



Workforce

**Secondment Policy: guide for
employees**

This guide will help you to understand the Secondment Policy.

The following guide forms part of the standard for workforce policies.

These policies apply to all eligible staff within NHSScotland, regardless of the board you are employed by. The guide covers:

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What is the purpose of the Secondment Policy?

NHSScotland recognises the importance of supporting development and the role of secondments in ensuring employees can develop the skills to meet changing service needs.

The Secondment policy provides a mechanism for employees to request secondments and gives managers a framework within which to manage secondment requests and support employees during their secondment.

Who is covered by this policy?

The Secondment Policy applies to all employees who wish to apply for a secondment.

Duration

Secondments would usually be for a minimum of 3 months up to a maximum of 2 years. There may be occasions where you request to extend your current secondment or ask to be seconded for more than 2 years. Your manager is asked to carefully consider each request and its own merits before deciding whether to approve a secondment request or a requested extension to a secondment.

Manager responsibilities

Releasing manager

Within the secondment policy, if your secondment request is approved, your substantive manager will be referred to as your releasing manager.

Your manager should carefully consider your secondment request and whether they can support it. Your manager should only refuse your request if there are clear service reasons why it is not practicable.

In deciding whether they can approve your secondment request, your manager is expected to consider the following factors:

- The duration of the secondment.
- Does the role need to be backfilled? If yes, is it a like-for-like replacement, or can the duties be covered differently?
- What are the operational, service, or financial implications of backfilling or not backfilling the role?

- How can the service support timely backfill arrangements to support the secondment request and minimise service delivery impact?
- If you are on a fixed-term contract, whether there are financial and contractual implications by extending your contract where the duration of the secondment is longer than your fixed-term contract.

Receiving manager

Within the secondment policy, the manager of your seconded role will be referred to as your receiving manager.

The receiving manager should:

- Engage with you and your releasing manager to agree on reasonable timescales for commencement.
- Support the completion of the Secondment Agreement, liaising with you and your releasing manager.
- Arrange an induction programme that includes orientation to your new workplace, reporting arrangements, and objectives for the duration of your secondment.
- Support and manage you in line with the arrangements detailed in the secondment agreement.
- Engage with you and your releasing manager regarding any significant issues that arise during the secondment, such as attendance, conduct, or capability.
- Engage with your releasing manager to discuss any changes to the terms of the secondment agreement. This includes any requests for the secondment to be extended.

Procedure

If you wish to be considered for a secondment, you are asked to discuss this with your manager. It is an opportunity for you both to explore whether a secondment can be agreed upon before you apply for a post. Where this has not been possible, you must speak with your manager to discuss your secondment request before accepting any offer of employment.

When you submit your secondment request, your manager should arrange to meet with you as soon as possible. This will help them better understand your request and the duration of the secondment.

You are asked to request a secondment before applying for a vacancy. If you have already been offered the post before speaking with your manager, your manager should be mindful of recruitment timescales when making a decision and feeding this back to you.

Secondment request supported

If your request for a secondment can be supported, your manager should notify you as soon as possible and should confirm their decision in writing within 7 calendar days of the meeting.

Your manager should then:

- Liaise with you and the receiving manager to [complete the Secondment agreement](#).
- Make sure you are aware of and agree to the terms and conditions implications of your secondment, including any impact on existing protection arrangements or changes to your pension, such as special class status.
- Keep in contact with you and inform you of any changes to your substantive post.
- Support you throughout your secondment and when you return to your substantive post.

You will usually return to your substantive post at the end of the secondment period. However, there may be times when this is not possible due to the nature or funding of your substantive role or challenges around temporarily filling the role.

If it is known when you request a secondment that you will be unable to return to your substantive post at the end of the secondment, your manager should make this clear to you. During your discussions, they can help you to decide whether you wish to accept the secondment opportunity.

If you are unable to return to your substantive role at the end of your secondment, a suitable alternative role should be sought in line with the [Redeployment Policy](#). Your releasing manager should discuss this with you. You should be made active on your employing board's redeployment register 3 months before the end of your secondment. Your releasing manager will be responsible for you during your time on the redeployment register.

If you are a permanent employee and you apply for a fixed-term post on a secondment basis, and the secondment is approved, you will retain your permanent contractual status.

Secondment request not supported

There is an expectation that your manager will carefully consider your secondment request and, where possible, support the request. If your manager is unable to support your request, they should inform you as soon as possible. They should write to you within 7 calendar days of the meeting to advise that they cannot support your secondment request. The letter should detail the reasons for refusing your secondment request and outline your right of appeal against this decision.

If your secondment request is rejected, you may resign from your substantive post and accept the other role on a fixed-term basis. If you are a permanent employee and you resign from your permanent post to accept a fixed-term post, you will lose your permanent employment status. In this event, you will receive written confirmation that you have lost your permanent contractual status.

[Please refer to the Fixed-term Contract Policy.](#)

During a secondment

Your releasing manager should arrange to keep in touch with you during your secondment. These arrangements should be clearly documented within the Secondment agreement.

Your releasing manager should act as your point of contact and keep you updated with any developments, changes and general information about your substantive team or service. If there are significant service or departmental changes, you should be invited to key meetings or sent minutes from meetings.

If there are changes to your substantive role whilst you are on secondment, these changes should be communicated to you by your releasing manager. In cases of more significant change, your releasing manager should arrange to meet with you to discuss the potential impact these changes may have on you and your substantive role.

As a minimum, you should be:

- advised of any changes to your substantive role
- consulted regarding any changes to the role

- offered the opportunity to be considered for any posts available to the affected group

Extending a secondment

If your receiving manager wants to extend the duration of your secondment, they should discuss this with your releasing manager before discussing it with you. If your releasing manager agrees to extend the secondment, your receiving manager will meet with you to discuss it. If you agree to extend the secondment, this should be confirmed in writing, and the Secondment agreement should be updated.

If your releasing manager does not support an extension to the secondment, they should meet with you to discuss it. They should also confirm their decision in writing within 7 calendar days of the meeting.

You may choose to resign from your substantive role to accept the extension as a fixed-term contract. If you do so, you will lose your permanent employment status, which should be confirmed to you in writing.

Ending a secondment early

Every effort should be made to allow your secondment to run to the timescales outlined in the Secondment agreement. However, there may be occasions where a secondment ends earlier than expected. The Secondment agreement should confirm the notice required for you to return to your substantive role if needed.

The secondment may be ended early at:

- Your releasing manager's request
- Your receiving manager's request
- Your request

At your releasing manager's request

Your releasing manager may need to recall you due to unforeseen changes or staffing issues within your substantive service. Your releasing manager should discuss ending your secondment early with you and your receiving manager, providing the rationale for recalling you and giving the notice agreed in the Secondment agreement.

At your receiving manager's request

There may be occasions where the receiving manager must end a secondment earlier than expected. For example, if a substantive postholder returns early from maternity leave. In this situation, the following must be decided:

- you remain in the secondment for the agreed duration
- the substantive postholder returns to their post

Your receiving and releasing managers will discuss the best approach in these circumstances. They will then discuss it with you to agree on the terms of your return to your substantive post.

At your request

If you wish to end your secondment early, you should discuss this with your receiving manager in the first instance. This discussion should allow you to explore your reasons for ending the secondment early. You both can also consider any adjustments that can be made to support you in continuing the secondment.

If you still wish to end your secondment after the discussion with your receiving manager, you should give the required notice outlined in the Secondment agreement. The written notice should be sent to both your receiving manager and your releasing manager to confirm your reasons for the early termination of the secondment.

Your releasing and receiving managers should discuss the arrangements for your return to your substantive post.

It may be that returning to your substantive post is difficult for service reasons. In this case, a decision should be made whether the employee covering your substantive post remains for the duration of the secondment or whether you return to your substantive post at that point. If you are not able to return to your substantive post, alternative temporary arrangements should be put in place where necessary.

If your substantive role no longer exists, this will be managed in line with your local organisational change policy. You should be added to the redeployment register, and alternative duties should be identified. The terms of the Redeployment Policy would apply.

Returning to substantive role

Your releasing manager should ensure you are supported back into your substantive team at the end of your secondment. This should include a discussion of the following:

- update you on changes within the team
- consider any training or development needs
- agree on key work priorities or objectives

Changing seconded role to a permanent role

If the role you are seconded into becomes available permanently, the permanent post will be advertised through your board's usual recruitment processes. You would not automatically be entitled to be made permanent in that role but could apply through the recruitment process.

If you are on the redeployment register, you may be given early access to the role through the redeployment process.

If your secondment is external to NHSScotland, that organisation's policies will apply.

Managing performance issues during a secondment

The Secondment agreement should confirm what will happen in the event of, for example, long-term sickness absence, frequent short-term absences, capability or conduct concerns.

If you are seconded within NHSScotland, your receiving manager should manage capability, conduct, or attendance concerns. These will be supported through the relevant NHSScotland workforce policy.

If you are seconded outside NHSScotland, you should initially be supported in line with the relevant HR policies of that organisation. Where more formal action is required, for example, in the case of a serious conduct issue, management of the process would normally revert to your substantive manager.

Appraisal and PDP

Appraisal and PDP arrangements would usually be aligned with the practices within your receiving service or department. For further information, [please see the Personal Development Planning and Performance Review Policy](#). Arrangements should be confirmed in the Secondment Agreement.

Terms and conditions

Payment during secondment

You will be paid at the band or salary of the role as advertised. This may mean you remain on your existing terms and conditions. Your receiving manager should ensure you are clear about the applicable salary.

When you return to your substantive post, you will revert to the terms and conditions that would have applied had you remained in your substantive role.

If the secondment is paid at a higher band, this service will be considered if you are promoted in the future.

Maternity leave

If you become pregnant during your secondment, the terms of the NHSScotland Maternity Policy will apply.

Your secondment request cannot be refused or ended early due to pregnancy.

This would also apply to shared maternity, adoption and shared adoption leave.

Expenses

The secondment agreement should detail arrangements for the repayment of any expenses incurred during the secondment, such as travel expenses. Your receiving manager would normally be responsible for these costs.

Lease car

There may be implications for existing lease car arrangements. You should seek advice from your local contact.

Equipment

The secondment agreement should detail equipment Arrangements. Unless otherwise agreed, you should return any equipment related to your substantive role, such as IT equipment. Your receiving manager would normally be responsible for providing equipment.

Pension implications

A secondment to an alternative role may have pension implications. [Please contact SPPA for further information.](#)

Continuity of employment

You will retain continuity of employment throughout your secondment.

Maintaining professional registration

If you require a professional registration for your substantive role, you have a responsibility to maintain your professional registration throughout your secondment.

Appeals process

You have a right to appeal against decisions made regarding secondments. Reasons for appeal may include a decision to decline a secondment or refusal to extend a secondment.

You should submit your appeal in writing within 14 calendar days of receiving written confirmation of decisions relating to your secondment.