

Aims and Objectives

A secondment is where an individual (the “secondee”) transfers on a fixed term basis, for a specific purpose, either

- into the council from another organisation (“inward” secondment),
or
- out of the council to another organisation (“outward” secondment).

An individual’s original organisation will be known as the “seconding” organisation and the organisation to which they are seconded will be the “Host”.

All secondments will be on agreed terms and conditions of employment and set out in writing in a **Secondment Agreement**.

The secondee will return to their original (“seconding”) organisation when the secondment agreement comes to an end.

Participation in a secondment must not adversely impact on a secondee’s terms and conditions of employment or employment status.

A secondment should bring benefits to all parties. The most successful secondments occur when there has been thorough planning and preparation, and achievable outcomes and benefits are clearly identified at the outset.

All secondments will normally be for a maximum of two years, reviewable at least annually. Any extension beyond two years will be on an exceptional basis only and only on the authorisation of the relevant Corporate Director.

Where an individual is “loaned” on a fixed term basis internally to a different service area / directorate within the council, this is a **Fixed Term Internal Transfer** (not a secondment). Please see separate guidance.

Scope

Patterns of working life are changing, and people are likely to have more varied and developmental career paths in flatter organisational structures. In the context of lifelong learning, employees need to be increasingly adaptable and have broad-based skills and be capable of responding positively to new and unfamiliar situations. Where available and operationally possible, the opportunity to experience and understand different cultures, values and ways of working within different organisations will assist in this.

The use of well-managed secondments in the Council is encouraged as a means of contributing to our wider corporate goals on a flexible workforce and the development of people.

Authorisation of an inward secondment will always be subject to operational business need and must be in line with Resource Management Procedures.

There may be instances where a significant business need, restructure and / or the requirement for specific skills / experience requires the directed secondment of an individual. Such cases will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way and in line with the principles of the Council's Managing Change policy, procedure and guidance.

Objectives

The objectives of each secondment must be closely related to the Council's Corporate Strategy or to a clearly identified business need. All parties must be able to clearly identify this link.

Secondments are most likely to arise in the following circumstances (although this list is not exhaustive):

- to stimulate culture change and work on 'cross-cutting' issues;
- to embed partnership working;
- to transfer expertise;
- to undertake a specific project assignment;
- to support development opportunities for both the host and the seconding organisations;
- to support development opportunities for the secondee;

Eligibility

A secondee may come from any level in the council / seconding organisation and be at any stage of their career. Individuals may apply for an advertised secondment or may be advised of a secondment opportunity in another organisation.

Normally it will be better to allow newly appointed individuals time to settle into their substantive role before considering secondment opportunities.

An employee may also request a secondment in support of their development needs or for other reasons (e.g. flexible working, personal circumstances etc.). These should be considered in the normal way and with due regard to operational need.

Potential Outcomes and Benefits

To the Council:

- Greater flexibility in developing and utilising the skills of the workforce
- Development opportunities for employees to learn and perform in challenging new situations
- Enhanced employee motivation and confidence
- Increased lateral thinking capacity of secondee
- Opportunity to develop closer working links with other organisations and support partner working environments

- Enhanced profile as a flexible employer

To the secondee:

- Increased motivation through the widening of perspectives and experiencing of different concepts, values, priorities and cultures
- Exchanging ideas and good practice
- Greater ability and confidence to deal with change
- Personal and career development through enhancement of a range of skills eg managerial, professional, communication and technical skills and knowledge
- Enhanced personal profile and development of wider network group

To the external organisation:

- Cost-effective access to skills and experience not otherwise available
- Increased capacity to undertake specific work
- Flexibility in addressing short-term need
- Fresh thinking and new approaches to organisational or role specific issues
- Enhanced links with the council

Selection

Where it is likely that more than one person could make an effective contribution to a particular secondment opportunity, the position must be openly advertised internally in the Council and filled in accordance with the Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy. As a general principle, the longer the secondment, the more likely it is that internal advertisement will be appropriate.

There will be some occasions when a secondment is set up specifically to tap into and develop a particular person's skills and experience. In such circumstances only that person will be considered.

A secondment opportunity needs to be seen by all parties as providing the secondee with a reasonable alternative to their substantive post in respect of terms and conditions and job content, and the role must be within the capability and skills of the secondee.

Planning and Preparation

When setting up a secondment both the host and the seconding organisations should ensure that the objectives of the secondment and role of the secondee are clearly defined and documented along with the required outcomes.

The host organisation should meet with the proposed seconding organisation and the proposed secondee to agree the content of the Secondment Agreement to ensure all parties clearly understand the role, responsibility, objectives and expected outcomes and benefits prior to the start of the secondment.

All parties must receive a copy of the Secondment Agreement which will include written confirmation of the terms and conditions applicable to the secondment, including confirmation of the secondee's right to return to their substantive job at the end of the secondment (or suitable alternative post in the

event that the substantive post has been made redundant during the period of the secondment).

In the case of an “Inward secondment” normal appointment procedure must be followed, including DBS checks in line with Safer Recruitment etc.

Terms and Conditions

The terms and conditions of a secondment will be set out in a Secondment Agreement. This will clarify the individual’s employment status and their terms and conditions of employment, together with the obligations and requirements on both parties and any specific additional working arrangements.

Advice and guidance must be sought from HR in the first instance. HR will provide the appropriate template and, where required, will liaise with the Legal Services team. The template must be used as a minimum, i.e. sections cannot be removed. Where an external organisation wishes to draft their own secondment agreement, it must meet the minimum requirements of the council’s template.

Responsibilities

To be discussed with all parties and agreed as expectations.

All parties

- Agree roles and responsibilities of secondee, Cumberland Council and the external organisation
- Agree expected duration of the secondment
- Confirm salary and any additional terms and conditions and complete and sign the Secondment Agreement. Particular attention should be paid to the agreement of responsibility in terms of the application of proceedings such as discipline, grievance, harassment etc.
- Agree associated costs and who will pay for what (normally such costs would be met by the host organisation), eg example, salary, travel in connection with work; any additional travel from home to new work base etc
- Make arrangements for regular review of the secondment
- Agree the mechanism in case an early conclusion of the secondment is necessary

Host Organisation

- Identify the purpose of the secondment and the required work, outcomes and deadlines
- Arrange supervision, support, induction (including health and safety), briefing and training for secondee
- Carry out health and safety risk assessment (as required)
- Make arrangements for any equipment and other resources to be provided
- Agree the performance appraisal mechanisms for the duration of the secondment
- Communicate with other employees who will be working with the secondee

Seconding Organisation

- Make arrangements to keep secondee up to date with work issues in substantive post
- Arrange for review and, if necessary, extension of the secondment.

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(in addition to responsibilities as Host or Seconding Organisation)

- Liaise with Payroll / Finance Manager regarding payroll and invoicing processes
- In the event of an outward secondment, the relevant line manager to consider how the absence of the secondee will be covered and to arrange fixed term replacement where appropriate.
- Ensure the Council's Managing Change policy, procedure and guidance are followed in the event of the impact of a restructure on a Council's employee's substantive post.

Return to Substantive Role

A secondment is a time-limited arrangement and at the end of it, the secondee will return to their substantive post. There may be occasions where the secondment finishes earlier than originally intended due to a restructure or other significant operational issue in either the Council or the other organisation. Early termination will be in line with the Secondment Agreement.

For council employees, the ending of a secondment will mean that they will return to their substantive post or to a suitable alternative post where available in the event that their substantive post has been made redundant during the period of secondment.

If there are issues with how the secondment is operating, from either the secondee's, the external organisation or the council's perspective, all parties should meet to discuss and look at ways to try and improve the situation. If this does not resolve the difficulty, all parties should look to facilitate an early return of the secondee to their substantive post. It is not in the interest of any parties to continue a secondment which is clearly not working as envisaged.

The return of the secondee to their substantive post must be planned well in advance by all parties, recognising that both the secondee and the seconding organisation may have changed. The secondee's substantive manager should facilitate their transfer back into their substantive role. This will be a smoother process where contact has been maintained and regular updates have been provided throughout the secondment.

In the event of secondee returning to the Council from an "outward" secondment, the substantive manager should meet with the secondee as soon as possible after the return of the secondee, to discuss and recognise the new or enhanced skills, knowledge and expertise which the individual now has, and explore how this can be used effectively in their ongoing work.

In addition, the secondee should provide a brief post-secondment report on their own learning and development which will be reviewed at their next appraisal interview.

If at any time during a secondment a council employee's substantive post is subject to an organisational review / restructure, the individual will be included in all relevant communication, consultation and associated procedures in line with the Council's Managing Change policy, procedure and guidance.

If at any time during a secondment the post becomes a permanent vacancy it must be advertised in line with the normal procedures within the host organisation. Subject to these procedures, the secondee, if they wish, may apply for the post alongside any other applicants. In the council this will mean that "inward" secondees may only apply for externally advertised posts. As they will have remained employees of the seconding organisation, they cannot be treated as internal candidates in the council.

The secondee has no right to be assimilated or placed in a secondment post on a permanent basis outside of normal recruitment and selection procedures.

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Version	Date Reviewed	Author	Changes Made
Version 1.0	6/5/2025	Recruitment & Retention	Document updated to the new Cumberland Council corporate template (formatting only, no content changes).
Version 2.0	12/06/2026		Secondment Agreement templates removed. Terms and Conditions amended to include reference to Legal Services team.