

Policy – Secondment

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Policy – Secondment

Version control

This document is subject to regular review due to legislative and policy changes. The latest versions of all our publications can be found on our website. Before contacting us about the content of this document, we recommend that you refer to the most recent version on the website and any relevant guidance.

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Notes / changes
v1.0	09/04/2013	Full council	New Policy
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TIMESCALES

Internal Secondments are limited to a period of 3-24 months only	3 – 24 months only
External secondments have no time limit as it will be dependent on the external providers' specifications and requirements. However the employee will relinquish the opportunity to return to their substantive post after 24 months.	No time limit
Secondments of 24 months or more – if the internal or external secondment lasts longer than 24 months then the employee will need to understand that they will relinquish the opportunity to return to their substantive post.	24 months plus, the employee will relinquish the opportunity to return to their substantive post.

This policy applies to all council employees with the exception of:

- Directors and Heads of Service
- Council employees working their probationary period
- Agency working
- Employees on a temporary contract
- Casual, relief or volunteers

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The seconding manager should:

- Maintain regular contact with the secondee and keep them informed of any developments or changes within the department.
- Complete the appropriate contract change forms.
- Re-introduce the secondee back into the department on their return.
- Continue to maintain record indicating any sickness.

The secondment manager should:

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- Arrange an induction for the secondee, including health and safety, policies and procedures and objectives.
- Review and manage the secondee's performance, including addressing any conduct issues.
- Complete the appropriate appointment forms.

The secondee should:

- Observe rules, policies and procedures within the department, including health and safety.
- Discuss any problems with the secondment manager.
- Maintain contact with their substantive manager.
- Report any sickness absence to both managers/organisations.

Secondments and Timescales

What is a secondment?

There are two types of secondment, internal secondment and external secondment.

Internal secondment

An internal secondment is the temporary transfer of an employee to another job within Denbighshire County Council. The secondment will usually be for a specific purpose and will range from 3 months to 24 months. As a secondment opportunity, the employee who is successful in their application will be able to undertake the secondment with the assurance that their current job role remains 'open' for their return (refer to timescale restrictions).

External secondment

An external secondment is the temporary transfer of an employee to another government body or partnership company. The secondment length is at the discretion of the external organisation. As a secondment opportunity, the employee who is successful in their application will be able to undertake the secondment with the assurance that their current job role remains 'open' for their return (refer to timescale restrictions).

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Why utilise secondment opportunities?

Wherever possible, requests for secondments should be supported. However, the demands and needs of the potential applicant's service must be a priority. Managers at all levels will facilitate the secondment process through co-operation, in recognition of the benefits to the organisation and to individual employees.

Timescales

It is recognised that secondment lengths can vary according to the work that is required to be completed and that the original secondment length may require an extension as the planned work has not been completed in the stipulated timeframe.

It is also recognised that employees may choose to apply for continuous secondments which can mean they are away from their substantive post for a long period of time. However, from an operational perspective, the following time limits apply in all cases:

Internal secondments

Internal secondments are limited to a period of 3 – 24 months only.

External secondments

There are no time limits placed on external secondments. The secondment length will be dependent upon the external secondment providers' specifications and requirements.

Secondments of 24 months plus duration

For internal and/or external secondments which are of 24 months plus duration, consultation must take place between the employee and their manager when they request to apply for the secondment. This consultation needs to take place as soon as possible to make the employee aware that, should they be successful in their secondment application, then they will relinquish the opportunity to return to their substantive post upon secondment completion as the council will consider their acceptance of the secondment as resigning from their substantive post.

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Extended secondment - duration of 24 months plus

If during the secondment the post requires an extension and the extension means the entire secondment period is in excess of 24 months duration, then the secondee will be offered the following options:

- to return to their substantive post within the 24 month period in order to retain continuous employment with the council.
- to resign from their substantive post and accept the secondment extension with the secondment provider (this may be as a fixed term contract, which details the termination of employment date).
- via agreement with the appropriate Heads of Services and the HR Department, the secondment may be extended and their substantive post is kept 'open' for their return.

Cumulative secondments – cumulative duration of 24 months plus

If the employee has a series of cumulative secondments exceeding a period of 24 months, then in the letter offering the latest secondment, the employee would be offered the following:

- to return to their substantive post within the 24 month period in order to retain continuous employment with the council.
- to resign from their substantive post and accept the secondment extension with the secondment provider (this may be as a fixed term contract, which details the termination of employment date).
- via agreement with the appropriate Heads of Services and the HR Department, the secondment may be extended and their substantive post is kept 'open' for their return.

Secondment request is declined/refused

In cases where a secondment request is declined/refused, a full and detailed explanation of the decision making process is required to be divulged to the employee.

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Information to be shared should contain the assessment of risk to continued service provision, any mitigating internal and external factors, e.g. colleagues on long term sick, maternity leave, any changes to future departmental structure, budgets or workloads and deadlines.

Dispute resolution – secondment refusal

An employee whose secondment request has been refused and remains unhappy following their manager's explanation of the decision is recommended to seek further clarification from their Head of Service. A meeting should be held with the Head of Service and a member of the HR Department may also be in attendance.

There is no appeal process associated with this policy.

Internal Secondments

Internal secondments

Internal secondments should be used selectively as a means of filling vacancies. Supervisor/Managers referring to the Recruitment procedure and/or in consultation with the HR Specialist – Recruitment & Selection will exercise their discretion to decide whether a vacancy constitutes a suitable secondment opportunity. For example:

A secondment to a 'new temporary' post

It is recognised that due to increased volume of work, a 'new temporary' post is created within a department to accommodate an additional person to undertake this work, within a given time period. Therefore, there is a start and end date to the proposed work programme.

A secondment to an 'empty' permanent post

An 'empty' post may be due to the post holder being on secondment themselves, or maternity leave, long term sickness etc. a secondee will be required for a fixed period of time to aid the completion of the departments' activities to meet service provision.

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Procedure for internal secondments

- A job (suitable for secondment) is advertised, making it clear that it is a secondment opportunity and instructing potential applicants to seek line manager approval **prior** to submitting an application form.
- In seeking approval, the employee should advise their line manager of the specific benefits to be gained from the secondment.
- A secondment can be refused on operational grounds.
- The recruitment selection process will determine the successful candidate for secondment.
- The successful candidate will receive written correspondence clarifying the full details of the secondment, including specific terms and conditions which will apply for the duration of the secondment and the relevant information surrounding their substantive post.
- Normal notice periods will apply when the individual is leaving for a secondment opportunity. However, these may be dispensed with either by agreement of the home department, or in cases where there are urgent business requirements that have to be addressed, by decision of the relevant Heads of Service or the Chief Executive.
- The secondee should receive induction into the new service area as quickly as possible upon transfer so that they can commence their duties/projects.
- The line manager in the host service area will act as mentor to the individual and will regularly review and monitor progress in relation to the duties and responsibilities undertaken, including performance management.
- The end of the secondment requires appropriate management.
- Where an employee is on secondment and their original post is “at risk” of redundancy, full consultation is required to take place with the affected employee. Dependent upon meeting redundancy payment criteria, the employee may be eligible for a redundancy payment and access to redeployment.
- Where the secondment period is coming to an end and the secondee is returning to their substantive post, the return should be planned and properly managed, i.e.

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workstation prepared, welcome back meeting to include a brief update on current projects etc.

- Where the secondment period is coming to an end and the secondee is not returning to a substantive post, e.g. substantive post is redundant, then the end of the secondment should be managed and the appropriate notice period issued. Dependent upon meeting redundancy payment criteria, the employee may be eligible for a redundancy payment and access to redeployment.
- When a secondment ends, an evaluation and review of the effectiveness of the secondment by the home and recipient service areas should be undertaken.

Consecutive Secondment Applications

Consecutive secondments are recognised as one secondment finishing and another commencing within one week of each other.

1. Should an employee wish to apply for another secondment following their current secondment period, they must seek approval from the Manager of their substantive post.
2. In cases of successive secondment requests, the applicant's original manager has the authority to approve or decline the further request.
3. If approved and the employee is successful in securing another secondment, then the collective timeframes of the secondments will be calculated together to give an overall secondment timeframe.
4. Subsequent secondments resulting in time period of 24 months or less duration allow for automatic entry back into substantive post.

If subsequent secondments result in a secondment period in excess of a 24 months plus duration, then the following options will be available for employee:

- to return to their substantive post within the 24 month period in order to retain continuous employment with the council.
- to resign from their substantive post and accept the secondment extension with the secondment provider (this may be as a fixed term contract, which

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details the termination of employment date) via agreement with the appropriate Heads of Services and the HR Department, the secondment may be extended and their substantive post is kept 'open' for their return.

External Secondments

Other Local Authorities or partnership groups etc may choose to approach the council to advertise their secondment opportunity on the understanding they believe individuals from the council will have the transferable skills needed to fulfil their employment needs.

Denbighshire County Council can decide to advertise a vacant position via other local authorities or partnerships etc for a variety of reasons. Primarily because applicants from these areas will have the knowledge, skills or experience required to fulfil the role.

Procedure for external secondments

- The advertising programme, i.e. where and for how long the secondment is advertised, is at the discretion of the external organisation. Denbighshire County Council will decide on where to advertise the secondment vacancy within the council.
- Individuals seeking a secondment to an external organisation must seek the agreement of their relevant line manager and Head of Service prior to submitting an application. Individuals will be asked to outline the potential benefits of the secondment before a decision is made.
- Wherever possible, requests for secondments should be supported. Managers at all levels will facilitate the secondment process through co-operation, in recognition of the benefits to the organisation and to the individual.
- However, the demands and needs of the potential applicant's service must be a priority. Assessment of the continued service provision must be made; paying attention to the availability and suitability of candidates to 'back-fill' the vacated post.
- Normal notice periods will apply when the individual is leaving for a secondment opportunity. However, these may be dispensed with either by agreement of the home department, or in cases where there are urgent business requirements that

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have to be addressed, by decision of the relevant Heads of Service or the Chief Executive.

- The parties involved in an external secondment agreement are Denbighshire County Council, the council's employee and the host organisation.
- Whilst on the external secondment, the secondee will remain employed by the council on their terms and conditions of employment as specified in their contract of employment, apart from their salary. The secondee will receive the salary applicable to the secondment position. Benefits from the council will continue, for example, pension contributions and associated life insurance. The terms and conditions of secondment must be made clear and agreed by all parties. Please refer to [Secondment Agreement](#)
- Continuity of employment with the Council for the duration of the secondment will continue.
- The secondee should receive induction into the new position within the host organisation as quickly as possible so that they can commence their duties/projects.
- The line manager in the host organisation will act as mentor to the secondee and will regularly review and monitor progress in relation to the duties and responsibilities undertaken, including performance appraisal.
- If there are problems with the secondee's performance in post, these should be dealt with as and when they occur by the host organisation. However, the employer (DCC) is required to perform any formal disciplinary action.
- If the secondment length requires an extension, all parties must be kept informed. The secondee needs to be made aware of the consequences to them of maintaining the secondment beyond 24 months.
- Throughout the period of secondment, it is the responsibility of the secondee to maintain appropriate contact with their line manager in their home department.
- The end of the secondment requires appropriate management.
- Where an employee is on secondment and their original post is "at risk" of redundancy, full consultation is required to take place with the affected employee. Dependent upon meeting redundancy payment criteria, the employee may be eligible for a redundancy payment and access to redeployment.

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- Where the secondment period is coming to an end and the secondee is returning to their substantive post, the return should be planned and properly managed, i.e. workstation prepared, welcome back meeting to include a brief update on current projects etc.
- Where the secondment period is coming to an end and the secondee is not returning to a substantive post, e.g. substantive post redundant, then the end of the secondment should be managed and the appropriate notice period issued. Dependent upon meeting redundancy payment criteria, the employee may be eligible for a redundancy payment and access to redeployment.
- When a secondment ends, an evaluation and review of the effectiveness of the secondment by the home and host service areas should be undertaken.

Substantive Posts

Substantive post – Implications for a secondment of 24 months or less

The council will commit to keep the employees substantive post 'open' to enable them to return to their previous job and maintain continuous employment upon completion of the secondment.

Where the original secondment duration requires an extension and the extension means the entire secondment period is of 24 months or less duration, the secondee will be offered and invited to accept the extension.

At the end of the secondment, the secondee will return to their substantive post and receive a refresher departmental induction to bring them up-to-date with any changes within the department.

Substantive post – Implications for a secondment of 24 months plus duration

The council will not commit to keeping the employees substantive post 'open' beyond the 24 month period.

If the employee accepts an offer of a 24 month plus secondment, then the council will accept this as the employee resigning from their substantive post.

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Employee wishes to return to substantive post

If the employee, at the time of applying and accepting the secondment, **declares they wish to return to their vacated/substantive post**, then their vacant/substantive post will be advertised as either/or a secondment or Fixed Term position as detailed in the Recruitment procedure.

At the end of the secondment, the secondee will return to their substantive post and receive a refresher departmental induction to bring them up-to-date with any changes within the department.

Employee does not wish to return to substantive post

If the employee, at the time of applying and accepting the secondment declares they **do not wish** to return to their substantive post following secondment completion, this will be detailed in written correspondence and accepted as their resignation from their substantive post.

The substantive post will be recognised as permanently vacated and the council will advertise the vacant post as detailed in the Recruitment procedure.

Upon completion of the secondment and where the **employee does not wish to retain continuous employment**, the employee may be entitled to a redundancy payment if they meet redundancy criteria. If this is the case, appropriate consultation will have to take place to meet legislative timescales and requirements. Refer to the Redundancy Policy for more information.

Upon completion of the secondment and where the **employee wishes to retain employment** with the Council, if the secondee meets redundancy criteria, then they will also meet the redundancy redeployment criteria and therefore is protected by and follows the procedures within the Redeployment policy.

Upon completion of the secondment and where the **employee wishes to retain employment** with the Council, if the secondee does not meet redundancy criteria, then by default they are not protected by the Redeployment policy, therefore they will have to

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undertake the normal recruitment and selection processes utilised within the council to secure alternative employment prior to exhausting their notice period.

Performance Management

Induction

The secondee, when they commence their new duties, will receive an induction into their seconded post. The organisation and delivery of this is the responsibility of the departmental manager.

The secondee will also receive a refresher induction when transferring back to their substantive role. The organisation and delivery of this is the responsibility of the departmental manager.

Performance Management

Internal secondment: the host department employing the secondee will follow the recognised process currently required within the council.

External secondment: the host organisation of the employee will agree the performance monitoring system to be used during the secondment period.

Performance Issues / Concerns

Internal secondment - If there are problems with the secondee's performance in post, these should be dealt with as and when they occur. Performance issues will be dealt with on an individual basis and assessed at the time to provide a suitable resolution. However, in these circumstances the employing department is not obliged to offer the extension to the secondee, but must provide an explanation for this to the secondee.

External secondment - The host organisation is required to deal with such matters as and when they occur. Performance issues will be dealt with on an individual basis and assessed at the time to provide a suitable resolution. If there are problems with the secondee's performance in post, these should be dealt with as and when they occur by the host organisation. However, the employer (DCC) is required to perform any formal disciplinary action.

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Ultimately, it is for the host organisation to decide to retain the secondee. Should there be evidence to demonstrate that the secondee does not have to the capability to fulfil the secondment role, then the host organisation may approached the council and advise of their decision.

Terms and Conditions

Appointments/Offers

Appointments to secondment posts will be in accordance with the salary, terms and conditions offered as part of the advertisement and in association with the recognised grade and pay for the position.

Whilst on secondment, employees will be expected to conform to any Service Area conditions of employment.

Notice Periods

Generally, normal notice periods apply when leaving for a secondment opportunity. However, these may be dispensed with either by agreement of the home department, or in cases where there are urgent business requirements that have to be addressed, by decision of the relevant Heads of Service or the Chief Executive.

Travel Allowance

There will be no entitlement to a travel/subsistence allowance when secondments entail a change of workplace and result in a longer home to work journey.

However, the Council will pay travel/subsistence allowance, **but** only in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when an individual with specialist skills has agreed to be placed on a secondment at the request of the Council and this secondment results in a longer home to work journey. The allowance will be paid at the standard rate.

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Managing the End of a Secondment

Secondment becomes a Permanent Job Role

If during the secondment the post becomes permanent, all relevant parties must be kept informed.

Subject to satisfactory evidence of good performance in post and the substantive post holder not wishing to return to their job, the secondee may be offered the permanent position.

Managing the End of the Secondment Period

Secondment to a ‘new temporary’ post

Secondment Length	Employee Status	Secondment Post transfers to Permanent	Secondment Post ends as per contract
24 months or less	Employee has the right to return to substantive post	Employee goes back to substantive post. Or Invite secondee to apply via R&S procedure.	Employee goes back to substantive post.
> 24 months (extended or cumulatively)	Employee return to substantive post @ 24 months duration Or Employee resigns from substantive post and undertakes a FTC for the remainder of the working period.	Invite secondee to apply via R&S procedure.	Prior to end of FTC, employee invited to apply for current DCC vacancies. Redundancy redeployment conditions may apply.

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Secondment to an ‘empty’ permanent post

Secondment Length	Employee Status	Secondment Post transfers to Permanent	Secondment Post ends as per contract
24 months or less	Employee has the right to return to substantive post	Employee goes back to substantive post. Or Offer position.	Employee goes back to substantive post.
> 24 months (extended or cumulatively)	Employee return to substantive post @ 24 months duration Or Employee resigns from substantive post and undertakes a FTC for the remainder of the working period.	Invite secondees to apply via R&S procedure.	Prior to end of secondment, employee invited to apply for current DCC vacancies. Redundancy redeployment conditions may apply.

Secondment Complete – Employee Reporting Sick

Should an employee report sick for work on the date they are scheduled to return to work following a completed secondment, they should inform their manager as soon as possible through the normal procedures.