



Northern Ireland
Assembly

SECTION 1.11

MANDATORY TEMPORARY REDEPLOYMENT

Purpose of the Policy

1. The Mandatory Temporary Redeployment Policy ('the Policy') outlines the process by which the Assembly Commission ('the Commission') may redeploy staff on a temporary and short-term mandatory basis when the Assembly, during periods of political uncertainty, is not carrying out its full range of functions and requires fewer staff to support its ongoing operations.
2. The Policy will be used when a process of voluntary redeployment has failed to identify a sufficient number of staff to be redeployed to other public bodies.
3. The Policy outlines the process by which Commission staff are identified for mandatory temporary redeployment and how those staff will be managed, communicated with and recalled during periods of mandatory redeployment.
4. The Policy also provides information on how those Commission staff remaining in Parliament Buildings will be managed and communicated with during a period when their colleagues are on redeployment.

Definition of Mandatory Temporary Redeployment

5. Mandatory temporary redeployment ('redeployment') is defined as an arrangement whereby Commission staff are redeployed on a temporary and short-term basis to carry out work for other public bodies and may be recalled to the Assembly at short notice. At all times during a period of redeployment, staff remain employees of the Commission and are subject to the policies of the Commission.

Aims of Mandatory Temporary Redeployment

6. The aims of redeployment are to provide Commission staff with suitable alternative work within other public bodies at a time when the Assembly requires fewer staff to support its ongoing operations in order to maintain staff skills and experience and help ensure effective support of the full range of Assembly activities when these resume. In addition, such redeployment arrangements enable staff who are paid from the public purse to provide support to other public bodies to contribute to wider public-sector objectives and in doing so, maximise the use of public resources.

Scope of the Policy

7. This Policy applies to all Commission staff.

Roles & Responsibilities

Assembly Commission

8. The Commission will take any decision to instigate a process of redeployment and will agree a set of assumptions that directs what activities Commission staff will undertake when the Assembly, during periods of political uncertainty, is not carrying out its full range of functions and requires fewer staff to support its ongoing operations.

Secretariat Management Group (SMG)

9. SMG will take strategic decisions relating to the redeployment process. This will include agreeing the corporate and legal obligations that will continue in periods of political uncertainty and the number of staff necessary to discharge the required organisational activities. Such decisions will be made in consultation with the Heads of Business.
10. SMG will establish the public bodies to be approached and will maintain oversight of the implementation of the Policy through regular updates from the Human Resources Office. SMG will be responsible for appointing the Redeployment Decision Panel (see paragraph 15). A Director will act as the appeal officer.
11. SMG will also be responsible for the content of organisational-wide communication issued to staff during the period when staff are being redeployed. The Clerk/Chief Executive will have the specific responsibility for liaising with the Commission on matters relating to the redeployment process.

Head of Business

12. Heads of Business will assist SMG in assessing which organisational activities need to be carried out in any period of political uncertainty and the number of staff required to discharge these activities. They will also be responsible for implementing the process necessary to determine which staff members should remain in the Assembly to carry out these activities.

Human Resources Office

13. The Human Resources Office will act as the main contact point between the organisation that accepts a member of staff on a temporary basis (the 'host organisation') and the Assembly. The Human Resources Office will also be responsible for informing staff about the process and providing any necessary support, advice and guidance to staff during their redeployment.

Individual Staff Members

14. Each staff member will be responsible for assisting in the implementation of this policy. In practice, this will include completing the [redeployment form](#) in a comprehensive, accurate and timely manner; maintaining communication with the Human Resources Office while on redeployment; working effectively within a host organisation; and carrying out their role in a manner consistent with the Commission's standards of conduct and its corporate values.

Redeployment Decision Panel

15. A Redeployment Decision Panel will match Commission staff with suitable posts within prospective host organisations. The Panel will be made up of a Senior Human Resources Manager and two other managers of appropriate seniority. Redeployment decisions for staff at AG3 and above will be taken in consultation with the relevant Director or Clerk/Chief Executive.

Stages of the Mandatory Temporary Redeployment Process

16. There are a number of key stages to the redeployment process:

- Agreement on the organisational activities required during any period of political uncertainty and the number/grade of staff necessary to discharge these activities;
- Identification of host organisations and suitable posts therein;
- Matching Commission staff to suitable posts within host organisations, including consideration of flexible working arrangements and reasonable adjustments;
- Confirmation with staff and the host organisation on the detail of the redeployment arrangement;
- Communication with staff who are redeployed; and
- Recall of staff to the Assembly.

Agreement on the organisational activities required during any period of political uncertainty and the number/grade of staff necessary to discharge these activities

17. SMG members, in consultation with Heads of Business, will agree the required organisational activities to be undertaken during a period when the Assembly is not carrying out its full range of functions. Such circumstances may result in a change to the nature and volume of activities undertaken by the Assembly Secretariat and will be influenced by factors such as:

- Whether plenary and Committee meetings take place;
- Whether Members remain in office and what support services are available to them; for example, research services, IS Office services etc;
- The extent of ongoing contractual arrangements; and
- Whether Parliament Buildings remains open to the public for visits, tours, dining etc.

18. Once the organisational activities have been agreed for each business area, the Head of Business will assess the number and grade of staff required to discharge these activities and agree their assessment with SMG. Such decisions will be informed by the business-critical skills/knowledge required to carry out the activities, whether a mix of activities can be combined into a post and the corresponding number and grade needed to carry out the required activities.

19. Once the number and grade of staff required to discharge the activities is agreed for each business area, the Head of Business will begin the process of identifying which staff should undertake these activities. This decision will be objective and the key determinant will be to retain staff with the business-critical skills/knowledge required to discharge the activities. A written record will be kept by the relevant Head of Business, outlining the reasoning applied when identifying individual staff members to be retained and the activities that they will discharge during the period of political uncertainty.

20. Where a group of staff at the required grade with similar skills/knowledge exists, volunteers from that group will be sought for redeployment in the first instance. If insufficient numbers result from seeking volunteers, random selection may then be used to select staff for redeployment. This process will be managed by the Head of Business, and to ensure the process of random selection is fair, open and transparent, staff directly affected will be invited to be present when a random selection exercise is being carried out. A Trade Union Side (TUS) representative will also be invited to be present.

21. Once decisions have been reached by each Head of Business, staff members will be informed in writing by the Human Resources Office as to whether they are to remain in the Assembly or be considered for redeployment during the period of political uncertainty.

Appeal process

22. If a staff member does not agree with the decision of the Head of Business, he/she can appeal the decision. To appeal a decision, staff should complete the selection [appeal form](#). A Director will act as the appeal officer and that Director's decision will be final.

Identification of host organisations and suitable posts therein

23. The Human Resources Office will approach the public bodies identified by SMG to advise that the Commission requires the temporary and short-term redeployment of a number of its staff and to ascertain whether suitable posts are available. All requests from potential host organisations will be made directly to a nominated contact within the Human Resources Office.
24. The intention is that Commission staff will only be redeployed to suitable posts that are of a broadly equivalent level of responsibility to the post they occupy in the Assembly Secretariat and that contribute towards the maintenance and development of their skills and experience. The suitability of posts and their equivalence will be determined by the Commission. Host organisations will be asked to identify posts that could be filled on a temporary basis by Commission staff and to communicate any such posts in writing to the Human Resources Office.
25. The host organisation will be asked to confirm full details of the post(s), including location; hours of work (including whether flexible working arrangements and reasonable adjustments can be accommodated); line management arrangements; training arrangements; car parking arrangements etc. The host organisation will also be asked to agree to the Commission's requirements on the reimbursement of [reasonable expenses incurred by staff at a temporary workplace](#).

Matching Commission staff to suitable posts within host organisations, including consideration of flexible working arrangements and reasonable adjustments

26. Staff members who are to be redeployed on a temporary and short-term basis to another public body will be required to complete a [redemption form](#) to provide details of their career history; qualifications; key skills etc, as well as some personal information, including contact details and any current flexible working pattern. In addition, if a staff member has a preference to be redeployed to a location outside of Belfast, they will be able to highlight this on their redeployment form for consideration by the Redeployment Decision Panel.
27. It is important that the [redemption form](#) is completed as comprehensively as possible as it will be used to match a staff member to a suitable post within a host organisation. Advice and guidance on completing the redeployment form will be available from the Human Resources Office.
28. Using the information contained in the redeployment forms and the information obtained from the host organisations on the post(s) available, the Redeployment Decision Panel will meet to match Commission staff with available posts. The Human Resources Office will oversee the administration of the work of the Panel and will record its decisions.
29. For those staff who have a flexible working pattern and/or reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in the post they occupy in the Assembly, the Human Resources Office will liaise with the host organisation to establish whether the particular flexible working pattern and/or reasonable adjustments can be accommodated in the post the staff member has been matched to. If the host organisation cannot accommodate the staff member's flexible working pattern and/or reasonable adjustments, the Redeployment Decision Panel will meet again to match the staff member with a different post. This process will continue until such times as a suitable post is found within a host organisation.

Confirmation with staff and the host organisation on the detail of the redeployment arrangement.

30. Once a successful match has been made, staff from the Human Resources Office will provide details of the post to the staff member. All necessary information required by staff to support them in taking up their temporary position will be provided, including reporting arrangements on the first day. Arrangements can also be made for a staff member to speak with the relevant line manager in the host organisation, in advance of their start date, to cover issues such as induction arrangements, initial training, agreement of performance and development objectives and managing attendance issues.

31. The Human Resources Office will document the redeployment arrangements and provide a copy to the staff member, the Head of Business and the host organisation. Any queries on the documented arrangements can be raised with the Human Resources Office. The redeployment arrangement will be for an initial period of up to three months, with a review and possible extension at the end of that period.

Appeal process

32. If a staff member does not agree with the decision of the Redeployment Decision Panel, he/she can appeal the decision. To appeal a decision, staff should complete the [redeployment appeal form](#). A Director will act as the appeal officer and that Director's decision will be final. In the case of an appeal by a Director, the Clerk/Chief Executive will act as the appeal officer.

Communications with staff who are redeployed

33. It will be important for those staff redeployed to another public body to have regular communications with the Assembly and their colleagues. Regular communications will be maintained with all redeployed staff via their email address to provide updates on relevant matters. It is also anticipated that Assembly-wide staff meetings will take place to provide face-to-face updates and to provide opportunities to keep in touch with colleagues. Staff may also be required to return to the Assembly to attend training courses.
34. Redeployed staff must raise issues relating to their temporary work with their line manager in the host organisation. However, if there are any other issues that staff wish to raise or which they feel unable to raise with the host organisation, they should contact the Assembly's Human Resources Office.

Recall of staff to the Assembly

35. The basis on which staff are redeployed to other public bodies is that they are readily available to be recalled to the Assembly immediately or at short notice. While it is not possible to be precise about timescales, it is hoped that a reasonable period of notice could be given to host organisations and the staff member. It may also be that staff are recalled on a staggered basis. For example, some staff may be recalled first to assist in preparations for an initial plenary meeting.
36. When redeployed staff members are to be recalled, the Human Resources Office will make contact with the relevant staff member and their line management in the host organisation to advise them of the timescales.
37. A possible benefit of redeployment to other public bodies can be a broadening of skills and experience that may be of benefit to the Commission. Following the recall of staff, an exercise will be undertaken to capture any learning and benefits.

Other categories of staff

Staff who are not redeployed

38. It is envisaged that there will be a number of staff who will remain in the Assembly during the period that the Assembly is not carrying out its full range of functions. It is likely that the roles/responsibilities of those staff will change on a temporary basis during this period, to ensure that all activities are carried out. In such cases, normal line management arrangements are also likely to change.

Staff returning to the Assembly from maternity leave, adoption leave, career break and long-term sick leave

39. Staff returning to posts in the Assembly from maternity leave, adoption leave, career break and long-term sick leave during a period when the Assembly is not carrying out its full range of functions, may also be redeployed on a mandatory basis. However, it is anticipated that these staff would return initially to the Assembly Secretariat unless the staff member is content to be redeployed directly from a period of long-term leave to a

post in a host organisation. If that is the case, the matching process outlined in the paragraphs above will be used. This is without prejudice to any other statutory or contractual rights of returning staff members.

40. The Human Resources Office will discuss the likelihood of redeployment under the Policy with the staff member in advance of their return to work.

Role of TUS

41. TUS has been consulted in the development of the Policy. Throughout the usage of the Policy, TUS will be fully consulted on all matters, including making comment relating to its implementation. TUS will also be invited to attend random selection exercises.

Enquiries

42. Any enquiries in relation to the Policy should be directed to the Human Resources Office.

Other documents

43. Staff may also be interested in reading the Mandatory Temporary Redeployment Policy - [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Further information

44. [Guidance for HoB's on selection of staff for redeployment](#)
45. [Guidance for Staff Members when appealing their selection for Mandatory Temporary Redeployment](#)
46. [Guidance for Staff Members when appealing the matching decision of the Redeployment Decision Panel](#)