



Workforce

Secondment Policy

Aim

The Secondment Policy aims to provide:

- A framework to manage secondment requests.
- A mechanism to support the development of employees.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees who wish to apply for a secondment.

This policy complies with current legislation and meets the aims of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) of the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Definitions

A **secondment** is where an employee continues to be employed by their employer but is transferred temporarily from their substantive post to another post. This will be for a specific purpose and period of time. The employee is expected to return to their substantive post at the end of the agreed term of the secondment.

An **internal secondment** is where the post to which the employee is seconded is with the same employer.

An **external secondment** is where the post to which the employee is seconded is with a different employer. This may be within or outside of the NHS.

Receiving manager is the manager who will host the employee during their secondment.

Releasing manager is the manager who is the employee's substantive manager.

Special class status (SCS) applies to members in particular employment groups who were members of the NHS Pension Scheme before April 1995. SCS was abolished from 1 April 1995. However, members who already held the status on or before 1 April 1995 can keep it until retirement if they continue in qualifying employment. SCS enables members to claim benefits in the 1995 Section from age 55. Mental health officer status has similar entitlements.

A **substantive post** is an employee's main contractual post, which is normally permanent.

Roles and responsibilities

There is a range of standard expectations which underpin all policies. [Read more about standard roles and responsibilities](#). In addition, the following specific responsibilities apply to this policy.

Releasing manager

The releasing manager should:

- Consider all secondment requests and only refuse a request if there are clear service reasons why it is not practicable.
- Consider backfill arrangements to support the secondment.
- Liaise with both the secondee and the receiving manager to [complete the Secondment agreement](#).
- Process secondment arrangements in line with local procedure.
- Make sure the employee is aware of and agrees the terms and conditions implications of their secondment, including any impact on existing protection arrangements or changes to their pension, such as special class status.
- Make sure there is continued communication with the receiving manager regarding the fulfilment of the Secondment agreement.
- Engage with the secondee if there are any changes to their substantive post.
- Support employees throughout their secondment and when returning to their substantive post at the end of their secondment.
- Understand any implications arising from the termination of a secondment agreement, at term or earlier.

Receiving manager

The receiving manager should:

- Support the completion of the Secondment Agreement, liaising with both the secondee and the releasing manager.
- Support and manage the secondee in line with the arrangements detailed in the secondment agreement.
- Engage with the secondee and the releasing manager in relation to any significant issues which arise during the secondment, such as conduct or capability.

- Engage with the releasing manager and secondee to discuss any changes to the terms of the secondment agreement.

Secondee

The secondee should:

- Discuss the potential for a secondment with their manager at the earliest possible opportunity when considering a secondment.
- Make sure the secondment can be supported by their manager prior to accepting the secondment.
- Be aware of and agree to the terms and conditions implications of their secondment. This includes any impact on existing protection arrangements or changes to their pensions, such as special class status.
- Maintain contact with the releasing manager throughout the secondment period.
- Understand any implications arising from the termination of a secondment agreement, at term or earlier.

Procedure

Secondments can benefit the individual and the wider organisation in terms of skills development. A secondment period is usually between 3 months and 2 years. In exceptional circumstances, this may be extended or a longer term agreed upon.

Each application should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking a person-centred approach. There may be service or operational issues which lead to an application being declined. However, managers should give all secondment requests serious consideration and support requests where service demands allow. No secondment application should be unreasonably refused.

How to apply

Employees who wish to be considered for a secondment should meet with their manager to discuss their request as soon as possible. Preferably, this should be before making an application. Where this is not possible, the employee must discuss the secondment opportunity with their manager before accepting the offer.

The releasing manager should make every effort to meet the secondees and provide a decision in line with any application deadlines.

Agreement

When the manager agrees to the employee's secondment, all parties should sign a Secondment agreement. The written agreement should confirm the employee's secondment period. It should also detail the management arrangements for the duration of the secondment and any temporary contract changes.

Refusal of the request

Where a manager refuses the employee's request, their decision, including the reasons for refusal, should be confirmed in writing within 7 calendar days of the meeting. More detail is provided in the following documents:

- [Guide for managers](#)
- [Guide for employees](#)

If an application is refused, the employee may appeal. [Find out more about the appeal process below.](#)

Where a secondment request is rejected, but the employee chooses to accept the post, they must be advised in writing of the following:

- their existing permanent contract has come to an end
- their new contract is fixed-term

The employee will then have to resign from their permanent post unless an arrangement can be agreed upon whereby both posts can be carried out.

For more information about fixed-term contracts, please refer to the [Fixed-term Contract Policy](#).

Appeal process

The employee has a right to appeal within 14 calendar days of receiving the written reasons for refusing the initial secondment or any extension request. When exercising this right, the employee must identify the reason for their appeal.

The appeal panel will be chaired by the next level of management and supported by an HR adviser who has not previously been involved in the process.

The appeal panel Chair will inform all parties of the hearing arrangements in writing no later than 14 calendar days before the hearing.

The process for the appeal should be managed in line with the [Formal hearing guide](#).

Terms and conditions of employment

Every effort should be made for the secondee's post to be kept open for them to return to at the end of the secondment period. However, it is recognised that there will be cases where this is not possible due to the nature of the role or the ability to fill the post on a temporary basis. If this is not possible, they will return to a suitable alternative post.

If this is the case, the employee should be advised before they accept the secondment. If, during the secondment, it is decided that the substantive post can only be filled on a permanent basis, the secondee must be advised and offered the opportunity to end their secondment.

Where the secondment is requested by the employee, the terms and conditions of the advertised post will apply for the duration of their secondment. The employee should be made aware of any changes to their pay or terms and conditions and agree to these changes.

If the seconded post attracts a higher pay band, the secondee will return to their substantive post on the terms and conditions that would have applied had they not gone on secondment. In the event of future promotion, incremental credit will be given for the time spent at the higher band.

Where the organisation seeks to second an employee, either within the organisation or externally, the employee is entitled to maintain the terms and conditions of their substantive post unless mutually agreed otherwise.

Time spent on secondments within or external to the NHS will not affect continuity of employment.

Keeping in touch

Keeping in touch with secondees throughout the period of secondment is good practice.

Arrangements for this should be clearly documented within the Secondment agreement.

Both the secondee and the releasing manager will be responsible for keeping in touch. The releasing manager should act as the contact point and keep the secondee up to date with developments regarding their substantive role or organisation.

Appraisal and personal development planning (PDP)

Arrangements for appraisal and PDP should be clearly detailed within the Secondment agreement.

Maintaining professional registration

Where an employee is required to hold professional registration for their substantive post, they should retain this registration for the duration of their secondment.

Organisational change

If there are any changes to the employee's substantive post, which constitutes organisational change as defined in the local organisational change policy, the arrangements of that policy will apply. As a minimum, the employee must be:

- advised of the change
- consulted with regarding the change
- offered the opportunity to be considered for any posts available to the affected group

The employee may be unsuccessful in obtaining a post within the organisational change process. If so, the Redeployment Policy will apply with any protections relevant to the substantive post.

End of secondment discussion

The releasing manager should meet with the secondee towards the end of their secondment to discuss and agree on arrangements for their return.

Where the employee is not returning to their substantive post, this discussion should take place 4 months before the end of the secondment to allow suitable time to support any necessary time on the redeployment register. [Please refer to the Redeployment Policy](#).

Extending a secondment

If the receiving manager wishes to extend the secondment, they should discuss this with the releasing manager before discussing it with the secondee. The receiving manager should then meet with the secondee to discuss whether they wish to apply for an extension.

If the releasing manager approves the application for an extended secondment, this should be confirmed in writing. The letter should confirm the extended end date. Where a manager refuses the extension, they should meet with the secondee to advise of their decision. This should be confirmed in writing within 7 calendar days of the meeting and include the reasons for refusal and right of appeal.

Ending a secondment

In general, secondments should be allowed to run for the timescales outlined in the Secondment agreement. However, there may be exceptional circumstances which require the releasing manager to recall a secondee early. This would be done in accordance with the terms of the secondment agreement.

In exceptional circumstances, the receiving manager may end the secondment early in accordance with the terms of the secondment agreement. If the reason for ending the secondment early relates to absence, capability, or conduct issues, the receiving manager should attempt to resolve these matters with support from the releasing manager before ending the secondment.

The secondee also has the right to end their secondment by giving the notice specified in the Secondment agreement to their substantive manager.

Related Policies

The following policies are related to the Secondment Policy:

- [Fixed-term Contract Policy](#)
- [Redeployment Policy](#)