

City Of Lincoln Council

Acting Up Policy

Appendix A

1 The Purpose of this Policy

From time to time acting up opportunities, both full and part time, arise within the Council. The Council recognises that acting up opportunities are an essential tool for Managers when needing to provide temporary emergency cover, e.g. due to sickness or other staff cover.

The Council also recognises that acting up duties are a valuable tool in staff development, to give staff opportunities for enhancing their skills set, and enabling the employee to gain wider experience and exposure to a differing range of situations.

The purpose of this Policy is to aid Managers in following best practice when offering acting up opportunities to existing team members and to ensure consistency and fair application throughout the Council.

2 Responsibilities

Responsibility of Directors and Assistant Directors

It is the responsibility of Directors and Assistant Directors to ensure this Policy is adhered to so that there are consistent standards of recruitment across the Council.

It is also the responsibility of Directors and Assistant Directors to consider applications from Managers to extend an acting up arrangement beyond a 6 month period.

Responsibility of Managers

It is the responsibility of Managers to ensure this Policy is followed and to ensure that acting up arrangements maximise career development opportunities for employees.

It is also the responsibility of Managers to ensure that the length of any acting up arrangement within their service area(s) are monitored to ensure that the timescales set out in this policy are adhered to.

Responsibility of HR

It is the responsibility of HR to make sure that all Managers are trained in this policy. It is also HR's responsibility to review and update this policy in line with new legislative requirements.

3 Eligibility

Acting up duties are ring-fenced to the team requiring the acting up arrangement. It is the Managers responsibility to consider the pool of staff applicable to apply for an acting up arrangement.

This Policy is applicable to all employees of the Council.

4 Time Limit on Acting up Periods

The Council understands the needs of Managers in wanting to provide cover using existing team members who will already be familiar with the work, regulations and/or department practices, whilst at the same time providing acting up opportunities to enhance the skills set for their team members. However, the Council needs to balance that against the need to provide redeployment opportunities for those employees at risk of redundancy, as well as considering the needs of employees in other departments who may wish to be considered for a secondment opportunity to gain wider experience of other Council roles.

As a result of that, any acting up arrangement will ordinarily be limited to no more than 6 months duration. If cover is required for longer than 6 months consideration should be made by the Assistant Director as to whether the position should be advertised as a fixed-term contract or secondment opportunity (subject to section 5 below).

It is the Manager's responsibility to assess at the outset how long an acting up role will be required and to advise HR, in writing, of their reasoning for that prior to notifying any staff member of the acting up opportunity.

5 Extension to Time Limits for Acting up Periods

The Council understands that, in exceptional circumstances, an acting up arrangement may need to continue for longer than 6 months, which was not reasonably apparent at the time the acting up arrangement was first entered into.

In these circumstances, the Manager must request an extension of time from their Assistant Director stating how much longer the acting up period is likely to continue. The Manager will need to state whether or not the acting up arrangement is again going to be offered to all existing team members to provide another employee in the team the opportunity of gaining additional skills and experience and, if not, why not.

The Manager must also state why it was not apparent at the time of first entering into the acting up arrangement that the period of time needed was likely to exceed 6 months. The Assistant Director will then advise whether or not the request is approved.

Any approvals required for candidates to act up into an Assistant Director role will be made by a Director or the Chief Executive.

6 When acting up arrangements can be offered

Acting up can be:

- when an employee carries out work duties at a higher grade and a payment is made to bridge the gap between the employee's current salary and the Acting Up grade.
- OR
- when the duties performed are outside and/or over and above the scope of the employee's own position.

A variety of positions may be advertised as suitable for an acting up opportunity such as:

- Cover for absent employees
- Short term project work;
- Introduction of a new initiative;
- Policy Development;
- Specific time-limited task;

7 Terms while Acting Up

If the employee is undertaking the full range of acting up duties, he/she will be paid at the rate applicable for the substantive role.

If the employee is undertaking part of the full range of duties, the Manager should determine at what grade the acting up opportunity is to be offered, taking into account how much of the role is being covered by the employee acting up.

The employee acting up will be assigned to a spinal point in line with the Councils pay scales. Increments, if applicable, will be paid annually each year on the anniversary of the start date of the acting up until they reach the top spinal point of the acting up grade.

Acting up payments should not be awarded to employees for carrying out additional work at the same and/or similar level to the individual's existing job description.

Leave entitlements and Notice periods will continue to be based upon the employee's substantive post and pay.

During management of change processes, employees rights to posts will be based upon their substantive post and grade, however in exceptional circumstances where the employee has been undertaking acting up duties for over two years, the Assistant Director/ Director has the discretion to give an employee rights to post(s) based upon their acting up duties/ grade. (This however does not apply to employees acting up into Chief Officer positions – including Assistant Directors as in line with the Constitution appointments to permanent Chief Officer positions are to be made following member appointment panels).

8 Selection Process for Acting Up opportunities

To select a team members for an acting-up opportunity, the following must take place:-

Notification of role

The Manager should forward an email to all applicable staff as follows:-

- Citing who can apply for the role – the Manager will need to consider the skills set required for the role, taking into account that it is an acting up opportunity and thus the employee may not be expected to have all the requisite skills and knowledge that the substantive post holder would be expected to have.
- Setting out what the role involves, how long the role is expected to last, and what grade is payable
- Confirming the closing date by when team members must submit expressions of interest
- Managers should include specific questions and/or request for information that the team member would need to answer in their expression of interest. Those responses will provide the Manager with the basis upon which to shortlist. E.g. a Manager could ask applicants to cite why they think they would be suitable for the role/what qualities they would bring, etc.

The Manager/recruiting panel will need to set a minimum benchmark an applicant would need to pass in order to proceed to interview if there is more than one employee submitting an expression of interest, ensuring that the weight given to particular facets of the candidates' abilities reflect the requirements of the job in a non-discriminatory way.

Managers should enable a sufficient amount of time for expressions of interest to be submitted. The Council recognises that acting-up opportunities are often used to provide emergency cover and thus the time by when expressions of interest need to be submitted is at the discretion of the Manager.

The time period should not however be less than 48 hours in order to allow employees sufficient time to consider the role and apply.

If members of the team are absent, e.g. because of sickness or annual leave, the Manager should consider whether or not it is feasible to extend the application date until they return to the office to ensure they are given the same opportunity to apply and/or to contact them at home in order to provide details of the acting up opportunity.

The Council's formal application forms do not need to be completed unless the Manager requires such.

9 Short-listing

Short-listing should be based on the responses given in the expressions of interest.

If a Manager chooses not to shortlist a candidate, they should ensure they provide verbal and/or written feedback (whichever the applicant prefers) as to why the team member was not successful.

Any feedback on areas for development should then be monitored and reviewed at the employee's appraisal and 1-1 meetings.

10 Interview

Successful candidates should be invited to interview. As this is an acting up opportunity, Managers will need to arrange the interviews and contact the

candidates directly. At least two people must be on the interview panel, one of whom would normally be the Line Manager for the role in question.

The Council recognises that acting-up opportunities are often used to provide emergency cover and thus Managers have discretion to list interviews as quickly as they believe is reasonable in the circumstances. The time period should not however be less than 48 hours from the date of submission of an interest in the role.

Depending on the level and type of role, Managers may request candidates prepare a short presentation or take a short test. Interview questions and the benchmarking applicable must also be set prior to interview.

Managers must take notes at the interview so they can provide feedback to applicants, highlighting any development areas and discussing with the applicant how any areas can be developed moving forward. It is recommended that face to face feedback be given so that the team member can learn from the experience.

Where only one candidate has applied, or where only one candidate has reached the bench-mark to proceed to interview, a formal interview does not have to take place. However, Managers must have a Job Chat with the candidate to satisfy themselves that the candidate understands the nature and extent of the role, and that the candidate has the necessary skills to undertake the role. Evidence of that must be documented and a copy sent to HR.

11 Selection

Once a successful candidate has been selected, the Manager should agree a start date and complete the "Current Employee – Change form" which must then be submitted to HR.

12 Ongoing support and training

As this is an acting-up opportunity the successful candidate will not have all the skills or experience required for the substantive role. It is therefore essential there is a support network in place to guide them through areas of work that are new to them.

As this is a learning opportunity, Managers should ensure that regular 1 to 1 meetings take place with the successful candidate in order to monitor their progress and assist them where necessary.

13 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed at intervals of three years, or earlier at the request of either the management or staff side.

Human Resources

Reviewed 2023