

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

Secondment Policy

Department/Service	Human Resources
Accountable Director	Chief People Officer
Review Date	01st March 2026
Changes since previous version	Format
Queries about interpretation and application of policy	<u>wah-tr.hrenquiries@nhs.net</u>
Target Organisation	Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust

This is a controlled document. The electronic version on the intranet is the controlled version and any printed copies are not controlled.

As a controlled document, this document should not be saved onto local or network drives and should always be accessed from the intranet.

Contents

What this Policy Covers	4
What is a secondment?.....	4
Definitions	4
Policy In Process	5
Secondment process	5
Duration and extension of secondments.....	7
Educational secondments	7
Trade Union secondment.....	7
Payroll and costs during secondment	7
Appraisal / revalidation during secondments	7
Terms and Conditions during a secondment	8
Ending of Secondments.....	8
Protection of the substantive position.....	8
Organisational Change during a secondment.....	9
Internal Secondment	9
External secondments	9
Commercial sensitivity	10
Receiving seconded individuals from external organisations	10
Appeal	10
Mandatory Training and awareness.....	11
Implementation Plan	11

What this Policy Covers

This policy covers the process for secondment. The policy covers:

- Internal secondment to positions within the Trust
- External secondment to other organisations
- Secondments to undertake further training and qualifications.

This policy provides guidance on the facilitation, management and implementation of secondments. It includes a clear framework which must be followed to ensure that all opportunities fairly consider both colleague's professional development and service requirements.

This policy covers employees of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. For secondments from other organisations into the Trust, the employing organisation's secondment policy applies. You would need to seek permission from your substantive employer who would issue the secondment agreement.

What is a secondment?

Secondment is a temporary formal transfer from your substantive post to another post within the Trust (internal secondment) or to a post in another organisation (external secondment). The secondment is for a set period of time and there is an expectation that you will return to your substantive post at the end of the secondment.

Secondments require a formal recruitment process and should not be confused with temporary acting up or specific projects agreed within the scope of substantive roles due to an urgent business need.

It is expected that some contractual terms might vary during the secondment dependant on the nature of the seconded role (e.g. salary, place of work, hours of work etc.) but that your substantive terms and conditions will remain as they were prior to the secondment.

Definitions

Substantive post- a colleague's ordinary job role and the post from which a secondment is made.

Substantive manager- is the line manager of the substantive role. The line manager's responsibilities include:

- Considering secondment requests taking into account the benefit to the colleague and the Trust and deciding whether the secondment can be supported.
- Considering the financial implications relating to backfilling roles.
- Ensuring that a confirmation of secondment letter/ secondment agreement is completed before the secondment commences.
- Ensuring that where applicable the host organisation is invoiced for the secondee
- Completing forms to ensure payroll are notified and ESR updated.

- Providing an induction/ reorientation to the secondee on return to the department.
- Ensuring learning objectives are established prior to the secondment and coordinating these with the host manager.
- Maintaining contact with the secondee and host manager during the secondment.
- Reviewing outcomes of the secondment as part of the colleague's appraisal.
- Liaising with host manager and conducting appraisal. Where both managers and the post holder agree the appraisal can be completed by the host manager.
- Liaising with the host manager to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions set out within the secondment agreement.
- Maintaining the secondee's personal file.

Seconded role - the post within which a secondee will temporarily provide services as defined by the role's job description.

Substantive employer – the employer where the secondee's substantive post is established and the organisation to which they remain in an employment contract.

Host employer – the organisation offering the secondment opportunity, for which the secondee will provide services as an employee of the substantive employer. Secondees are not in an employment relationship with the host employer while the secondment is in effect.

Host manager - the line manager of the seconded role. The host manager's responsibilities include:

- Ensuring a fair selection process for the secondment opportunity.
- Providing opportunities to fulfil training needs identified throughout the secondment and ensuring necessary mandatory training is completed by the secondee.
- Organising an induction programme.
- Managing the secondee and providing support/ regular 1:1s throughout the secondment.
- Supporting substantive Line manager to complete appraisal.
- Ensuring the host employer's terms and conditions are met.
- Communicating any sickness/ performance/ disciplinary issues to the substantive line manager.

Policy In Process

Secondment process

[Quick reference process available here](#)

Secondment opportunities are available to all colleagues unless the post has been ring-fenced.

Secondments will be offered following the Trust recruitment and selection process. It is unlikely that more than one secondment will be granted in any two-year period, however all requests will be reviewed on their own merits.

Secondments will not be offered to colleagues who are subject to any formal disciplinary or performance management procedure. However, secondments may be considered for colleagues who are subject to sickness or absence management procedures if this would support their wellbeing.

If you are considering applying for a secondment, you should discuss this with your line manager and seek approval prior to your application.

You should consider and provide the following information to your line manager at the pre-application stage:

- How does the potential secondment meet your development needs?
- Upon completion of the secondment will the developmental objectives benefit the future operational requirement of the organisation

Approval for secondments will not be unreasonably withheld; however, prior to the approval, line managers should consider the impact of the secondment on service needs. The decision to refuse a secondment should be made on evidence based service needs e.g. additional costs involved will impose a burden, agreeing to the request will have a detrimental effect on the department's ability to meet patient needs, the Trust is unable to reorganise work among existing staff/ recruit to cover the vacancy, agreeing to the request will have a detrimental impact on quality or performance.

The substantive line manager will confirm approval or non-approval of a secondment request in writing.

Line managers and colleagues are encouraged to contact the HR Advisory Team with any queries regarding the secondment process. Colleagues are encouraged to contact their trade union representative for support and advice. If a substantive line manager does not approve a secondment request, then colleagues are encouraged to try and resolve this informally with the aim of resolving the issue as quickly as possible to give the colleague opportunity to apply for the secondment opportunity. If it is not possible to resolve the issue informally then the Trust's Grievance Policy will be used. If agreement is not secured prior to application, colleagues may continue to apply for the secondment so they do not lose the opportunity. In this case, efforts will be made to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

For confirmed internal secondments all parties involved i.e. substantive manager, host manager and secondee must agree:

- Commencement date.
- Duration of the secondment.
- Arrangements for the substantive manager to remain in communication with the secondee.
- Notice periods. The notice period to commence a secondment should not normally exceed the contractual notice period of the secondee.
- Pay including any changes to enhancements e.g. on call.

For secondments to external organisations, approval given at the pre-application stage is approval in principle only, with the final approval being subject to the Line manager's satisfaction that the prospective employer and secondee can meet the terms of the secondment agreement.

Duration and extension of secondments

Secondments should normally be for a period of over 3 months and not more than 12 months without renegotiation. No secondment may be open ended.

Secondments may be extended with agreement from all parties; however, a new agreement is required.

Educational secondments

Educational secondments (e.g.) Widening Access may be agreed for longer time periods to mirror course requirements.

Trade Union secondment

Terms and conditions of service during the period of secondment to Trade Union (Staff Side) posts including Staff Side Chair will be as per the Trust's Recognition Agreement. On removal, or relinquishing the trade union post, the colleague will either return to their substantive post and hours, or an offer of employment, commensurate with their previous role will be made. Further details included in the Trust's Recognition Agreement.

Payroll and costs during secondment

Seconded employees will remain on the Trust's payroll system for the duration of their secondment.

For internal secondments, it is expected that post holders will be placed in the budget for the post to which they are being seconded to, to avoid unnecessary internal recharges.

For external secondments substantive managers should liaise with their Finance Business Advisors to ensure that all recharges for costs related to the employment and administration of the secondee are recovered.

For internal secondments substantive managers are responsible for ESR change forms confirming the secondment and placing the secondee in the relevant established post and cost centre.

Secondments must incur no financial cost to the substantive employer or substantive budget, all cost associated with a secondment must be borne by the budget for the seconded role (internal) or by recharge/invoice (external).

It is recognised that there may be some opportunity cost or backfill cost during transition to and from a secondment, but these should normally be offset by the benefits of the colleague's development as a result of the secondment process.

Appraisal / revalidation during secondments

The 12 month appraisal cycle will continue during secondment. Substantive managers have a responsibility to provide an appraisal of the secondee.

The appraisal should be facilitated in conjunction with the manager of the seconded role, who would be expected to directly contribute, proportionate to the appraisal period related to the secondment.

Where both managers and the post holder agree the appraisal may be completed by the host manager, this is more likely to be appropriate for longer secondments.

For the purposes of revalidation, it remains the colleague's responsibility to identify a suitable appraiser as part of the on-going revalidation process.

Terms and Conditions during a secondment

The terms and conditions for secondees during a secondment will remain the same as those in effect prior to the initiation of the secondment, that is with the exception of those terms that vary by the nature of the seconded role (such as salary, base, hours of work etc.).

Any enhancements or protection arrangements that were a result of employment in the secondees' substantive post will not be paid during the secondment. For the purposes of time limited protection arrangements, the duration of the secondment will count as time spent in the appropriate protection period, but no payment will be made in relation to this time (i.e. the pay protection period will end as originally intended).

Upon completion of a secondment, the seconded will return to their substantive post on terms and conditions comparable to those that would have been in place as if they had remained in their substantive post for the duration of the secondment.

Ending of Secondments

Secondments may be terminated by any party with 3 months written notice, any variation to this is subject to mutual agreement by all parties.

Shorter periods of notice may be written into the secondment agreement subject to the condition that they are not detrimental to the service in relation to back-fill or other arrangements.

Where there are performance, disciplinary or sickness absence issues that may be detrimental to the continuation of a secondment, all parties should work together, using the appropriate Trust policy to resolve the issue.

Prior to return from secondment, arrangements should be made between the substantive manager and the seconded to re-integrate within their substantive service. This preparation should commence no later than 4 weeks before the planned return.

A debrief session should be held to outline the development gained from the secondment and how this might be used to benefit the substantive role. The host employer should provide a brief summary of the colleague's progress in the secondment.

Protection of the substantive position

It is anticipated that upon completion of the secondment, a seconded will return to their substantive role. However, the substantive manager reserves the right to recruit on a permanent basis into the substantive post of the seconded where a significant service need arises. In this event it will be discussed with the colleague prior to the commencement of any recruitment activity.

The colleague may wish to terminate their secondment to return to their substantive position. If the colleague chooses to continue their secondment upon completion of the secondment an alternative position of an equivalent Band, type and status will be provided.

Secondees will also be consulted on any other changes or proposed changes that may affect their substantive role during the course of their secondment.

Organisational Change during a secondment

If the seconded role becomes redundant, the employee will return to their substantive post having been given the appropriate notice.

In the event that a secondee's substantive post becomes affected by organisational change, such as redundancy or TUPE, they retain the same rights as other affected employees. The seconded employee must be involved with all communication, engagement and consultation processes related to the change.

Internal Secondment

The substantive line manager should complete an ESR change form and [internal secondment letter](#) which will state the duration and any variation in contract in place for the duration of the secondment. The host manager should check that all relevant pre-employment checks have been completed e.g. does the secondee have the relevant professional registration and appropriate DBS check.

During an internal secondment, day to day operational line management, including the management of the secondee's performance, attendance and conduct shall be the responsibility of the host manager.

External secondments

Documentation required to support and initiate an external secondment will be an ESR change form and a [Secondment Agreement](#) which will stipulate the duration and any variation in contract in place for the duration of the secondment. The secondment agreement must be completed and signed by all parties involved in the secondment (i.e. the substantive employer, the host employer/organisation and the secondee).

Day to day operational line management shall be provided by the host employer.

While seconded to an external organisation, a secondee will be the subject to the day to day operational policies and procedures of the host employer. The exception to this will be policies related to the employment of the individual such as performance management, disciplinary, grievance and sickness absence, health and wellbeing, flexible working and family leave for which the substantive employer's policies will remain in place. In the event of the performance management, disciplinary, grievance and sickness absence, health and wellbeing policies being initiated, the substantive line manager of the secondee will manage the process appropriately, with the facilitation and full cooperation of the host employer.

Before enacting any of the policies above, advice should be sought from the HR Advisory Team by the substantive manager.

The host employer will be expected to cooperate with the implementation of Trust policies which would include, but is not limited to:

- The reporting of absence information to the substantive employer.
- Cooperating with investigations and grievance procedure.
- Liaising and co-facilitating during the performance management process to set achievable targets and provide appropriate support to the secondee.
- Certifying expenses incurred are genuine.

It is the responsibility of the host employer to ensure that they have made satisfactory pre-employment checks for the secondee or that they are satisfied with existing checks in place at the substantive employer.

It is the responsibility of the secondee to maintain any professional registration or DBS update relevant to the substantive or seconded roles.

During a secondment to an external organisation, it is recognised that any intellectual property generated by a secondee in the normal course of their duties during the secondment will belong to the host employer, unless the property is subject to a collaboration agreement, either a part of a separate agreement or specifically described in the secondment agreement.

Commercial sensitivity

Secondments to a competitor organisation will not normally be approved unless agreed by the appropriate Divisional Medical, Nursing or Operational Director.

Secondments to partner organisations are encouraged within the terms of on-going partnership working, but due care must be given by management to ensure that any potential commercially sensitive and compromising risks are managed. Commercial sensitivity is an appropriate basis to refuse a secondment.

Receiving seconded individuals from external organisations

Employees from external organisations should be accepted on secondments to Trust posts on terms no less favourable to the Trust than those outlined for the secondment of the Trust's own colleagues

At no time shall individuals seconded from external organisations be recognised as employees of the Trust during the period of their secondment. The same principles should apply in the expectation of how Trust employees would work at an external organisation as for individuals seconded from external organisations to the Trust. Consideration should be given to risks related to intellectual property and commercial sensitivity as well as the benefits of collaboration with employees from other organisations.

Appeal

Where secondments or extensions to secondments are refused, the Trust's Grievance Policy will be followed. The Grievance Policy has 3 stages:

- 1) Stage 1- Informal
- 2) Stage 2 – Formal
- 3) Stage 3 - Appeal

Please refer to the Grievance Policy for further detail

Mandatory Training and awareness

Line managers and secondees should ensure that the Trust's Mandatory Training Policy is followed.

Implementation Plan

This policy will be available on the Trust Intranet.

A policy briefing will be developed for Divisional Management Boards, Directorate Meetings and Worcestershire Weekly.

[HR Key Documents Supporting Documents](#)