

Fit for Future – Employment Process

INTRODUCTION

Warwick District Council has outlined in Fit for the Future (FFF) and People Strategy , its approach in response to meet the challenges in terms of balancing the budget, the changing environment, government policy and customer expectations. It will need a workforce that is flexible to respond to these changes in a timely and productive manner.

This Employment Process and associated procedures seek to maximise the opportunities for alternative options for employees facing potential job loss through redundancy. The highest priority will be given to maintaining the security of staff as it is Council policy to avoid redundancy wherever possible.

This document works in conjunction with our current Redeployment Policy and has been made in agreement with our union colleagues.

This has been established in consultation between the Council, and its unions and sets out the measures that will be taken with the objective of maintaining employment security on the understanding that all parties will agree to use their best endeavours to comply with its provisions. The main objectives are:

- (i) Retaining skills, expertise and knowledge;
- (ii) Preventing avoidable job losses;
- (iii) Creating organisational flexibility; and
- (iv) Avoiding the need for redundancy and early retirement

It applies to all employees of the Council, with the exception of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives, the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer.

Where a service transfers to another employer, the Council will wish to consider the transfer of those staff who are engaged in providing that service to the new employer under TUPE.

Measures to preserve continuity of employment

To preserve continuity of employment following a FFF redesign we will look to assimilate colleagues into suitable revised roles and to job match into suitable vacant posts in order to preserve security of employment and avoid redundancies.

The following outlines the processes which will be followed and gives guidance on how we intend to preserve continuity of employment.

Consultation

During the FFF programme, the current Consultation and Communication Policy, which has been agreed with the unions, will be followed.

Consultation will begin when any changes to the service are being considered. This can include initial thoughts, and all the points up until final decisions are reached. Any discussions at this stage may be subject to change as further information is gathered, more data is available and other factors about

the proposed changes arise as part of the consultation. This is when those that are affected have the opportunity to comment on proposals.

Job Assimilation – How it works

An Assimilation Process is used to manage instances where the Council is implementing a reorganisation of roles and duties to achieve a more flexible focussed approach, and there is no significant organisational reduction in the duties carried out.

The Review Manager together with HR will consider the revised job description and whether the changes to the duties and skills needed to carry out the role are a significant change or whether it is reasonable to assimilate the current post holder in to the new role. Full consultation will take place with the postholder with a view to reaching agreement to the changes, subject to Employment Committee's approval of the proposals.

Objection to Assimilation Proposals

In the event agreement is not reached there is the right of appeal to the HR Manager against the assimilation, within 5 working days. If the changes are upheld and it is considered a reasonable change, following Employment Committee's decision, appropriate notice of dismissal and re-engagement to the new role will be given.

Job Matching – How it works

If an employee is displaced from their role and put 'at risk' they will enter into a virtual redeployment pool for a maximum of 12 weeks. The Review Manager together with HR will hold an initial meeting to outline the individual support that each employee will need in the short and medium term. To assist in matching staff to roles, each individual will be supported by HR in completing a Skills Matching Inventory which will guide them into thinking about current skills and any additional skills they have to offer.

Before any role is put into the vacancy pool it will have been reviewed and revised or new Job Description and Person Specification will have been drafted. The Person Specification will have been weighted to indicate what level of skills the person will need to have in order to fill that role

Staff should be aware that they could be asked to move service areas to work on a project or piece of work during their time in the redeployment pool as commensurate with their skills and experience.

HR will start the process of job matching staff into new roles once they have formally been put 'at risk' and notice given of the possibility of redundancy if they are not matched successfully. Matching against roles will take into account the current grade, skills and experience and any additional skills and experience that is relevant from the Job Description and Person Specification.

If there is more than one person matched to the same vacancy, each will be assessed and scored against the weighted criteria and the person who best matches the criteria will be offered the role. In these situations, individuals will receive detailed feedback on their own scoring and matching (but not anyone else's) anyone not matched will return to the virtual redeployment pool.

Once matched into the role, there will be up to 4 weeks to trial it – but may be extended for training purposes if mutually agreed. If for any reason this does not work out, employees will return to the redeployment pool and continue to be matched for another post. During the 4 week trial period details of all vacancies will continue to be sent. .

Any time spent trialling a role unsuccessfully will be added to the 12 weeks stability of employment period and HR will work with individuals to redeploy and match successfully.

Once an employee is matched into a role and completes the 4 weeks trial satisfactorily, this will be confirmed in writing by HR and employment continues.

If an employee is matched into a role but the employee refuses to accept it, there is the right of appeal. If the appeal is unsuccessful this will be deemed as a resignation and employment will be terminated at the end of the notice period without redundancy payments.

Objections to Job Matching

Should an employee object to being matched into a role then they must put in writing to the HR Manager the reasons why they are objecting within 5 working days of being told of the match.

In the event of an employee not being successfully matched or redeployed to a role during their 12 weeks in the redeployment pool, they will be made redundant in line with the Council's scheme and will be paid accordingly.

Appeal

All employees who are made redundant have the right to appeal against this decision and each will be heard on their own merits.