

23 February 2015

HR UPDATE

Purpose

1. This paper is being presented to update the Board on current strategic HR matters.

Corporate HR Matters

Recruitment & Postfilling

2. HR undertook a postfilling survey via FR after the last Staff Survey to try and understand the negative perceptions from our staff towards our approach to recruitment and postfilling. The outcome of the key areas from that survey and the actions we needed to undertake corporately were discussed at our board meeting in July last year.
3. A key area of concern from both managers and staff was around the use of the FC's e-recruitment system i-grasp. It was evident that the system was not 'user-friendly'.
4. One of the actions arising was to pursue a move to using the Civil Service system, WCN, which is widely used across Civil Service departments and to ditch i-grasp. This would require us to have lowest level access available to Civil Service Resourcing to enable our staff to use the main system.
5. The FC will be moving into the new CS system from April 2015, with our current licence to operate i-grasp ceasing by early May this year. There is a lot of work to do between now and April/May to gear up for the change but it is an important step for us as it brings us closer alignment with CS Resourcing.
6. HR Ops Managers will be talking to local management teams about the forthcoming change to start building awareness out in the business. As well as a shift to a new system, we will have to change our current scoring method from A to D to 1 to 7 to fit the new arrangements. It has also been brought to our attention that 'Home Civil Service' departments can only use stage 1 of the post-filling process for level transfers. Whilst this will NOT apply to the FC (our HR Director could decide how stage 1 applied in the FC when the strategic postfilling arrangements were introduced back in 2010 and we allow promotions at this stage), we will need to make sure that managers are equipped to use the new system in a certain way to avoid issues of candidates being disregarded at the first stage.
7. Training plans are still to be worked through, but HR staff and key administrators and managers will all require some training. Much of this will be via a dedicated trainer, but 'train the trainer' sessions will also be used to help

cascade the training. Further information will follow in due course as and when it becomes available.

Operational Pay

8. The working group have concluded their review of operational pay. Key decisions, subject to sign off by the Service Board are:
 - The definition of when operational pay is applied to a post has been tightened;
 - Staff who are currently in receipt of operational pay will need to work their contracted arrangements of an average 44 hpw. Where the individual decides this isn't workable, we will look to revert the person onto a non-operational contract;
 - Postfilling authorisation forms have been amended to ensure that a business justification is given when a request is made to fill an operational post;
 - Part-time operational contracts will be permitted provided the contractual hours are completely flexible and not fixed, i.e. no fixed working pattern is stipulated
 - The way in which pay is calculated on promotion when someone is in receipt of operational pay will be changed to ensure fairness and equity with staff on non-operational contracts.

Once these arrangements are finalised, HR Ops Managers will work with the business to deal with any issues that arise.

Shared Parental leave

9. Shared Parental Leave (SPL) is a new system which will come into effect on 1st April 2015 and enable eligible mothers, fathers, partners and adopters to choose how to share time off, and pay, in the first year of their child's life/placement (subject to the mother opting to share her entitlement to 52 weeks maternity/adoption leave with her partner).

This is a new, complex area for HR and managers to understand and it's difficult to know exactly how things will work until we have our first cases to deal with. Managers will be encouraged to talk to HR if they have a member of staff who is looking to share their maternity/adoption leave with their partner.

Holiday Pay & Overtime

10. Various cases have recently gone to employment tribunals, the outcome of which requires an employer to recognise 'non-voluntary' overtime for the purposes of calculating holiday pay. Up until now, payment whilst on holiday has always been paid in line with the contractual working week at basic pay. A separate paper will be presented to the board to aid understanding of the current situation and what that might mean for us in the FC.

Alpha Pension Scheme

11. The new pension scheme arrangements come into effect from April 2015 and all staff in England have been offered the chance to attend a workshop to understand the changes and how they affect them. Due to low staff numbers for some sessions we had to cancel some dates and venues, as it was simply not cost effective to run them. The final session will run towards the end of February.

Move to Civil Service Expert Services

12. The FC will be utilising Civil Service Expert services from 1st April 2015. As well as level 1 access to the e-recruitment system (WCN) as outlined above, we will also have access to Civil Service Learning, Civil Service Employee Policy and a small Civil Service Organisational Development (OD) advisory service.

FCE HR Matters

WPEP

13. The team is continuing to support the various HR requirements for the FS Reshaping and the COSOP transfer of admin hub staff in York to the RPA. Further work is being undertaken to support FEE Plus with their requirement to look at business requirements, identify new job roles, working with HR to look critically at the impact of proposed changes and links with existing staff and teams etc.

Devolution of HR Services work to the Countries

14. Joint working continues on the business case and a separate paper will be presented to the board to consider the options from an England perspective. FCS and FR Boards will have papers presented during March, with the expectation of the business case being put to the BSG in April 2015.

Homeworkers Allowance

15. The centrally negotiated buy out of the FC's existing homeworkers allowance arrangements between HR Policy and FCTU has not proved easy to implement. After further discussions via the HRMB, it was confirmed that the allowance payable would need to be pro-rated on the hours that someone spends on average working at home, unless they are contractually based at home, where the full £18 is payable. Staff have the option to claim actual expenditure rather than the pro-rated allowance if they wish. HR Ops Managers are dealing with any outstanding issues on a case by case basis.

Graduates

16. For the 2015 year intake, FEE will be taking one graduate from the pool of applicants. The initial assessment of all candidates and X-Factor event has taken place and final interviews will be held in March 2015.

Case Management Information

17. A table showing the current break down of cases being managed is shown in Annex 1.

Risk Assessment

18. The following risks have been identified;

- Failure to manage a smooth transition to the new e-recruitment system could risk posts not being filled in good time;
- Changes to the homeworkers allowance may result in a continued unhappiness for a small number of staff impacted by the change;
- The publication of the Roadmap for devolution of shared services to the Countries continues to have an unsettling effect for staff in the HRSS;
- Recent resignations in the HRSS have reduced the number of experienced HR staff who are familiar with Civil Service protocols when dealing with change.

Equality Impact Assessment

19. Not required.

Communications

20. The Board is asked to communicate the key messages from this paper through their managers.

Recommendation

21. The Board is asked to note the contents of this paper and discuss the business implications that might flow from it.

Sarah England
HR Business Partner - England
10 February 2015

Annex 1

HR Case Management figures

Data on number of cases being managed via Case Manager/HR Operations Managers as at end of January 2015:

Issue	Number of Cases
Grievance	6
Disciplinary	1
Performance	2
Probation	1
Redundancy	0
Persistent Short-term Sickness	1
Long-term Sickness (in excess of six months)	3
DDA adjustments at work required	0