Chapter 8: Career Progression, Recruitment, Changing Jobs by Lateral Transfers and Promotion

1. About this Chapter

1.1 This chapter explains the processes available to the House of Commons to:

- fill vacancies
- move staff around between posts
- re-structure work areas
- develop your career

1.2 The chapter outlines the process for recruitment to the House, for gaining promotion or transfer to another post within the House and for redeployment following re-structuring and explains:

- what to expect if you apply for a post through concurrent recruitment
- what happens if you become supernumerary following re-structuring
- reappointments
- what to expect when you apply for promotion or transfer
- internal transfers
- what is meant by a temporary promotion and substitution
- Fast Stream graduate entrants.

2. Principles

Recruitment

2.1 Our policy and procedures are aimed at recruiting, transferring and promoting individuals on the basis of suitability for the job. They also aim to ensure consistency across the House and to act as a mechanism for movement between teams.
2.2 Any recruitment to the House Service which offers permanent employment will always be by selection on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition. This means the following principles are applied:

- job opportunities must be known about and published
- selection must be fair and objective at each stage
- those appointed must have the necessary skills and competencies for the job
- the best applicant for the job must be chosen
- the House of Commons must be able to demonstrate that it applied the recruitment principles by taking the above steps

2.3 These principles are in line with those used by the Civil Service. This means existing House of Commons staff recruited to their standards are eligible to apply for vacancies advertised internally within the Civil Service as if they were civil servants, through the Civil Service Gateway, either on level transfer or on promotion.

2.4 When a potential vacancy is identified Line Managers must consider:

- placing staff who have been identified as supernumerary in the role
- staff on the internal transfer list
- advertising the post as a level transfer opportunity or promotion
- managed moves of existing teams or staff at the same level within or between teams

2.5 All vacancies advertised within the House of Commons are open to staff working part-time or on job share unless there is a sound business reason to the contrary. If you work part-time, or you wish to do so, you may still apply for any full-time vacancy within the House. Your application will be considered on its merits.

2.6 Further details on recruitment and promotion practices are available by contacting the Recruitment team on ext. 6011, at recruitment@parliament.uk, and on the Intranet at:

Recruitment

2.7 Guidance is also provided for those sitting on Recruitment and Selection boards on the Intranet at:

Managing recruitment

Re-structuring – management of supernumerary staff

2.8 Our policy and procedures are aimed at recruiting, transferring and promoting individuals on the basis of suitability for the job. They also aim to ensure consistency across the House and to act as a mechanism for movement between teams.

2.9 The House will endeavour to find suitable alternative employment for employees identified as supernumerary for example, following re-structuring. The House recognises the valuable skills and knowledge held by supernumerary staff, and is committed to supporting them in seeking redeployment. Details of the policy can be found on the Intranet at:
Management and redeployment of supernumerary staff

3. Reappointment

3.1 If you have previously been employed by the House on a permanent contract and then leave, you can apply to the House for re-appointment. Staff can be re-appointed either by:

- Re-instatement: coming back to the House of Commons at the same substantive pay band as you held on resignation.
- Re-employment: coming back to the House at a different substantive pay band to that held on resignation.

3.2 Your application will be considered by the HR Business Partner and will depend on the vacancy situation at the time. However, there is no automatic right to either of the above and each application is considered individually. If your application is refused, you will be notified in writing of the reasons.

4. Advertising Vacancies

4.1 If the post is to be advertised as a level transfer or promotion opportunity, the recruiting manager will raise a vacancy request on our online e-recruitment portal (ATS), once this is approved, the Recruitment team will share the job description with Trade Unions, clearly setting out the duties of the post and the criteria required for the role. This is to allow the Trade Unions to comment. The vacancy is then advertised on the House of Commons internal vacancy portal on the website. Line Managers of staff who are absent from the office should ensure arrangements are in place for keeping them informed of relevant notices.

External recruitment

4.2 A number of posts are advertised externally and this is on the basis of concurrent open competition both inside and outside the House. Selection under concurrent arrangements is on the basis of outright merit, with internal and external candidates competing on a level playing field.

4.3 Many posts in the House at pay bands D and C require similar skills and levels of experience. From time-to-time the House may run generic recruitment campaigns for specific pay bands, normally D and C, where there is an excess of work or high demand for new appointments. These campaigns are run both internally and externally and will be advertised in the normal way on the House of Commons vacancy portal on the website. These campaigns can allow you an additional means of applying for a transfer or promotion without having to apply for a specific post.

Internal recruitment

4.4 Some posts are advertised internally within the House only. You are eligible to apply for one of these posts provided you are a permanent or fixed-term member of staff employed
by the House of Commons directly. Applicants should make a sensible judgement about their capabilities to carry out the duties of the post before completing an application.

5. Selection Boards for Internal and External Recruitment

5.1 Most selection boards are made up of three or four people comprising a chair, who is normally two pay bands above the level of the post(s) to be filled, and one or two members who are normally at least one pay band above the level of the vacant post(s). One of these will usually be the Line Manager who has the vacancy. An HR representative should be involved where possible and can be the same band as that of the vacancy. There may be variations for SCS vacancies. Chairs should ensure that the board is diverse in its composition wherever this is reasonably practicable. Further information is available here.

5.2 Members of the selection board are given copies of:

- your application
- guidance notes setting out the procedures.

5.3 Recruitment and selection for posts usually consists of:

- an initial short-list of candidates who will be invited to interview
- a test, or presentation at interview, if appropriate
- a competency-based interview, which explores the candidate’s previous experience against the requirements of the post
- Online skills testing, and other forms of testing may also be used.

5.4 Other selection techniques are used from time-to-time and these should be outlined on the Vacancy Notice.

5.5 All members of selection boards must be trained in selection and interviewing. The board conducts a preliminary shortlist in order to compile a list of candidates for interview. Those candidates who best fit the criteria for the post as specified in the job description and selection criteria will be considered for interview.

5.6 Should the post become vacant again within six months, individuals who have passed the board, but who were not the preferred candidate, can be considered for appointment without being required to sit a further board.

Paper boards

5.7 A paper board means that the candidate is not required to attend for interview. The paper board considers all relevant documentation before it comes to its decision based on this. Paper boards are usually held when there has been only one applicant for a post. The Trade Unions are consulted prior to a paper board taking place.

Selection board reports
5.8 After the interviews, the panel chairperson prepares a report in consultation with the other members of the board. For band A-E and Catering posts, the report is sent to the relevant Business Management Director and a copy to the appropriate HR Business Partner. For SCS posts the report is sent to the Managing Director of HR & Diversity and to the other relevant Managing Director or Head of Office.

Confidentiality and notifying the candidates

5.9 All proceedings of boards are strictly confidential and those involved are made aware that they should not be discussed with any unauthorised person.

5.10 The recruitment team notifies candidates of the result in writing as soon as possible after approval of the board report. Candidates should not be told the result of the board or be given information about their performance until the board report has been approved and the candidates have received official notification.

Following the selection process

5.11 If you would like to discuss your performance at a selection board or if you are unhappy with not being called for interview following the shortlisting process you can speak to the Recruitment team. They may refer you to the person who chaired the sift or selection board. The discussion is aimed at helping you with future applications.

5.12 If you are unhappy with the outcome of the board or have any complaints about the process you may raise this with your Line Manager under the grievance procedure set out in chapter 21.

6. Internal Transfers

Level transfer scheme

6.1 The House also recognises that you may wish to initiate a level transfer in order to develop your career. You can do this by registering your request using the level transfer scheme.

6.2 The scheme covers staff in all teams of the House of Commons and the Parliamentary Digital Service on permanent appointments, whether full or part-time, and fixed-term staff who have been appointed through fair and open competition. It does not cover staff on temporary contracts. Postings can be permanent or short-term placements.

6.3 Generally, it is expected that you will have spent at least two years in your current post before applying for a transfer to another team as well as fully meeting the requirements of your current post and have satisfactory attendance.

6.4 Before considering applying for the internal transfer scheme you should consider what you wish to achieve from the transfer and then discuss it with your Line Manager as part of your regular performance discussions.
6.5 A level transfer can help in:

- acquiring skills and knowledge useful in your career
- utilising current skills and knowledge to support a better understanding of the business of the House
- developing networks which would assist you in your current post, or your longer-term career goals
- encouraging further cross-team working and understanding as well as gaining new knowledge and skills

6.6 Internal Transfer Scheme guidelines are on the Intranet at:

[Internal Transfer Scheme guidelines]

7. Temporary Promotion

7.1 Temporary promotion occurs when you are asked to carry out the duties and responsibilities of a vacant post in a higher band that cannot be filled substantively in the short term. If you are on temporary promotion you automatically take on all the conditions of service of the higher band.

Selection for temporary promotion

7.2 When choosing candidates for temporary promotion, the emphasis is on immediate suitability for the post rather than seniority. The selection process for temporary promotions varies depending on how long the promotion is expected to last. If the vacancy is expected to last:

- up to six months: the temporary promotion can be approved by the relevant Business Management Director
- more than six months: this requires a full selection board, normally including interviews

7.3 Where it is necessary to temporarily promote a member of staff to cover for maternity leave the HR Business Partner may approve the temporary appointment for a period of up to 12 months without the need for a selection board. Where the requirement continues past the 12 month period a full selection board will be required. This procedure will also apply to other post movements associated with the maternity leave cover.

7.4 If you are awarded a temporary promotion, you are still able to apply for full or substantive promotion. Your suitability for promotion continues to be assessed against your previous band although your Line Manager also assesses your performance against the higher band, because those are the duties you are carrying out.

8. Substitution
8.1 Substitution happens where a member of staff is absent from work or temporarily covering another post and it is not feasible for the duties to be shared temporarily amongst other members of staff. The person considered most suitable for the job in the short term, regardless of the merits of others in the same pay band, is awarded substitution pay. Substitution usually applies only for short periods and, in any case, must be terminated at the end of three months. If the absence of a member of staff is expected to or continues beyond three months, temporary promotion becomes appropriate and the selection procedures set out above are followed.

9. Pay on Promotion (Substantive, Temporary or Substitution)

The methods for calculating pay on promotion are described in chapter 9.

10. Fast Stream Graduate Entrants

10.1 The Fast Stream Programme is a specialist four-year training programme for graduate entry to Parliament.

10.2 Fast Stream Trainees (FST) enter the A3/FST pay band normally at the band minimum. At the end of the four years they attend an assessment centre for consideration for promotion to Band A2. If not considered suitable for promotion to Band A2 a transfer to the main stream may be appropriate.

11. Secondments

11.1 A secondment is the assignment of a member of one organisation to another organisation for an agreed period of time in a way which does not affect their employment status and are one of the options that can be used to support an individual’s development. The House of Commons Secondment policy is on the intranet at:

Secondment Policy

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