification in these circumstances might be shorter than those used in open

recruitment to a “normal” post, concentrating on the key skills, ~~and~~ knowledge and duties relating to the specific project(s) envisaged. The job description must nevertheless be evaluated in the normal way.

- ii) The secondment should be advertised in the Council’s Jobs List, and be clearly marked ‘for internal applicants only’. A closing date two weeks after publication should be sufficient.
- iii) Applications should be on standard Council application forms, and ~~with~~ short listing, interviews and evaluation carried out in accordance with the Council’s recruitment procedures. However, applications should be accompanied by a letter from the applicant’s service head (or above) approving the application.

### 5.3 For ‘selection by nomination’

- i) The service manager should follow the process in 5.2(i) above.
- ii) All employees who may be appropriately qualified should be notified.
- iii) Interviews must be held in accordance with the Council’s recruitment procedures if more than one appropriately qualified person applies.

### 5.4 Before appointing a secondee, the host and donor section managers need to agree (in writing)

- the length of the secondment, with a maximum period of two years for both full time and part time secondees
- the terms under which early termination or extension of the secondment might be agreed and the period of notice to be given for termination
- the number of hours or proportion of time to be spent on seconded duties for part time secondees, subject to a minimum of at least one day per week (as an average over the period of the secondment)
- terms of access to full time secondees by the donor section, up to and possibly including occasional days back in the donor section
- access by the host section once the secondee has returned to normal duties
- arrangements for annual leave of the secondee, if not pro rata
- deciding on who will be responsible for fixing and managing the arrangements for reporting, monitoring and if necessary, dealing with absence (particularly for part-time secondments). Also for conducting performance appraisals etc.

## 6.0 Managing Secondees

### 6.1 Under the secondment scheme, all line management responsibilities for full time secondees transfer to the host section manager including

- allocating and supervising day to day work
- authorising leave
- evaluating and providing for (where necessary) training needs relating to the secondment
- reviewing performance, including formal appraisals after six months (where the secondment is greater than or equal to six months) and at the end of the secondment, with details made available to the manager of the donor section
- exercising disciplinary action (if necessary) during the course of the secondment, pursuing such action after the secondee returns to normal duties if required
- dealing with grievances, except where the grievance is concerned with a problem arising in the donor section or department (refer to grievance procedure – note: grievance may be across two departments).

6.2 For part time secondees some line management functions are shared between the host and donor section managers (e.g. supervision of work, evaluation/provision of training and appraisal) and others remain the responsibility of the donor manager (e.g. authorising leave, taking forward any disciplinary action, and dealing with grievances, except where the grievance is concerned with a problem arising in the host section).

## **7.0 Rights Of Employees**

7.1 One objective of having a formal secondment scheme is to encourage employees to apply for secondments without fear that in some way this would be disadvantageous to them. Secondments should also not unduly place pressure on the remaining staff in donor sections. Employee rights are addressed by the secondment scheme in the following areas:

### **i) grading and pay**

Job evaluation for the ‘post’ to which the secondment is being made could result in a grade being awarded which is higher or lower than the substantive grade of applicants. In these circumstances:

- a) where the evaluated grade is lower, the employee will be protected on their substantive grade for the duration of the secondment
- b) where the evaluated grade is higher, the employee will be paid at the higher rate for the duration of the secondment, and will return to their substantive grade at the end of the secondment

All secondments are made to posts with fixed grades based on single job descriptions, and do not entitle secondees to progression on any linked grade scheme that might exist in the host section.

**ii) job security**

Secondees must not be prejudicially affected by any budget reductions or reorganisations in the donor section while they are on secondment elsewhere. In practice this means giving them equal/identical treatment to all other staff in the donor section who are affected by the reorganisation or budget reduction. At the same time, the secondee is not entitled to be matched and/or assimilated to any post based on duties undertaken while on secondment. Such rights remain based solely on the duties undertaken as part of the secondee's *substantive* post.

**iii) provision of cover**

Managers of donor sections should seek to provide appropriate cover for posts vacated by secondees where the length of secondment is more than one month (or greater than one day a week for part time secondments).

**iv) appraisal**

Secondees are entitled to a full appraisal at the end of the secondment, and during the course of a secondment if it is longer than six months. The host manager should do this, unless the secondment is part time and the bulk of the secondee's time is still spent in the donor section. The outcome of appraisals should be made known to the section head of the donor section, and any experience and knowledge acquired as part of the secondee's duties should be taken into account in any future appraisals within the donor section, including those relating to progression within a linked grade scheme.

## **8.0 Reviewing Secondments**

### **8.1 Host section managers will benefit from reviewing:**

- whether the objectives of the secondment have been achieved;
- whether value for money has been achieved as a result of the secondment;
- what lessons can be learned for management of future secondments.

### **8.2 The impact of secondment on the donor section may be less immediate. However, donor section managers will benefit from reviewing:**

- the new experience and skills brought back by the secondee;
- any new opportunities the secondment has presented for the secondee's progression or development within the section;
- the possibility of other staff in the section benefiting from secondment.

## **Appendix A: Host Section Managers' Checklist**

### **Issue and reference**

Identify the need for a secondment (Para 3.1/2)

Consider the type and length of secondment required e.g. full or part time (Para 3.4)

Gain agreement for the secondment from your Director or other delegated manager (Para 3.3)

Inform your local trade union representative of your intention to arrange a secondment (Para 3.3)

Consider the availability of funding within your own section of department (Para 4.1)

Consider whether the proposed secondment would be suitable for funding from the internal management budget (Para 4.1)

If you apply for funding from the internal management budget you should apply in writing to the Head of Strategy and Review outlining the purpose and length of the secondment, the grade of the post to which the secondment would be made, and the value of funding being sought (Para 4.2)

Copy the application to the Chief Executive (Para 4.2)

If the secondment is funded from the internal management budget and the secondee is protected on a higher grade, you will need to find the difference between the secondment's evaluated grade and the secondee's substantive (protected) grade from departmental budgets (Para 4.3)

Consider whether 'open selection' or 'selection by nomination' would be most appropriate (Para 5.1)

#### If you opt for open selection

- draw up a job description and person specification (Para 5.2)
- ensure job description is evaluated in the normal way (Para 5.2)
- advertise the secondment opportunity in the Jobs List (Para 5.2)
- follow usual short listing and interviewing procedures (Para 5.2)

#### If you opt for selection by nomination

- draw up job description and person specification (Para 5.3)
- ensure job description is evaluated in the normal way (Para 5.3)
- notify all appropriately qualified staff (Para 5.3)
- interview if more than one appropriately qualified member of staff wishes to apply (Para 5.3)

Agree terms and conditions of secondment with donor section manager before commencement of the secondment covering:

- length of secondment (Para 5.4)

- procedures for early termination or extension of secondment (Para 5.4)
- proportion of time to be spent on seconded duties if the secondment is part time (Para 5.4)
- access to full time secondees by donor section (Para 5.4)
- access by host section after secondment ends (Para 5.4)
- arrangements for the seconded's annual leave (Para 5.4)

For full time secondees, you will be responsible for

- allocating and supervising work (Para 6.1)
- authorising leave (Para 6.1)
- providing training where needed (Para 6.1)
- reviewing performance and undertaking appraisal (Para 6.1)
- carrying out any disciplinary action (Para 6.1)
- dealing with grievances (Para 6.1)

For part time secondees, you share responsibility with the donor section manager for

- allocating and supervising work (Para 6.2)
- providing training (Para 6.2)
- undertaking appraisal (Para 6.2)

Where grievances from part time secondees relate to your section, you are responsible for dealing with them (Para 6.2)

Full time secondees should receive a full appraisal at the end of their secondment (Para 7.1)

For full time secondments longer than six months, an appraisal should also be provided after six months (Para 7.1)

The outcome of appraisals should be made known to the donor section manager (Para 7.1)

If a secondment funded from the internal management budget finishes early, any unspent money needs to be notified to the Head of Strategy and Review (Para 4.3)

If you wish to extend a secondment funded from the internal management budget, you will need to submit a new application (Para 4.3)

At the end of a secondment you should consider

- whether objectives have been achieved (Para 8.1)
- whether value for money has been achieved (Para 8.1)
- what lessons can be learned (Para 8.1)



## **Appendix B: Donor Section Managers' Checklist**

### **Issue and Reference**

Encourage staff to apply for suitable secondments (Para 7.1)

Ensure applications from staff in your section are accompanied by a letter approving the application (Para 5.2)

Agree terms and conditions of secondment with the host section manager before commencement of the secondment covering

- length of secondment (Para 5.4)
- procedures for early termination or extension of secondment (Para 5.4)
- proportion of time to be spent on seconded duties if the secondment is part time (Para 5.4)
- access to full time secondees by donor section (Para 5.4)
- access by host section after secondment ends (Para 5.4)
- arrangements for the seconded staff's annual leave (Para 5.4)

For part time secondees, you are responsible for

- authorising leave (Para 6.2)
- any disciplinary action (Para 6.2)
- dealing with grievances relating to the seconded staff's work in your section (Para 6.2)

For part time secondees, you share responsibility with the host section manager for

- allocating and supervising work (Para 6.2)
- providing training (Para 6.2)
- undertaking appraisal (Para 6.2)

Where the host section manager undertakes the appraisal(s), you should ensure the outcome is taken into account in future, post secondment appraisals (Para 7.1)

If your section undergoes reorganisation or review whilst a member of staff is seconded elsewhere, you should ensure the seconded staff is treated identically to all other staff in your section (Para 7.1)

Try to provide appropriate cover for posts vacated by secondees (Para 7.1)

Following the return of the seconded staff to your section, you should consider

- the seconded staff's new experience and skills brought (Para 8.2)
- any new opportunities for the seconded staff's progression or development (Para 8.2)
- other staff in the section who may benefit from secondment (Para 8.2)

## **Appendix C: Basic Principles Of The Secondment Scheme**

1. Goals and objectives of the scheme to be understood by all parties, and the benefits of the scheme to be actively publicised
2. A need for the secondment to be demonstrated and justified by the service head of the host section, or team leader in the case of temporary project teams (in the same way that for example they would need to justify the employment of consultants or additional members of staff)
3. Agreement to the secondment by the service head of the donor section; and by the secondee him/herself (i.e. volunteers not conscripts). Managers to be encouraged to allow secondments
4. A fixed time period for the secondment at the outset, with a facility for early termination or extension by mutual agreement of all three parties, with termination subject to a period of notice agreed at the outset
5. Part time secondments to be included within the scope of the scheme, with the proviso of a minimum of one day per week (on average, over the period of the secondment) to be spent in the seconded activity
6. Facilities to be provided for:
  - a) employees to offer themselves for secondment with the agreement of their managers;
  - b) publicising the availability of particular secondment opportunities.
7. Selection process to reflect the Council's commitment to equal opportunities
8. Host section to allow reasonable access to the employee by the donor section service head during the course of the secondment, including occasional days back in the donor section if requested (but at the discretion of the host service head unless otherwise agreed at the outset); and the donor section to allow reasonable access once the secondee has returned to normal duties
9. Secondees to be entitled to appraisal from host section service head at the end of a placement, and during the course of a placement if longer than six months. Appraisals to be open to service head of donor section, and skills/knowledge acquired during secondment to be taken account of in future appraisals within the donor section
10. In principle annual leave to be taken pro rata during the course of a secondment; any alternative arrangement to be agreed by all parties at the outset of the secondment
11. Host service head to be responsible for all day-to-day management of the secondee, including any disciplinary action arising during the course of the secondment
12. In general, managers of donor sections should seek to provide appropriate cover for posts vacated by secondees, where the length of secondment is intended to be longer than one month (or is greater than one day a week in the case of part time secondments)

13. Secondees should not be prejudicially affected by reorganisations. Nor should 'temporary' duties carried out on secondment entitle the secondee to assimilation to any other temporary or permanent post, or to progression on a linked grade scheme. However, experience and knowledge acquired as part of the secondees' duties should be taken into account in any future appraisals, including those relating to progression within a career grade scheme
14. The secondee should be paid the rate for the job, or be protected on their substantive salary if that is higher
15. In general, secondments should be funded from within host sections' existing budgets. Funding can be made available from other budgets upon application, in limited and defined circumstances
16. Applications for funding can be accepted from the manager of the host section; or occasionally from the manager of the donor section where cover for the secondee is required