



Secondment Policy and Procedure

Policy No. 6

| People Area | Name of Policy |
|---|--|
| Authored by (Responsible Officer): | Head of HR |
| ELT Approved: | 9th December 2024 |
| FBU Consultation: | 10th December 2024 – 7th January 2025 |
| Unison Consultation: | 10th December 2024 – 7th January 2025 |
| Executive Committee Approved: | 24th January 2025 |
| CFA Approved: | N/A |
| Policy Register Review Date: | December 2027 |
| Implementing Officer: | Head of HR |

1. Policy

1.1 Policy Statement

- 1.1.1 Cleveland Fire Authority is committed to maintaining an efficient and effective workforce and recognises the valuable contribution of all employees in achieving its objectives. The Authority seeks to retain and develop employees and recognises the importance of supporting individuals in a professional and personal context.
- 1.1.2 Whilst there is no statutory entitlement that allows employees to undertake a secondment the Authority is committed to accommodating such arrangements in circumstances when it is operationally feasible to do so, and when it is beneficial to the employee and the Authority.
- 1.1.3 The Authority seeks to assist staff in undertaking development opportunities to support their professional competency. Secondments are recognised as a mechanism to enhance skills and experience whilst supporting collaborative working and shared learning of best practice principles.
- 1.1.4 A secondment is defined as a temporary transfer to another job role, department, fire authority or affiliated organisation. Secondments can take many forms and can relate to periods of service outside an individual's normal workplace, both internally within the Authority or externally with other appropriate organisations.
- 1.1.5 Whilst the following list is not exhaustive, there are a number of reasons as to why a secondment may be sought:
- 1.1.6 Internal Secondment
- to gain additional skills and experience in another specialty or different part of the Brigade
 - to undertake a specific training activity for the benefit of the individual and the sponsoring Department
 - to fulfil an existing vacancy until such time as the post is filled on a permanent basis
 - to provide opportunity to apply their skills in a different environment
- 1.1.7 External Secondment
- to secure an additional qualification under any recruitment and promotion initiatives
 - to gain wider career and personal development
 - to gain additional experience in another environment which, on return to the substantive post, will make a valuable contribution to the Authority's services
- 1.1.8 In general terms, a secondment will only be appropriate for staff employed on a permanent basis. However, consideration will be given to applications from staff who are employed on a fixed-term basis or under the Retained Duty System on a case by case basis.

- 1.1.9 Consideration of resourcing implications, namely the ability to recruit to a post left vacant as a result of a secondment, will be a key factor in the decision making process. Individuals are only eligible to apply for and accept a secondment if their substantive position is capable of being left vacant for the period of the secondment or filled on a temporary basis without disruption to the service and without additional cost.
- 1.1.10 A secondment arrangement will be negotiated with the individual, and the host department/organisation, but will not exceed 2 years, unless specific circumstances, such as the length of training for a specific qualification, apply.

1.2 Policy Aim

- 1.2.1 This policy aims to support our commitment to succession planning and professional development as the Brigade may be able to make use of specific skills that an individual has, or to meet identified individual development needs. Any application will need to be considered in line with the needs of the service.
- 1.2.2 In order to support the achievement of its aims the Authority will:
- ensure equality of opportunity for all employees;
 - recognise the benefits of knowledge sharing and skill development achieved through secondment opportunities
 - manage all requests for secondments in accordance with the procedure set out within this document
 - provide appropriate training, development and support to those involved in the application of this policy and procedure
 - collate and report management information to the Brigade's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) relating to requests for secondments and any subsequent arrangements.

1.3 Scope

- 1.3.1 This policy and its procedure apply to all employees who are directly employed by Cleveland Fire Brigade, save for Retained Duty Staff who are not eligible for a secondment.
- 1.3.2 This policy and its associated procedure are one of several policies and procedures relating to ways of working within Cleveland Fire Brigade, as detailed below;
- Recruitment, Selection & Promotion Policy
 - Continuous Professional Development Policy

There is a separate policy and procedure for each of the above working arrangements and this policy relates specifically to the arrangements for secondments.

1.4 Policy Category

- 1.4.1 This policy is categorised as '**Corporate Authority**' within the Key Document Framework.

2. Organising

2.1 **Cleveland Fire Authority** is responsible for:

- approving the Authority's Secondment Policy and Procedure

2.2 **Chief Fire Officer** is responsible for:

- reviewing, agreeing and monitoring secondment arrangements for employees within Cleveland Fire Brigade in line with the Authority's Scheme of Delegation

2.3 **Assistant Chief Fire Officer Strategic Planning and Resources** is responsible for:

- overseeing all aspects of this policy and procedure
- reviewing, considering and determining the outcome of applications for secondments within the Brigade in line with the Authority's Scheme of Delegation
- agreeing the implementation of a secondment opportunity as a resourcing tool for internal vacancies as appropriate
- liaising with HR in the context of employment law as applicable

2.4 **Senior Head of People** is responsible for:

- monitoring arrangements within their areas of jurisdiction in relation to secondments

2.5 **Head of Human Resources** is responsible for:

- implementing this policy and procedure
- providing training and development to those involved in the application of this policy and procedure
- ensuring that the policy and procedure meets and continues to meet the requirements of employment legislation
- advising managers and staff on all secondment and employment law issues
- effectively communicating this policy and procedure to all staff
- managing, administering and coordinating all applications for secondments

2.6 **Heads of Department/ Line Managers** are responsible for:

- ensuring the fair and consistent application of this policy and procedure
- informing HR of employee's intentions to request a secondment
- making recommendations to the relevant Director after taking into consideration the Brigade's operational/business requirements
- adhering to the Recruitment, Selection and Promotion Policy and Procedure when using a secondment as a resourcing tool
- undertaking training in the application and management of secondments
- supporting all staff who are affected by this policy and procedure

2.7 **Individuals** are responsible for:

- adhering to the requirements of this policy and procedure
- adhering to the relevant recruitment process when making an application for an internal vacancy established as a secondment

- keeping managers informed of their intentions at the earliest opportunity and providing the relevant information and documentation

2.8 **Trade Unions and Representative Bodies** are responsible for:

- supporting the implementation of, and adherence to, this policy and procedure

3 Planning and Implementing

3.1 This policy is underpinned and implemented through the Authority's Secondment Procedure Appendix 1.

3.2 All new staff will be made aware of this policy and procedure during their induction and all documents will be available on the Brigade's intranet.

3.3 Existing staff will be informed of this policy and procedure as per the accepted Policy Framework Procedure.

3.4 Where necessary, training for those managers involved in the execution of the procedure will be provided by the Head of Human Resources.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 There is a cost-neutral financial resource implication currently associated with this policy in terms of the employment of a temporary replacement to cover secondments, and resources relate exclusively to any recruitment costs. This will vary according to the position and level of the post being vacated.

4.2 There are people resources required to coordinate the procedure, recruitment, document administration, liaison with individuals and training and communication. Most of this work is regarded as core work of the Human Resource Department.

5 Equality Impact Assessment

5.1 This policy has been assessed in accordance with the Brigade's Equality Impact Assessment Procedure.

5.2 The findings of the Equality Impact Assessment conclude that the Secondment Policy and Procedure does not have a detrimental impact on any group of staff, including those with one or more protected characteristics. Conversely, the Secondment Policy and Procedure is considered to provide additional benefits to staff, in the way of professional and personal development opportunities.

6 Monitoring

6.1 The Head of HR will monitor activities under this policy and procedure.

7 Audit

- 7.1 This policy will be audited in accordance with the procedure detailed within the Authority's Policy Framework.

8 Review

- 8.1 The ACFO SPR will undertake a review of this policy in 2027 to ensure it is taking account of any new or emerging political, social, technological, legislative, environmental, competitive, citizen or reputational factors.

Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the procedure that underpins and implements Cleveland Fire Authority's Secondment Policy.

2. Scope or Definition

- 2.1 This policy and its procedure apply to all employees who are directly employed by Cleveland Fire Brigade, save for On-Call Duty Staff who are not eligible for a secondment.

3. Background

3.1 Employment Law and Best Practice

Consideration will be given to all aspects of employment law to ensure that the Authority is compliant throughout any element of the application of this policy and procedure.

3.2 Employment Rights Act 1996 (section 80F – 80I) and Employment Act 2002

The above regulations relate to the general principles afforded to individuals with employed status in an organisation.

3.3 Data Protection Act 2018/ General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Authority's records relating to secondments will be kept confidential and in accordance with the Data Protection Act/ GDPR. Any documentation related to a request for a secondment, or an application for an internal secondment opportunity in the context of general recruitment, will be placed on the individual's personal record file and retained for the duration of employment.

3.4 Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 (PTW)

The PTW regulations state that employers cannot treat part-time workers less favourably than their full-time equivalents and cannot subject them to any disadvantage (or detriment) because of their part-time status, unless objectively justified.

3.5 The Equality Act 2010

- 3.5.1 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace. It is unlawful to discriminate against people because of any, or all, of the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

- 3.5.2 The Authority will ensure that direct or indirect discrimination does not occur when applying the procedure for requests for secondments. Direct discrimination is treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others, whilst indirect discrimination involves the application of rules and/or arrangements in place that apply to everyone but may put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair advantage.
- 3.5.3 There may be occasions when there is a Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ) i.e. a genuine requirement for a condition to be met that applies to a specific section of the workforce related to a job role, which may impact on secondments. In such circumstances advice should be sought from the Human Resources Department.
- 3.5.4 Under the Disability provisions of the Equality Act the Authority may have to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate an employee who has a disability. HR and Occupational Health, in partnership with departments, will work with managers and individuals to ensure that this happens. Reasonable adjustments will be made outside of the scope of a secondment.
- 3.6 **Public Sector Equality Duty**
The Authority is obliged under the Public Sector Equality Duty to provide and publish relevant equality information which will make public bodies transparent about decision-making processes, and accountable to its service users. The HR Department is responsible for monitoring all secondment arrangements to ensure the Authority meets its duty.

4. Agreement and Application

4.1 Secondment Agreement

- 4.1.1 As highlighted in the Secondment Policy, there are several reasons as to why an employee may wish to undertake a secondment. When making a request for a secondment, outside of an application for an internal secondment vacancy, the reason and associated benefits should be detailed.
- 4.1.2 All parties must agree, as a minimum, the following:
- The purpose of the secondment;
 - The funding arrangements (including, where applicable, the recruitment costs directly incurred as a result of the secondment)
 - The effective date and anticipated duration of the secondment;
 - Arrangements for 'Keeping in Touch' during the course of the secondment
 - Specific arrangements for returning to the substantive post.
- 4.1.3 For the purpose of this policy the term "all parties" relate to the employee being seconded, their current manager and the manager of the role to which the secondment relates.

- 4.1.4 During the secondment, it is important that the employee keeps in touch with the manager of the department from which they have been seconded, so that they can be made aware of any developments appropriate to their work. This is especially so when the period of secondment exceeds twelve months. The manager and employee should therefore agree the frequency and method of contact. For secondments of twelve months or more, it would be appropriate to require the employee to contact the manager **at least** annually.
- 4.1.5 Depending on the length of the secondment, an employee may be required to undertake re-training, re-orientation or induction on their return to their original post.
- 4.1.6 Any application from an employee with a formal disciplinary sanction regarding conduct, performance or attendance should be discussed with the Human Resources Department in the first instance.
- 4.2 Terms of the Secondment**
- 4.2.1 The duration of the secondment will be agreed in advance by the Brigade in consultation with the employee requesting the secondment and will depend principally on operational considerations and the purpose of the secondment.
- 4.2.2 The period of the secondment will be for a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 2 years. Once agreed the length of period will not normally be varied (unless in exceptional circumstances and agreed by both parties) and in discussion with the Human Resources Department.
- 4.2.3 In situations where a temporary appointment is made to cover the post, the temporary employee's contract of employment will clearly state that the employment terminates on the return of the substantive post holder.
- 4.2.4 For an internal secondment all existing terms and conditions of employment will remain save for the salary which will be determined by the post in which the secondment relates to. For an external secondment terms and conditions will be deferred during the secondment and substituted by those in place at the host employer.
- 4.2.5 HR department can only provide limited information regarding pension implications so it is recommended that employees seek independent advice before they commit to an external secondment opportunity.
- 4.2.6 All staff on secondment will be required to demonstrate competence and CPD during the period of secondment. For those with an operational background or specialist skill they may need to demonstrate maintenance of competence in this specific skill area.
- 4.2.7 Staff will not normally be permitted to take up secondary employment during the course of a secondment. However, for the purpose of supplementing a lower income incurred from a secondment, prior approval must be obtained from an ACFO. Any anticipated conflict between the needs of CFB and the individual may lead to the request being refused. If alternative employment is sought during the period of the secondment then authority from an ACO will similarly be required.

4.3 Returning to the Substantive Post

- 4.3.1 Secondments will be established for a defined period of time, dependant on the nature of the transfer. All permanent staff have the right to return to their substantive post at the end of the secondment. There may be circumstances however where the substantive post cannot be held open. In such cases an equivalent post on no less favourable terms and conditions will be made available to the secondee on the completion of the secondment. This may not necessarily be at the same location or shift as the substantive post. This will not be determined until the return to work is confirmed by the employee. In the event of a redundancy situation arising during the secondment the Redundancy Policy and Procedure will apply.
- 4.3.2 The employee will commit to returning to the substantive post for a minimum period of time unless otherwise mutually agreed.
- 4.3.3 Consideration will be given to employees who wish to return to work from a secondment earlier than the agreed date. This will be subject to at least 3 months' notice in order to facilitate arrangements. Similarly an extension of the secondment period may be considered and, if approved, will require a new Secondment Agreement to be completed; such a request will be considered by the ACO SPR.
- 4.3.4 There may be occasions where the organisation needs to prematurely recall the substantive post holder or bring the secondment to an end before the agreed date. In the event of such a requirement both the seconded individual and any temporary member of staff will be consulted and timescales agreed.
- 4.3.5 A full health assessment commensurate with the duties of the post will be conducted prior to the return to work.
- 4.3.6 Operational personnel will be required to undertake a period of re-training prior to returning to their duties. They will not be allowed to return to operational duties until the relevant Station Manager, in liaison with Learning and Development, are satisfied that they are competent to do so in accordance with standard brigade competency measures. The content and duration of the training will depend on the length of the secondment. Organisation of the training should be agreed between the employee and their Line Manager in accordance with standard brigade competency measures.
- 4.3.7 Operational personnel requiring additional training over and above the normal re-training will be placed onto development rate of pay until full competence can be displayed.
- 4.3.8 If an employee is unable to return to work on the due date because of illness, they will be required to adhere to the standard procedure for absence management for self-certification/medical certification in accordance with the duration of sickness.
- 4.3.9 If an individual wishes to resign whilst on a secondment, they must give notice in the normal manner.

- 4.3.10 Employees will not normally be recalled to duty during a secondment. However, in conditions of extreme emergency, (major disasters and the implementation of business continuity plans), employees should be prepared to return to duty at short notice.

4.4 Making an Application for a Secondment

- 4.4.1 Employees considering a secondment should discuss their intentions at the earliest opportunity with their Line Manager who should report the intentions to the Head of Department.

- 4.4.2 Applications for an internal secondment will be made in accordance with the Authority's Recruitment, Selection and Promotion Policy.

- 4.4.3 For external secondment opportunities in an affiliated organisation an application for the arrangement must be made from the Head of Department, in writing, to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer Strategic Planning and Resources. The following factors will be considered when determining the suitability of the arrangement:

- The likely operational implications including workload implications for colleagues
- An assessment of any anticipated difficulties in the cost effective temporary replacement of the employee for the period of absence
- Length of the secondment being requested
- Number of current staff on secondment/career breaks
- Long term benefits/impact for the Service
- Financial implications
- Staffing levels/requirements
- Demands on the Service

- 4.4.4 For any secondment arrangement the employee will be issued with a Secondment Agreement at least one month prior to the commencement of the arrangement. The employee will sign to confirm their acceptance of the arrangement and submit to the HR Department for recording on their personnel file.

4.5 Rejection of a Secondment Request

Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate secondments there will be instances where this is not possible. Notification of the decision to reject a request will be provided in writing, with an explanation for the reason of the decision. The decision is final with no right of appeal.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING

EQIAs enable us to consider all the information about a service, policy, practice or activity from an equalities perspective and then put an action plan in place to achieve the best outcome for our employees and service users. EQIAs analyse how the work that we undertake can impact different groups. This will help us to make better decisions and evidence how we have reached these decisions.

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|--|-------|--|-------|---|
| Analysis Rating: please tick one box (the analysis rating is identified after the analysis has been completed – See EQIA procedure) | RED | | AMBER | | GREEN | ✓ |
|---|-----|--|-------|--|-------|---|

SECTION 1 – INITIAL SCREENING

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| | |
| Directorate: | Strategic Planning and Resources |
| Department/Section: | Human Resources |
| Title of EQIA – Name of Service or Policy Conducted on: | Secondment Policy |
| Date Of Assessment: | 05/12/2024 |
| Assessment carried out by: | Anne Skillcorn |

Is this Policy/Service/Project: Existing ☒ New/Proposed ☐ Changing ☐ Other ☐

Applicable to: Our staff ☐ Our Communities ☐ Other ☐

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

| | |
|--|---|
| What are the aims of the service / policy? | Provide a framework for staff to request and CFB to consider applications for a secondment both internally and externally |
| Who is responsible for the service / policy? Who is responsible for the assessment? | Senior Head of People |
| Who implements the policy? Are external contractors involved? | Head of Human Resources |
| Are there any related policies or processes that will need to be changed associated to this one? | Related Policies: Recruitment, Selection and Promotion Continuous Professional Development No changes required |
| To what extent does the service / policy have an impact on people? Who is affected by it and how? | All CFB staff who wish to apply for a secondment when opportunities occur |
| What analysis has been done to identify if the service / policy is meeting the needs of all of these groups of people? | Ongoing monitoring of secondments are in situ |

ESTABLISHING RELEVANCE

In this section you should review the data and evidence above and consider the actual and potential impact of the policy, service, activity or practice on employees, residents, groups and other service users. Findings should be noted in the table below. You should also consider whether the decision will, or is likely to, influence CFB's ability to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act and other relevant legislation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups of people
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Using the information available, identify the impact of this service / policy in relation to people across the Protected Characteristics:

| Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010 | Negative Impact | Neutral Impact | Positive Impact | Explain your answer |
|---|--|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Age | Potential | | | Subject to monitoring |
| Disability | Potential | | | Subject to monitoring |
| Gender Reassignment | Potential | | | Subject to monitoring |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | Potential | | | Subject to monitoring |
| Race | Potential | | | Subject to monitoring |
| Religion and Belief | Potential | | | Subject to monitoring |
| Gender | Potential | | | Subject to monitoring |
| Sexual Orientation | Potential | | | Subject to monitoring |
| Marriage and civil Partnerships | Potential | | | Subject to monitoring |
| Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? Yes or No If not why? | <p><i>If you have identified a negative potential impact for the group, then you must complete a full Equality Impact Assessment. If you have identified a neutral or positive impact on any groups then no further action is required.</i></p> <p>No – The potential for negative impact can be mitigated by increased monitoring as follows to ensure robust monitoring of any potential impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The secondments available • Who applies • Who is successful | | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is unsuccessful • equal opportunities monitoring <p>If monitoring subsequently identifies any negative impact on any of the protected characteristics, then a full impact assessment will be done.</p> <p>As secondments can vary so much, it is difficult to carry out an assessment that covers all potential secondments, we have committed to carrying out a full impact assessment if a secondment comes in that could negatively impact any protected characteristic.</p> |
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MONITORING AND REVIEW

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|---|--|
| What procedures are in place to monitor the impacts outlined in the analysis? | <p>Secondments are monitored currently through the HR Department with regards to the successful candidate and the details regarding the secondment such as duration.</p> <p>Further monitoring is required as detailed above including the secondments available, who applies, who is successful and unsuccessful and equal opportunities monitoring to ensure robust monitoring of any potential impact.</p> <p>The additional monitoring required will commence with immediate effect.</p> |
| How often will this take place? | Quarterly with report to Senior Head of People |
| Date of next planned review? | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Proceed to Full EQIA Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--|

SIGNATURE OF PERSON COMPLETING THIS SCREENING

| | |
|------------|------------------|
| Name: | Anne Skillcorn |
| Job Title: | HR Advisor (EDI) |
| Date: | 05/12/2024 |

SIGNATURE OF LINE MANAGER – MINIMUM HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

| | |
|------------|--------------|
| Name: | M Richardson |
| Job Title: | Head of HR |
| Date: | 5/12/2025 |

SIGNATURE OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY OFFICER – HR DEPARTMENT

| | |
|-------|----------------|
| Name: | Anne Skillcorn |
| Date: | 05/12/2024 |

