

Wolverhampton City Council



Human Resources Policy Framework

External Secondments

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CONSULTATION

The following officers and/or bodies have been consulted on this policy:

| Officers and/or Bodies | From | To |
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The following Trade Unions have been consulted on this policy:

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REVIEW LOG

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EQUALITY ANALYSIS

An equality analysis is being carried out on this policy and procedure. Contact HR Strategy and Policy Team for a copy. Contact HR on 01902 552345 or by email on HR.supportdesk@wolverhampton.gov.uk for HR advice.

ADVICE

Contact HR on 01902 552345 or email HR.supportdesk@wolverhampton.gov.uk for HR advice.

COMMENTS AND AMENDMENTS

Contact HR on 01902 552345 or email HR.supportdesk@wolverhampton.gov.uk to make any comments or suggest any feedback on this policy.

DISTRIBUTION

This policy and procedure is placed on the HR intranet for managers and employees to view. Copies will be provided to recognised Trade Unions and managers electronically.

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to regularise the position regarding external secondments.
- 1.2 It is necessary to ensure that where an employee is seconded to another organisation, a formal and legally binding agreement is in place between the Council and the “host” organisation. Similarly, when the Council accepts a secondee from another organisation, a formal agreement must be in place.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Council employees with the exception of those working in schools and those employed centrally on teachers’ terms and conditions of service.
- 2.2 This policy relates to all employees who are seconded out of the Council or for employees seconded into the Council from external organisations.

3. What is an External Secondment?

- 3.1 The term external secondment refers to the temporary transfer of an employee into a post within an organisation outside of Wolverhampton City Council. This may be another council, partner organisation or voluntary sector organisation.

This temporary transfer is to cover:

- Vacancies
 - Sickness absence
 - Secondment of the post holder
 - A time-limited project
- 3.2 An external secondment is usually to a post of equal (or higher) grade, with a duration of more than one month.

4. Principles

- 4.1 The application of secondment arrangements should be based on the following:
 - Secondments should be viewed as a valuable tool for staff development, where employees can often gain experience in a range of situations not normally open to them in their substantive post.

- All external secondments must be approved in order for the temporary move to take place. Where an extension to a secondment contract is required then this must also be approved.
- Employees interested in applying for an external post as a secondment opportunity will need to gain the support of their line manager in the first instance.
- Externally seconded employees will return to their substantive post. If, however, for reasons of reorganisation etc. the substantive post becomes at risk of no longer existing, then the employee will be placed on the Council's redeployment register and will be able to apply for vacancies at their substantive level or below.
- A formal secondment agreement will be entered into and signed by the "host" organisation. This should also be signed by the appropriate Strategic Director of the Council.

4.2 Secondments will normally only be agreed for periods of less than one year but in exceptional cases where a longer period is agreed, the employee will be given written notification in advance that:

- The Council cannot guarantee that their substantive post will be available on their return
- If this is the case, the Council will make all reasonable efforts to find suitable redeployment, if available
- If suitable redeployment is not available, their contract of employment may be terminated.

5. Process and Procedure

5.1 Employees interested in applying for a post as a secondment opportunity will need to gain the support of their line manager in the first instance. The line manager will need to consider the benefits for the individual and the team alongside the needs of the service and the possibilities of 'backfilling' the role of the person who expressed interest.

5.2 During the course of an external secondment, an employee's post may be subject to organisational change processes in line with prevailing policy and legislation. The employee must make himself available, at his own expense if necessary, to participate in any processes related to the re-organisation.

5.3 Should an external secondment end prematurely at the request of the external organisation or the secondee, the Council is not obliged to provide work, or payment, to the employee until the date on which the secondment was last agreed to end. This may result in the employee being unpaid for a period. Redeployment to another post will be sought.

- 5.4 During a secondment, it is generally the responsibility of the seconded employee to maintain contact with their substantive manager and team. Employees are encouraged to diarise regular telephone calls. However, it is the responsibility of their substantive manager to consult formally with them, where necessary, about any planned changes to their post.
- 5.5 The employee will normally continue to be paid through the Council's payroll, including any expenses payments. The council will invoice the host organisation for the seconded employee's pay and associated costs, in line with the secondment agreement.
- 5.6 The manager of the substantive Council post will be responsible for completing the transfer form for the employee to commence the external secondment.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities of Employee

- 6.1 Seconded out employees must keep in touch with their line manager and advise their line manager if there are any changes to the secondment.

Roles and Responsibilities of Managers

- 6.2 Managers have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied appropriately within their own area. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed with HR prior to any action being taken.
- 6.3 Managers should ensure any employees in receipt on formal secondments fully understand the terms and that they will be reviewed.

Roles and Responsibilities of HR

- 6.4 HR will provide operational support to the organisation to enable the effective management of secondment arrangements under this policy.
- 6.5 HR has a responsibility to:
 - Provide support and guidance to managers and employees
 - Ensure the communication, maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy
 - Monitor and review delivery and impact of this policy.

Role of the Chief HR Officer

- 6.6 In consultation with the recognised Trade Unions, the Chief HR Officer will exercise delegated authority for and be responsible for the on-going review and updating of this policy to ensure compliance with changes in statutory requirements and operational delivery, including responsibility for identifying the appropriate process for the regular evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy. Any fundamental changes to this policy will be brought before Cabinet (Resources) Panel for approval.

Role of Trade Unions

- 6.7 Any review and revisions of this policy will be undertaken by HR and will be in consultation with the Council's recognised trade unions.

7. Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 The external secondment policy and procedure will reviewed and updated annually and be available to managers and employees via the HR intranet.

8. Links to other Policies and Procedures

- 8.1 The External Secondment Policy cannot be seen in isolation, it is closely linked with the following strategies and policies:

- Recruitment and Selection policy
- Equality and Diversity policy

9. Equality

- 9.1 An Equality Analysis is being carried out on this policy and procedure.
- 9.2 The Council has a duty to monitor the application of the policy in relation to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. This is reported annually in the Council's Equality Monitoring Report.
- 9.3 If any aspect of the external secondments procedure causes you difficulty on account of any disability that you may have, or if you need assistance because English is not your first language, you should raise this issue with HR.

**Appendix 1
External Secondment Process Chart**

