

Managing Secondments

Agreed in conjunction with PCS Trade Union

Sport for life

sportscotland
the national agency for sport

1.0 Introduction

1.1 **sportscotland** is committed to the development of its employees. Secondments are a valuable tool for individual career development and for developing skills within **sportscotland** and partner organisations.

1.2 In managing secondments, **sportscotland** will not discriminate on any grounds including but not limited to disability, age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation and also gender identity, responsibility for dependents, political beliefs, trade union activity, socio-economic background, Looked After Children and Care Experienced Young People or other relevant factors.

1.3 Given that secondments involve a number of stakeholders both internally and externally it's important that any potential secondment is discussed at the earliest opportunity to allow appropriate planning to take place.

Line Managers should speak with HR as soon as an employee makes them aware they are considering applying for a secondment or if they are considering hosting a secondee.

2.0 Scope of Policy

2.1 **sportscotland's** policy is to:

- support secondment opportunities where it can
- ensure that the needs of **sportscotland**, the employee and partners are fully considered when planning and facilitating a secondment.
- limit the duration of a secondment to no more than one year, unless exceptionally agreed by the Senior Management Team (SMT).
- clearly define the terms of each individual secondment arrangement, including but not limited to the terms set out within the secondment agreement or Variation to Contract.
- ensure all employees are treated fairly against the criteria as laid out in this policy

- ensure the outcomes of all secondment requests are provided in writing regardless of whether they are approved or rejected.
- ensure internal/incoming secondment recruitment is managed by the HR team and in line with the Recruitment and Selection policy.
- ensure that all eligible **sportscotland** employees have the opportunity to apply internally for secondments if/when **sportscotland** are approached by a host organisation seeking to second our employees into their organisation.
- ensure that all fixed term contract opportunities are offered internally as secondments

2.2 This policy applies to all **sportscotland** employees who meet the eligibility criteria

2.3 If an employee secures a secondment whilst employed on a fixed term contract with **sportscotland**, and the fixed term contract ends whilst they are on secondment, their employment with **sportscotland** will cease at the end date of the secondment unless they secure another position, or an alternate date is agreed by both parties.

2.4 All secondments will be considered on a case-by-case basis and only if there is demonstrable benefits to **sportscotland** and our employees will the secondment be approved.

2.5 How a secondment will impact **sportscotland** operationally, as well as the sporting system, and individual employee development, will form a key part of the decision-making process and should be defined and discussed at the earliest opportunity.

3.0 Overview of Procedure

3.1 The purpose of secondments is to provide individuals with the opportunity to apply their skills, knowledge and experience in a new environment and challenge them professionally, aiding development, bridging identified skills gaps, and broadening experience. Secondment opportunities enable individuals to enhance and develop their skills and their knowledge of particular areas of work and may also be used to develop skills of partner organisations.

3.2 Internally, secondments can be used to provide cover for fixed term vacancies (e.g., maternity leave) or to undertake specific project work, which has a definite end date.

3.3 For employees who are taking on additional responsibilities for which additional responsibility payments may be made there are separate arrangements in place.

3.4 As part of any secondment it is important that records are kept by the HR Team in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

What is a secondment?

3.5 A 'secondment' is the temporary move or 'loan' of an individual to another position in **sportscotland** or to a different organisation. The term secondment can also be used if an individual moves within their own team or section, covering an alternative position and reverting to their original (substantive) position on completion (unless otherwise agreed).

How does it work?

3.6 **sportscotland** operates three types of secondments:

- **Internal** within/between teams or departments within **sportscotland**
- **External** from **sportscotland** out to an external organisation
- **Incoming** from an external organisation in to **sportscotland**.

Definitions:

- **Home Line Manager:** *The line manager of the employee looking to move into the secondment*
- **Host Line Manager:** *The recruiting manager for the secondment position*

3.8 The 'host' department or external organisation of the secondee benefits from the individual's existing and developing skills whilst their 'home' department benefits from their increased motivation and enhanced skillset on their return. There is also an organisational benefit of promoting increased mobility for **sportscotland** staff, retaining valuable skills, knowledge, and experience.

4.0 Guidelines

4.1 Types of work that might be considered for secondment include (but not limited to):

- filling of a permanent vacancy for a limited period prior to making a permanent appointment
- a specific project or task of a defined, limited period
- a funded position of a specified duration
- maternity, career break or long-term sickness absence cover
- to meet an individual's development need (e.g., for succession planning purposes), which may be identified through the Coaching for Performance process.
- secondment to or from a partner organisation to support both the individuals experience and/or to enhance the partner organisations governance or delivery.

4.2 It is essential that all parties are clear about their obligations, expectations, accountabilities, and objectives.

Role of the Employee

Employees considering applying for a secondment have a responsibility to discuss their intention to apply with their line manager before making their application, to ascertain what the potential impact would be if successful, and whether their line manager would be in a position to support the application.

Role of the Home Line Manager

The home line manager has responsibility for considering secondment opportunities when approached by their staff and giving thought to the impact any successful application will have on their team, colleagues, and the organisation.

Before a secondment is agreed internally the Home Line Manager should be in regular contact with the Host Line Manager, and between them they should agree an appropriate release date for the secondee considering both the employee and the needs of the organisation. The home line manager can turn down a request for a secondment if this will have a significant detrimental impact on their ability to manage the work of their team. The Home Line Manager should have agreement from their Head of Department before agreeing any release date.

Role of the Host Line Manager

The Host Line Manager should be in regular contact with the Home Line Manager and between them they should agree an appropriate release date for the secondee.

Role of Human Resources

HR will support the secondment management process by providing guidance, advice and support to managers and individuals on the secondment policy, the terms of any secondment and assist with the completion of the secondment agreement or variation to contract, as appropriate.

Internal Secondments

- 4.3 In most circumstances the Host Line Manager should agree to release the secondee at a date that reflects the secondee's notice period, however in exceptional circumstances this can be negotiated between the Host and the Home Line Managers. If there are any occasions where the Host and Home Line Manager cannot agree a release date, this should be discussed with the HR Manager in the first instance before the employee is informed of any potential dates, to try and facilitate a fair and reasonable outcome for all parties. If an agreement cannot be reached the matter will be escalated to an appropriate Director (if Host and Home Line Managers are in the same directorate or to SMT if these differ) whose decision will be final.
- 4.4 Employees must have been in their substantive post, for a minimum period of one year before applying and being considered for an internal secondment. Employees on fixed term contracts will not normally be considered for an internal secondment.
- 4.5 Internal secondments will normally be confirmed through a Variation to Contract agreement provided in writing by HR.

External Secondments

- 4.6 Employee's must have at least 2 years continuous service with **sportscotland** and a minimum of 1 years' service in their substantive post before they will be considered for **sportscotland** People Management Toolkit – Managing Secondments June 2023 – Version 1.1

an external secondment release. Employees on fixed term contracts will not normally be considered for an external secondment.

- 4.7 Where an employee is considering applying for an external secondment opportunity, they should discuss it with their Line Manager in the first instance, **and before applying**, to ascertain what the potential impact would be, if successful, and whether their line manager would be able to support the application.

Incoming Secondment

- 4.8 The hosting of a secondee by **sportscotland** will depend upon the policy of the home (external) organisation and negotiations between **sportscotland** and the home organisation. Normally the terms and conditions, policies and procedures of the host organisation will remain in place for the secondee, unless agreed by both parties and signed off by the SMT.
- 4.9 **sportscotland's** Legal Manager and HR Team should always be involved at the earliest stage of any discussions around hosting any incoming secondee and before any recruitment process is commenced.

Duration of Secondment

- 4.10 **sportscotland** will consider secondments both incoming and outgoing for a period of up to one year unless otherwise agreed by the SMT.
- 4.11 Secondments of less than six months should not be backfilled and instead be managed through the reallocation of workload internally rather than as part of a formal secondment arrangement.

Confirmation of External Secondment Agreement / Terms and Conditions

- 4.12 Confirmation of the terms of the secondment will be provided in writing by HR, known as the Secondment Agreement, prior to the start of the secondment.

This will be a tripartite agreement where the three parties involved are:

- the employee/secondee
- **sportscotland** HR representative
- a representative from the host/home organisation (depending on whether **sportscotland** is seconding an individual in or out)

- 4.13 The agreement will confirm all the elements of the secondment so that the parameters are clear. Any variation to **sportscotland's** terms will be confirmed to the employee in a variation of contract or will be defined in the secondment agreement.

Extension/Renewal of any Secondment

- 4.14 A secondment can be extended/renewed beyond the initially agreed period by up to six months; however, before confirmation the terms of the secondment arrangements should be reviewed by the Senior Management Team in conjunction with the Head of HR and the Host and Home Line Managers due to potential legal and operational implications.

- 4.15 Any review should take place within three months of the end of the secondment.

This review would include, but not limited to:

- the benefit of extending the secondment to **sportscotland**, the individual and the partner organisation
- an assessment of the future (longer term) needs for the role
- a review of the terms and conditions of the secondment
- whether the position should become permanent
- implications of the continued secondment on the home team
- whether the work is sustainable for the period of the extension

- 4.16 If an extension/renewal is agreed, this will be confirmed to the home line manager by the host line manager and confirmed to the individual by the HR Team. No more than one extension or renewal will be granted, unless in very exceptional circumstances.

Change to hours and working pattern

- 4.17 No changes to working hours or working patterns during the secondment will be agreed with the employee unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Legal and Immigration Matters

- 4.18 Secondments to external organisations and/or countries outside the UK need to be referred through the Head of HR to the Legal Manager for consideration of any implications regarding the local right to work provisions for the country or countries involved.

- 4.19 There are also special considerations for individuals sponsored to work for **sportscotland** under the UK Home Office points-based system. The Head of HR will consult the Legal Manager and the Host line manager at an early stage to seek advice if the sponsored individual's duties, remuneration or hours would change for the duration of the secondment, to ensure the implications of these changes are clear both for the sponsored individual and in terms of legal reporting requirements and appropriate action taken.

Pre-employment Check Requirements

- 4.20 For incoming or internal secondments, any pre-employment checks (including Disclosure or PVG checks and health screening) which are required for the post must be identified at an early stage and appropriate action taken, in accordance with **sportscotland's** recruitment processes.

Pay Progression and Pay Awards

- 4.21 During the secondment, if the employee is eligible under Pay Policy rules, pay point progression will apply in relation to the substantive position as if the employee had not been on secondment. On completion of the secondment, the employee will return to their substantive position, grade, and pay point, subject to any incremental progression that took place during the secondment.

Management and Communication

- 4.22 The seconded employee is expected to fully relinquish the responsibilities of their substantive position to focus on their new role. Before the start of the secondment, the individual should agree with their home line manager how to keep in touch during the secondment period.
- **Internal:** On a day-to-day basis, the secondee will report to and be managed by their line manager in the Host team. Any management issues concerning the secondment will be dealt with in consultation with the Host and Home line managers and the HR Officer.
 - **External:** On a day-to-day basis, the secondee will report to and be managed by the line manager in the Host organisation. Any management issues concerning the secondee will be dealt with in consultation with **sportscotland**. The secondee will be expected to comply with the policies and procedures of the Host organisation, including health and safety, in addition to those of **sportscotland**. More details will be provided in the written Secondment Agreement. Secondees will normally continue to be paid by the home payroll and the cost claimed back from the host organisation, however where possible expenses should be claimed through the host organisation.
- 4.23 The secondee will not be expected to keep abreast of all developments in their home team whilst on secondment unless this has otherwise been agreed and communication arrangements have been put in place.

Returning to substantive post

- 4.24 In the last three months of the secondment, the line manager in the home team should contact the secondee to arrange a full re-induction and to plan for the secondee's return. At the meeting, it will be important to manage expectations and be clear with the secondee what will be expected on returning to their original role. This could include clarifying details of the role and responsibilities, setting objectives and discussing how any new skills can be used.
- 4.25 Arrangements should be made to ensure delivery and return of all property, documents and data owned by the Host, as appropriate.
- 4.26 In the event that a substantive role no longer exists or has changed substantially, the secondee will be involved in the normal consultation process and possible redeployment opportunities should be explored.

Continuity of Service

- 4.27 Where the secondment is external, all rights under the substantive Contract of Employment will be suspended, however the terms of the secondment will be defined to the secondee using a secondment agreement. For the purpose of continuity of employment, the period of the secondment will count towards the period of employment for statutory purposes.
- 4.28 Where the secondment is internal, all substantive contractual entitlements remain unchanged, unless agreed and defined in a variation to contract.

Pension Scheme Members

- 4.29 In advance of any external secondment, individuals are advised to contact their Pensions provider to discuss the potential impact on their personal pension arrangements.

5.0 Record Keeping

- 5.1 It is important that all parties keep clear, written records of secondments. **sportscotland** will keep appropriate records pertaining to secondments subject to retention periods and in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

6.0 Compliance

- 6.1 Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Senior Management Team
- 6.2 Any exceptions to this policy will need to be agreed by the SMT.

7.0 ICT

- 7.1 If a **sportscotland** employee secures a full time secondment, they must return all ICT equipment prior to the secondment commencing. Their Microsoft account (including emails) will be suspended during the period of secondment, though they will still be able to access iTrent, as they may be used to access payslips if **sportscotland** continues to pay the secondee.
- 7.2 The secondees line manager must arrange the return of all ICT equipment in advance of the secondment commencing. It is the line manager's responsibility to check that all equipment is in full working order prior to the equipment being returned to the ICT department, this includes chargers and additional equipment that was issued. Any ICT queries should be discussed with our IT department at the earliest opportunity - IT Helpdesk IT.Helpdesk@sportscotland.org.uk
- 7.3 **sportscotland** employees can retain their **sportscotland** equipment if they are only on a part time secondment and are still working for **sportscotland** part time, however they cannot use their **sportscotland** equipment for secondment work due to cyber security risks and issues around GDPR.
- 7.4 Failure to follow instructions above, could lead to disciplinary action.