

Redundancy policy

1. Statement of Intent

1.1 Definition of Redundancy:

Redundancy can be defined as a dismissal, which is wholly or mainly attributable to:

- The fact that the employer has ceased, or intends to cease, to carry on the business for the purposes of which the employee was employed by them, or has ceased or intends to cease to carry on that business in the place where the employee was so employed; or
- The fact that the requirements of that business for employees to carry out work of a particular kind or for employees to carry out work of a particular kind in the place where they were so employed, have ceased or diminished or are expected to cease or diminish. (Section 139 (1), Employment Rights Act 1996).

NHS Wales organisations are committed, as far as is possible, to providing continued employment for existing permanent employees. These organisations are therefore required to take all reasonable, practical and affordable steps to retain valuable skills, knowledge and experience and avoid making employees compulsorily redundant.

This policy sets out all the measures which organisations must explore to avoid compulsory redundancy and the procedure to be followed, in the event of compulsory redundancy having to be affected.

The organisations will:

- encourage full and open consultation with employees and their representative(s) during a period of change, which may result in redundancy;
- facilitate the redeployment of employees;
- ensure appropriate and fair processes are followed; and
- endeavour to ensure that wherever possible, or affordable, reductions in employee numbers are achieved through natural wastage, or by means of voluntary early retirement or voluntary early release.

2. Procedures

2.1 Consultation

Where it is evident or strongly considered that changes planned will have a significant impact on employee contracts or will result in redeployments or redundancies then the statutory requirements concerning the provision of information to, and consultation with, recognised trades unions/staff representatives will be followed in accordance with section 5.3 of the OCP - Collective Consultation of Proposed Redundancy.

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Employees at risk of redundancy will have the right to representation throughout the process.

Management must do their utmost in all circumstances to ensure that the consultation process commences at the earliest possible stage.

2.2 Measures to be taken to minimise or avoid redundancies

Wherever practicable all possible steps will be taken to minimise or avoid redundancy in accordance with the provisions set out in the Organisational Change Policy.

Any offer of alternative employment, which is considered to be suitable should be made in writing, providing sufficient details of the post and allowing reasonable time for the employee to consider it, prior to expiry of the notice period. The offered alternative post should be available no later than four weeks, from the date the old contract is ended. The offer should, where appropriate attempt to indicate the principal ways in which the new job differs from the old. Where this procedure is followed but the employee fails to respond to any such offer, the employee shall be deemed to have refused suitable alternative employment.

The acceptance of any alternative employment, which is considered suitable, may by agreement be subject to a four week trial period. Trial period arrangements, including mechanisms for assessment and review should be agreed between the manager and the employee before the trial period begins.

If during the trial period it becomes clear that the redeployment is not in fact suitable, this will not affect the employee's entitlement to any redundancy payments that might be due under their old substantive contract. Redundancy payments will be put at risk if an employee withdraws without reason from an agreed trial arrangement.

2.3 Selection Methods

Selection methods will be agreed locally according to the circumstances of the reduction in posts, the staff groups involved and the requirements of the service and the organisation following the change. Any or all of the following may be considered as criteria for selection, bearing in mind the requirement that selection must be based on objective criteria:

- length of service;
- attendance record;
- sickness record (use of this criteria must be carefully managed in accordance with the Equality Act (2010));
- disciplinary record;
- qualifications;
- skills;
- competencies;
- work experience; and

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- performance records (based on formal documented and objective evidence e.g. performance management/development review documentation).

The organisation must take care when designing and applying their selection criteria, to avoid using factors, which may directly or indirectly discriminate against any employee, on the grounds of gender, race, disability, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or because they are transgender, married or in a civil partnership. The same consideration should be given to part-time employment status and trades union membership. Organisations must undertake an equality impact assessment of the chosen selection method.

2.4 Time off to look for work

Employees will be given reasonable time off, with pay and reimbursement of expenses, to consult with management, trades union and staff representatives, to visit any new locations where they may be seeking alternative employment, to attend for interview and to attend training and retraining.

2.5 Retraining

Appropriate preparatory training, induction and on or off the job training will be provided to enable employees to move into areas of work, not fully covered by their original training or recent experience. This will include attendance at any courses or seminars that may be pertinent to current vacancies.

2.6 Additional assistance

Each employee who is displaced or at risk of redundancy will be given the opportunity for individual counselling, including provision of information e.g. entitlements and specific support as identified in section 8.6 of the OCP Support arrangements.

2.7 Notice periods

Contractual notice should be served to any employees that are given notice of termination of employment by reason of redundancy.

Circumstances will dictate whether the organisation can offer a notice period which is longer than the employee's contractual notice. Notice periods may be extended, to maximise the opportunity to find the employee suitable alternative employment.

Subject to mutual agreement an employee may leave before the expiry of their notice period if:

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- they obtain other employment outside of the NHS. In such a circumstance the new termination date will become the revised date of redundancy, for the purposes of redundancy calculations; or
- the employee, after having been given notice by their employing organisation, gives written counter notice, which with agreement may be less than the contractual period, with no loss of redundancy payment rights.

An employee may also be required to leave if:

- they engage in conduct resulting in another reason for dismissal, during their redundancy notice period.

In respect of the above, the organisation reserves the right to make an outright payment in respect of notice and the redundancy entitlement, by way of full and final settlement, subject to statutory regulation.

2.8 Equality

In applying this redundancy policy, organisations will ensure that any proposed arrangements do not discriminate on the basis of disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, trade union membership, age (except in so far as it is affected by the age retirement policy) etc. Part time employees should be treated in the same way as full time employees in all respects.

3. Entitlements of employees who are redundant

- 3.1** All NHS employees who are eligible to receive a redundancy payment will have their entitlement calculated and paid in accordance with section 16 (redundancy pay) of the Agenda for Change NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook.
- 3.2** Provision also exists for eligible NHS employees to retire early without reduction of their pension benefits subject to the specific criteria set out in the NHS Pension Scheme membership rules and the provisions of Section 16 (redundancy pay) of the Agenda for Change NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook.
- 3.3** It should be noted that these redundancy pay provisions apply to all NHS employees not just those covered by the Agenda for Change NHS Terms and Conditions of Service.

4. Right of appeal

4.1 Redundancy process grievances

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In the case of dispute in respect of the redundancy process, associated with organisational change, an employee may lodge a grievance, in accordance with the All Wales grievance policy.

- 4.2** Employees who are served notice of redundancy must be advised of their right of appeal. Any such appeal should be lodged within 21 days of the date of the letter of notice. Such appeals will be managed and conducted in accordance with the relevant organisation's dismissal procedure.

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