

# Internal Career Progression Procedure



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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Career pathways show how internal movement can happen within the organisation, whether through vertical growth in the form of promotions and acting up opportunities, or lateral growth via secondments to other job roles and teams.
- 1.2 The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines around career progression opportunities, to enable all employees to understand the internal opportunities available to them, and to support management by providing clear and transparent processes to follow. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the recruitment and selection policy.
- 1.3 If the need arises to introduce a new position within a team, or to fill a vacant position, managers should consider utilising internal talent and the skills of the existing workforce through offering a secondment or acting up opportunity prior to the commencement of any external recruitment campaigns.
- 1.4 Slough Borough Council (SBC) aims to design and implement policy documents that meet the diverse needs of our services, residents, and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others. It considers current UK legislative requirements, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998, and promotes equal opportunities for all.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the council, except those employed in schools. This policy does not apply to interims, agency workers or contractors.
- 2.2 Employees with less than one year's service in their current position would not normally be considered for any internal progression opportunities due to the requirement of learning and developing within their new post. However, managers should discuss with HR any situations where this may arise, and seek advice and guidance as to how to proceed.

## **3. Types of Internal Career Progression**

### **3.1 Acting Up**

Acting up opportunities may be full or part time, and can arise for a variety of reasons such as:

- To cover maternity/adoption/shared parental leave.
- To cover long term sick leave.
- To fill a post temporarily pending permanent recruitment.
- Directorate is being restructured and there is a requirement for someone to undertake responsibilities of the higher graded post to deliver the service temporarily.

- 3.1.1 Acting up opportunities should only be considered when an individual undertakes the duties of the acting up role for at least 4 weeks. Acting up arrangements should last

no longer than 12 months and should be regularly reviewed by the line manager.

3.1.2 If it is anticipated that the acting up arrangement will continue beyond a 12-month period, the line manager should provide clear business reasons for doing so to decide whether to:

- Continue the acting up for a further specified period.
- Advertise as a permanent role, ensuring an appropriate recruitment and selection process takes place.

3.1.3 If the acting up post requires a significant increase in duties and responsibilities and/or is to cover the work of a higher graded post, it is usually necessary to pay an “acting up” payment in line with the principles of equal pay. Decisions on the payment should be made and consideration should be given to:

- The nature and complexity of the responsibilities undertaken by the employee and their current spinal point.
- Whether the employee is undertaking full or part responsibilities.
- If the employee is being placed into the post as a development opportunity (See section XXX secondment).

3.1.4 Where an individual is fully acting up into a higher graded post, the salary will normally reflect the bottom spinal column point of the established salary level for the position being undertaken, with the opportunity to receive further increments depending on the duration of the acting up opportunity.

3.1.5 If the role warranted a market factor supplement, then this should be included in the payment.

3.1.6 Employees who partially act-up, meaning they are taking on higher level duties compared to their substantive post, but not all of duties of the higher graded acting up post, will be given an honorarium payment to the value of no greater than the first spinal point of the acting up grade for the duration of the partial acting up. There will be no opportunity to receive further increments throughout this period.

3.1.7 Employees who are on salary protection but have been asked to undertake acting-up duties which is higher than their substantive grade, but not higher than their protected salary, are not entitled to receive any additional remuneration. Employees should, however, be encouraged to undertake the opportunity of acting up as part of their development to assist them in providing their promotion prospects.

3.1.8 Following a selection process, the acting up appointment letter will be sent to the employee which sets out the terms of the acting up. It becomes the responsibility of the hiring manager to fill out the contract form and update the payroll system.

## 3.2 **Secondments**

3.2.1 A secondment is an arrangement whereby an employee is assigned to a new role

internally with the goal of broadening their exposure to different teams, skills and ways of working. A well run and successfully managed secondment programme can be extremely beneficial to both the organization and workforce through developing employees in roles that they wouldn't normally access within their current team and enabling the business to benefit from enhancing the skillset of the workforce.

- 3.2.2 Secondment arrangements are temporary, with the maximum period of a secondment being 12 months. The period of secondment must be agreed and clearly defined in the agreement signed by all parties. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for the secondment period to be extended (providing there are clear business reasons for doing so) to ensure that the Council continues to use skills and experience effectively and to maintain the development of the employee.
- 3.2.3 Any extension of a secondment must be discussed between the employee, host and home managers and be approved by the Director. Where a significant extension is requested (i.e., 6 months plus) or the secondment arrangement exceeds 18 months in duration as a result of multiple extensions, the host manager should liaise with the HR Business Partner team to ascertain whether the position is a permanent requirement, in which case an appropriate recruitment and selection process should take place.
- 3.2.4 As the purpose of secondments are to provide individuals with development opportunities, and to enable organisations to have a multi-skilled workforce, individuals who are offered secondments will commence them whilst retaining their existing terms and conditions and pay. If during the secondment it becomes evident that the individual has taken on significantly more duties than was previously outlined in the secondment agreement, an honorarium payment may be made following a discussion with the HRBP team.
- 3.2.5 Following a selection process, an offer letter setting out the terms of the secondment will be sent to the employee and will require it to be signed.
- 3.2.6 The receiving manager is also responsible for ensuring that payroll is updated about the change of contract and for liaising with Finance and the HR Business Partner to ensure that appropriate cost codes and/ or cross charging arrangements are in place if required.
- 3.2.7 There is a dual responsibility on the employee and home manager to maintain regular contact during the secondment period. This will ensure the employee is kept informed on developments, changes and general information about their substantive service/team.

#### **4. Recruitment and Selection**

- 4.1 The Council encourages the personal development of all employees, and actively encourages the development of skills and experiences. Therefore, all acting up and secondment opportunities should be advertised internally across the Council to give all employees an opportunity to apply.
- 4.2 In some circumstances, managers may have individuals within their own section that possess some of the skills, knowledge and experience required for the opportunity, and may therefore be a natural fit. However, to ensure fairness and transparency,

the role should still be advertised internally, and all applications considered.

- 4.3 Council selection procedures must be used to recruit to both acting up and secondment opportunities. The process adopted will be determined by the nature and level of the secondment. For example, some posts may require a DBS check.
- 4.4 An employee applying for any internal career progression opportunity need's to have obtained the agreement of their line manager prior to submitting an application.
- 4.5 The line manager should both respond to the request in writing and discuss the reasons for the refusal with the employee, within 5 working days. The manager should also discuss with the employee how further personal development opportunities can be obtained to ensure constant learning and development.
- 4.6 Acting up and secondment opportunities are temporary in nature and individuals should not expect them to continue past the expiry date outlined in the agreement. However, if a decision is made to recruit to the position on a permanent basis, the permanent position should be appointed to following a recruitment and selection process in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy.
- 4.7 Where a manager chooses to backfill an employee who is carrying out either an acting up opportunity or secondment, they must do so on a temporary basis to ensure that there is no increase in establishment when the employee on secondment returns to their substantive position.

## **5. Returning to the substantive post**

- 5.1 In most cases, at the conclusion of a secondment or acting up opportunity, the employee will return to their substantive post.
- 5.2 Should an employee's substantive post be affected during an acting up or secondment arrangement, for example due to organisational change, they will be fully consulted with in line with the council's organisational change policy. Where the original position no longer exists, efforts will be made to secure a suitable alternative in line with the council's redeployment procedures.
- 5.3 It is recognised that in certain circumstances an acting up or secondment arrangement may need to be terminated early. Reasonable notice will be given to all parties, recognising that other existing backfill arrangements will need to be considered.
- 5.4 An employee acting up or working in a secondment arrangement to an area that is affected by an organisational change process will have the choice of either returning to their substantive position or being considered for a position in the new structure if this is not to the detriment of any substantive post holder. If the employee is partially covering the role rather than the full role, the manager should seek advice from HR Business Partner in respect of the appropriate way forward.
- 5.5 Where a position is vacant (and being filled through an acting up arrangement), and the employee on acting up has been in the position for 12 months or more, then they will be eligible to be placed into the selection pool for the positions at the level they have been working to.
- 5.6 At the conclusion of any arrangement and upon returning of an employee to their

substantive post, the employee should meet with their manager to be given an update on service developments during the time that they have been away from the team and role. In addition, this is a good opportunity to evaluate the skills and experience they developed during the acting up or secondment and how these could further support the service area.

