

3 February 2014

STAFF SURVEY 2013

Purpose

1. This paper provides a resume of the main issues that need to be tackled as a result of the staff survey results relating to England. The paper also considers the wider issues identified from the Forestry Commission Staff Survey.

Background

2. In August 2013, the Forestry Commission commissioned Capita Surveys and Research to conduct its staff survey. This survey is a key staff engagement initiative within the Forestry Commission and it is rolled out every two years. The purpose of the survey is to identify areas of good practice and those areas that need to be improved. Appendix 1 shows a summary of the highlights and lowlights.

2.1 A summary of the main areas of strength that emerged are detailed below:

- Treating people fairly and inclusively
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Understanding of job roles
- Performance management system/forward job plan

2.2 The areas for improvement that that staff felt most strongly about are:

- Pay and Benefits
- Change Management
- Social Media
- Fairness of promotion/recruitment timescales

Key facts

3. The percentage response rate to the staff survey for England was 56% and the engagement level was 76; Appendix 2 provides a summary of both sets of indices. Additionally, the CAPITA 'Employer of Choice' score is 3.16 compared to 2.98 in 2011. Scores ranging from 2.50 – 2.99 provide an organisational designation of 'good employer' and scores of 3.00 and above provide an organisational designation of 'employer of choice'.

3.1 In order to distinguish between the matters that relate corporately to the Forestry Commission and those that relate to England only, the structure of the report will be split. This is primarily because those matters relating to the Forestry

Commission need input across the organisation and are not solely within the control of England.

Corporate FC Issues

3.1.2 The two main areas identified for improvement relate to pay and benefits and the perceived fairness of promotion and the length of the recruitment process.

3.1.3 The key findings from the survey regarding pay and benefits that staff reported are:

- their pay compares less favourably to people doing similar jobs in other organisations;
- the promotion process in terms of fairness could be improved;
- the total benefits package could be improved
- the length of time it takes to fill a post could be improved.

3.1.4 The Board will be aware that the two-year pay freeze, lack of pay progression, changes to pension arrangements and increased pension contributions has had a major impact on our staff. HRMB are well aware of these factors but our hands are tied. The best that can be achieved is to continue with our strategy of shortening pay bands, dealing with anomalies in the pay system and addressing equal pay within a capped pay bill.

3.1.5 The HRMB are also looking at the issues raised in the staff survey in respect of recruitment selection and promotion to see what steps could be taken on some areas to improve current perceptions. work is ongoing and will take time.

3.1.6 The HRBP will periodically bring progress updates on these matters back to the Board.

FC England Issues:

3.1.7 One of the striking points arising from the staff survey is the high level engagement score of 76 compared to the Civil Service overall benchmark score of 71. It is worth noting that the highest scores relate to the degree of pride people feel about working for the Forestry Commission (84%) and the level of commitment towards their part of the organisation (78%), which is an impressive reflection on the general leadership capability across the Forestry Commission.

However it appears to be anomalous that only 67% would recommend their specific part of the organisation as a great place to work. Whilst this is a high score and contributes to the overall engagement score, it is an indication that Area, District and National Office staff may need additional support. Cost Centre Managers will need to investigate further and drill down into their specific results to establish the reasons behind this. The broad strategic issues however that emerged from the survey relating to England are detailed below:

3.1.8 Managing Change and Leadership

The information from the staff survey indicates that change is managed inconsistently across England producing a disappointing overall score of 34% by respondents. If this is cross referenced with the section on Leadership, then there are some teams that may need support at a localised/middle management/junior management level and on a 1:1 staff level. Examples of this being a drop in the percentage score by 10 relating to staff feeling valued, co-operation between teams within the same part of the organisation appears to have deteriorated by 9 percentage points and the feeling of personal accomplishment has reduced by 8 percentage points. This could partly be due to the restructuring since SR10 and the 25% cuts which were underway during the previous staff survey. However this flags that we need to think carefully about what we need to do more locally on managing change and where further investigation may be required.

3.1.9 Additionally it has been reported through the survey that staff perceive that things were better in the past (presumably prior to SR10) and that there is no clarity of vision for their part of the organisation. There appears to be a perception that senior management are not sufficiently visible with a corresponding 13 point rating drop in 2013 (47) compared to the score in 2011 (60). This is perhaps reflective of the changes that have been occurring, the changes that are on the cards and the need to shape and define a future vision and structure for moving various parts of the business forward.

3.2 The challenges for the Board and the wider leadership team cannot be underestimated, particularly where Government policy and decisions are involved. However, as a Board we have the opportunity to control how internal change is managed, phased and implemented. In times of change, staff look for key support from their leaders at all levels, (not just those at the top), for clarity of purpose and future vision and information concerning the scope and impact of changes affecting their particular roles. People in times of uncertainty will feel anxious and unsettled and will also look towards each other for peer support.

3.2.1 Whilst it is acknowledged that the geographical spread of our staff adds additional challenges when tackling and leading change, it will be important to identify these challenges, recognise and prioritise the actions that can reasonably be expected to be put in to place in order to ensure that staff feel valued; that morale and wellbeing issues can be improved, particularly from middle management level downwards.

3.2.2 Communication

72% of respondents reported that they receive the information they need to do their job well, however this figure drops to 54% when asked about the timeliness of information regarding the changes that affect them.

54% reported feeling fully informed about the business plans for their team and yet 80% reported that they have a clear understanding of the objectives for their part of the organisation.

In terms of the methods used to communicate, 81% reported that they find regular team meetings the most effective form of communication, followed by 62% reporting that they also find bulletins and newsletters effective forms of communication.

These figures fall dramatically when considering social media as a form of communication with only 14% reporting that they feel it is effective.

3.2.3 Health and Safety at Work

One of the main strengths to emerge from the survey concerns health, safety and wellbeing (81%). However, there has been a small overall drop in the score against Health and Safety at Work within England compared to the 2011 survey results (-6) and this appears to relate to the quality of personal protective clothing. This may be as a result of the drive to support value for money initiatives but without further information it is not possible to comment further apart to highlight it at this stage.

4. Discussion of the alternative courses of action available

4.1. Possible Courses of Action Related to Change Management and Leadership:

In order to support the key changes facing us, it will be imperative that leaders at all levels and our staff are equipped with the requisite skills, competencies and attitudes they need in the face of change, so that they feel supported throughout. Some of the mechanisms that the Board may wish to discuss are highlighted below:

- Cost centre managers to consider the results of the staff survey relating to their particular part of the business and determine how they address specific matters relating to their area. HR and L&D support can be provided initially via further discussion at a FEMB and FSMB to discuss specific requirements. An action plan can then be prepared for the Board to agree priorities.
- Given that the survey results highlight the need to manage change more effectively, it may be that a further session with the Board, supported by HR and Development colleagues is considered.
- Work on determining interim plans, targets and measures to cope with lengthy change timescales, whilst working on longer term strategic and visioning plans.
- Utilise the communication focus groups set up by the internal communications team as a means of testing/assessing leadership responses from staff survey and capturing any suggestions for improvement in relation to managing change, raising visibility; These groups could also consider non-financial means of expressing how much management values its staff, maintaining morale through change, for example, working with relevant senior managers to progress any actions, using relevant professional support as required e.g. Communications, HR, Learning and Development.
- Benchmark our own staff survey outcomes with that of key stakeholders such as RPA, Natural England etc to share understanding of where we sit with our

results and links with these organisations given the requirement for better ;line of sight and closer working arrangements.

4.1.1 Possible Courses of Action Related to Communication

There is a need to reflect the Governments Communication Strategy and Protocol within the Forestry Commission. This is being led by the Head of Communications who tabled a report at the England Executive Board in December 2013. One aspect of the paper was the consideration of the strategic need to use social media as a means to engage with external stakeholders and customers and the need to ensure that our staff utilise its power as a communication tool in a responsible manner that safeguards the reputation of the organisation. The Board has approved the roll out of a business targeted staff training programme to address this gap as a first step towards cultural acceptance and the appropriate management and use of social media.

To conclude, the overall results of the staff survey are highly positive given the climate of change and uncertainty at this time. The results should be viewed in the context of improving and strengthening the leadership at all levels of the organisation and how change is managed more effectively.

Resource Implications

5. The main resource implications will impact on key Board members, cost centre managers with support from Learning and Development, HR and Communications, depending upon actions agreed as a result of this report.

Risk Assessment

6. The key risks of not addressing the areas identified –

- staff morale is damaged which in turn may start to affect plans for change;
- a rise in sickness absence, decreased motivation and staff morale;
- an increase in staff turnover and staff opting to ;
- a more difficult employee relations climate to manage in.

Equality Impact Assessment

7. None required for the purpose of this paper.

Communications

8. Communications will play a pivotal role in helping to implement the recommendations. Team briefings, e-connect bulletins, Bark! Will all play their part but critically face to face discussion and recognition of what we are doing to address the key concerns raised by staff and through the Board and via our cost centre managers over the coming months will be key.

Recommendation

9. The Board is asked to discuss the outcome of the staff survey and to -
- Acknowledge the Corporate FC issues, recognise the limitations and note the actions of the HRMB;
 - Consider the suggested options outlined in Section 4;
 - Agree next steps and actions to be taken;
 - Determine how it wishes to communicate and engage with staff in response to the staff survey results.

Angela Gizzi
Senior HR Manager

Sarah England
HR Business Partner

29 January 2014

Appendix 1: Highlights and Lowlights Summary



PART C – Highlights and Lowlights

This section shows the highlights and the lowlights from the survey. It details the two highest/lowest scoring sections and the ten⁸ highest/lowest scoring questions for England from the 2013 Forestry Commission Staff Survey.

Depending on the construction of each statement the 2013 positive % score is calculated from % 'Agree Strongly' and 'Agree' responses or 'Yes' Responses for statements where agree was the preferred answer, but this is inverted where disagree was the preferred answer.

Highlights

Sections	2013 Positive %
Inclusion and Fair Treatment	88%
Safety, Health and Wellbeing	77%

Questions	2013 Positive %
<i>Are you currently being harassed or bullied at work?</i>	98%
<i>During the past 12 months have you personally experienced discrimination at work?</i>	95%
I believe that my part of the organisation takes health and safety seriously.	93%
My usual workplace e.g. on site or in an office, meets health and safety guidelines.	92%
I have the skills I need to do my job effectively.	91%
I understand how my work contributes to my team's objectives.	91%
Do you have a current Forward Job Plan?	90%
My Forward Job Plan was agreed with my Line Manager.	90%
I have the opportunity to discuss my job performance with my Line Manager at least twice a year.	90%
My Line Manager is open and approachable.	89%

⁸ Twelve lowest scoring questions are shown in the lowlights table as the 9th question listed has the same % difference as the 10th, 11th and 12th question so all have been displayed.

[Note: the sum of the total responses throughout this report may not be exactly equal to 100% due to rounding.]

Lowlights

Sections	2013 Positive %
Managing Change	34%
Pay and Benefits	36%

Questions	2013 Positive %
I find social media e.g. tweets, Yammer and blogs are effective forms of communication.	14%
When changes are made they are usually for the better.	25%
The process of change is well managed.	32%
Compared to the people doing a similar job in other organisations I feel my pay is reasonable.	33%
I feel that my pay adequately reflects my performance.	34%
I have seen some positive changes in the last 12 months.	36%
I feel the promotion process is fair within my part of the organisation.	37%
The Senior Management Team manage change effectively.	38%
I believe the process for filling vacant posts within my part of the organisation is fair.	40%
I believe that my senior management team has a clear vision for the future of my part of the organisation.	40%
My Line Manager asks for feedback on his/her own performance.	40%
I am satisfied with the total benefits package.	40%

[Note: the sum of the total responses throughout this report may not be exactly equal to 100% due to rounding.]

Appendix 2: Engagement Level Summary

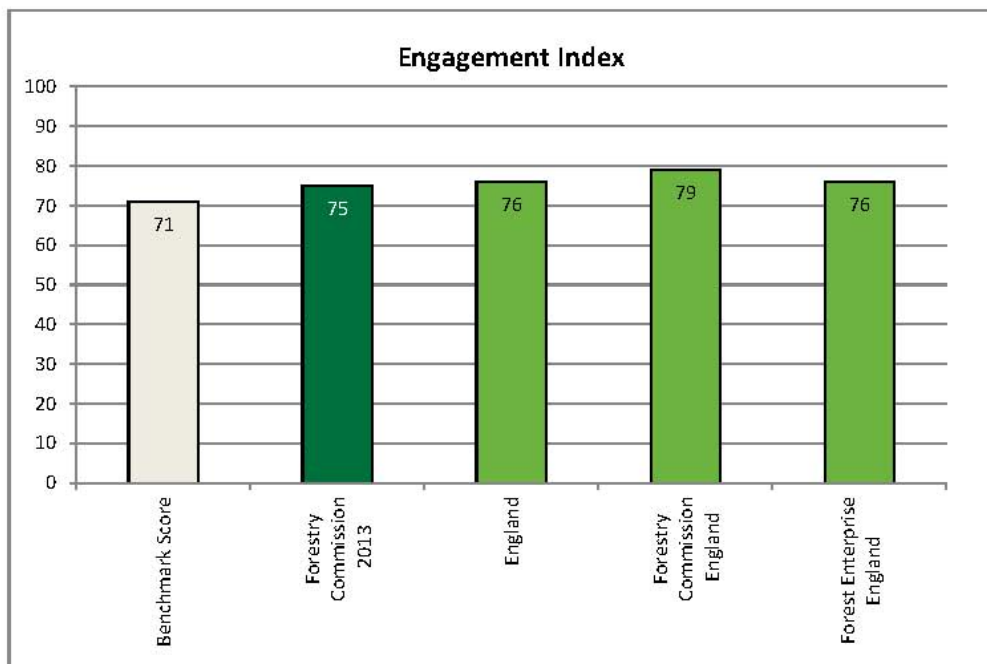


PART A – Employee Engagement Index

The chart below shows the employee engagement index for England, alongside the overall Commission Score. The Employee Engagement index is calculated from three questions in the staff survey which are detailed below, the England score from the 2013 survey is given in round () brackets. A benchmark score has also been included calculated from the civil service organisations using the three questions.

The Employee Engagement Index is calculated as an average of the % positive scores for each question.

- Q12.1 I am proud when I tell others I am part of the Forestry Commission (84%)
- Q12.2 I would recommend my part of the Organisation as a great place to work (67%)
- Q12.4 I feel committed to my part of the organisation's goals (78%)



[Note: the sum of the total responses throughout this report may not be exactly equal to 100% due to rounding.]