

Forestry Commission Equality Analysis Form

1. What is the name of your policy, function or service?

Relocation Expenses policy review.

2. What are the main aims and objectives of the Policy function or service?

The Relocation Expenses policy and procedure set out the Forestry Commission's approach to providing reimbursement and support to employees who relocate in the interests of the business.

The policy and procedure aim to provide a fair and consistent process for reimbursing employees for the expenses that they incur as a result of their relocation, ensuring compliance with the Civil Service Management Code and HM Revenue and Customs rules on the reimbursement of employee relocation expenses.

Deployment of People is a key theme in the People Strategy 2011-2016, with a key action being to review the transfer expenses policy. The main aim of the review is to increase mobility and ensure maximum flexibility in achieving the FC's aim of re-deployment rather than employees leaving the organisation.

The FC will reimburse the reasonable expenses incurred by employees who are relocating to a new work location in the interests of the business. This includes employees who choose to apply for an internal job vacancy that would require them to relocate their home, as well as those who are management posted by the FC.

If you request to transfer for personal or compassionate reasons, you will not normally qualify for financial assistance, although this may be considered where your transfer will also benefit the FC.

Financial assistance will not be provided to enable employees to buy or rent a better type of property than the property owned/rented before their transfer, or to increase their stake in the housing market.

The package of support provided by the FC will depend on the personal circumstances of each employee, including whether it is necessary for them to move home, whether the transfer is permanent or temporary and whether they own or rent a property.

The objectives (principles) of the policy and procedure are to:

- support the aim of having the right people in the right place at the right time;
- reimburse employees for the reasonable additional costs that they actually and necessarily incur as a result of their relocation;
- provide a package of financial assistance that is fair, consistent and

- appropriate to each employee's personal circumstances;
- offer support to the partners and families of employees who are relocating, to assist them in finding employment in the new location, if appropriate;
- consider any additional support that employees with disabilities or caring responsibilities require to enable them to take up a post in a different location; and
- comply with Civil Service and HM Revenue and Customs guidelines on the reimbursement of employee relocation expenses.

3. Briefly describe the impact (or potential impact) on people

The Relocation Expenses policy and procedure will have an impact on any employee who relocates in the course of their employment. Relocations can occur as a result of internal post-filling competitions (voluntary relocation) or a management posting decision (compulsory relocation).

Financial assistance is provided to any employee who incurs additional costs as a result of their relocation. This includes employees who are able to travel daily to their new work location as well as those who require a home move.

The Relocation Expenses policy has the potential to impact on any member of staff within in the FC, since the opportunity to apply for recruitment competitions and internal trawls is open equally to all permanent and fixed term employees within the FC. In addition, most FC employees have a mobility clause within their contracts of employment and could potentially be asked to move to a different work location where business needs require this. The mobility clause for staff in pay bands 6 and 7 is such that they may be posted to a location within one hour's travel of their home (this is considered to be reasonable daily travelling distance). Staff in pay band 5 and above, on the other hand, can be posted to any location in Great Britain. These mobility requirements apply to all appointments except those employed on a casual, fixed term or part-time basis.

The Relocation Team, HR Services is responsible for determining the specific expense types that a particular employee is eligible to claim reimbursement for, which is based on their personal circumstances. This helps to ensure that the approach taken to reimbursement of expenses is consistent across the FC.

4. What are the names and contact details of the initiative's owner and the person who completed the Equality Analysis?

Owner:

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5. Is this a new Equality Analysis, or a review of a previous Equality Analysis?

New.

Yes.

3 year review.

**Early review,
explain why.**

**Review due to
end of the
initiative.**

6. If this is a review, when was the previous Equality Analysis signed off?

Not applicable.

7. How will this initiative be put into practice?

The Relocation Expenses policy and procedure will primarily be applied by the Relocation Team, HR Services, who are responsible for ensuring that employees who are relocating in the interests of the FC are appropriately reimbursed for the additional expenses they incur.

The Relocation Team will obtain personal information from each employee that is offered a post in a different location, to determine:

- whether the new post will be permanent or temporary;
- whether a home move is required or the individual would reasonably be able to

travel daily to the new location;

- whether the employee owns or rents at their current location;
- the employee's plans with regard to living accommodation at the new location;
- any other factors that will impact on the employee's transfer.

The Relocation Team will use the Relocation Expenses policy and procedure to assess each employee's eligibility to claim reimbursement for certain types of relocation expenses, based on their personal circumstances.

Each employee will be advised of their entitlements and will be responsible for submitting regular claims to the Relocation Team, supported by receipts, in order to be reimbursed for the actual and necessary expenditure that they incur as a result of their relocation. In addition to this, the Relocation Team will arrange for payment of longer-term allowances, for example to assist employees who move to an area where property prices are high or who temporarily have a dual commitment for expenses relating to properties at both their old and new locations.

Reimbursement will be made directly or through salary, depending on the expense type and whether the employee is required to pay tax on the amount reimbursed.

Under HM Revenue and Customs rules, all expenses relating to employee relocation must be reimbursed by the employer by the end of the tax year following the tax year in which the employee's transfer took place. The Relocation Team will work with the employee during this time to ensure that, at any given time, the expenses that they are reimbursed for, or allowances that they are in receipt of, are appropriate to their circumstances. The allowances and expenses that an employee is entitled to claim may change throughout the relocation process, for example as employees sell or buy property or move into or out of temporary rented accommodation.

The Relocation Expenses policy and procedure will be available in the Staff Handbook, which is accessible on the HR pages of eConnect. There will also be an additional guidance booklet with more information for employees who are relocating, which will also be available via the Staff Handbook.

8. What evidence regarding the protected characteristics have you obtained to analyse this initiative? Quote sources including details of engagement.

Data from the Rebus HR/Payroll system indicates that the FC employed a total of 2710 staff at 31st March 2012. These figures do not include staff employed on Short Term Temporary Appointments or Office Holders, as these individuals are not managed using FC procedures for relocation expenses.

Analysis of the protected characteristics of the FC workforce is as follows:

Gender:

1854 males (68%)

856 females (32%)

Disability:

66 declared themselves as having a disability (2%)
2644 have not declared that they have a disability (98%)

Race:

2623 White British (97%)
67 White Other (2%)
10 Asian (>1%)
Less than 5 Black (>1%)
6 preferred not to disclose or did not respond (>1%)

Age:

16 to 24 = 43 (2%)
25 to 29 = 154 (6%)
30 to 34 = 276 (10%)
35 to 39 = 306 (11%)
40 to 44 = 371 (14%)
45 to 49 = 467 (17%)
50 to 54 = 505 (19%)
55 to 59 = 372 (14%)
60 to 64 = 184 (7%)
65 and over = 32 (1%)

Sexual Orientation, Religion / Belief and Gender Identity:

Responses from the Staff Survey 2011 (autumn; excludes office holders) have been used to obtain data on the sexual orientation, religion / belief and gender identity of the FC workforce, as this information is not currently captured by the Rebus system.

The Staff Survey responses showed that of the 1972 FC employees who completed the survey, the protected characteristics are:

Sexual Orientation:

1684 Heterosexual (85%)
13 Gay man/woman (<1%)
14 Bisexual (<1%)
261 Not disclosed (13%)

Religion or belief:

882 Christians (45%)
13 Buddhists (<1%)
Less than 5 Muslim (<1%)
Less than 5 Hindu (<1%)
Less than 5 Jewish (<1%)
51 Other (3%)

99 Atheists (5%)
658 No religion (33%)
263 Not disclosed (13%)

Gender identity:

13 staff (<1%) identified as being transgender.

Relocation Cases

The Relocation Team, HR Services manage permanent relocation cases where the employee moves their home as a result of a transfer. Records are not currently maintained about employees who relocate temporarily or who travel daily from their existing home to a new work location following a change of job. Records of this group will be kept from April 2013 onwards to allow future monitoring and analysis.

However decisions regarding postings and whether an employee may travel daily rather than moving home are dependent on the specific circumstances of a particular employee and their posting, so cannot be attributed to the protected characteristic groups. Entitlement to particular relocation expenses is affected by the individual's choices about where to live and whether to travel daily, which the FC cannot fully control.

The records kept by the Relocation Team show that from 1st April 2010 to 31st July 2012 a total of 132 employees have permanently relocated their home as a result of taking up a post in a different location. An analysis of the protected characteristics of the employees who permanently relocated their home between 1st April 2010 and 31st July 2012 is below:

Gender:

110 males (83%)
22 females (17%)

Disability:

Less than 5 declared themselves as having a disability (2%)
130 have not declared that they have a disability (98%)

Race:

122 White British (92%)
8 White Other (6%)
Less than 5 Asian Other (<1%)
Less than 5 Black African (<1%)

Age:

16 to 24 = Less than 5 (2%)
25 to 29 = 21 (16%)
30 to 34 = 28 (21%)
35 to 39 = 19 (14%)

40 to 44 = 24 (18%)
45 to 49 = 14 (11%)
50 to 54 = 16 (12%)
55 to 59 = 7 (5%)
60 to 64 = Less than 5 (1%)
65 and over = 0 (0%)

Marital status:

70 were regarded as single (including divorced, separated or widowed) (53%)
60 were married (45%)
Less than 5 were in a Civil Partnership (1%)
Less than 5 chose not to declare their marital status (1%)

Pregnancy/maternity:

There is no recorded data which suggests that any of the employees who relocated were pregnant, or within the protected maternity period.

Business engagement

As part of this review, research was commissioned into the experiences and attitudes of FC employees towards relocation. This research was carried out by the Social and Economic Research Group within Forest Research and investigated the experiences of staff who had relocated in the past 3 years and the attitudes and perceptions of those who had never relocated or had not done so for some time (over 10 years).

The research indicated that employees who had recently relocated felt that they had been sufficiently reimbursed for most relocation expenses. There was a desire for clarity about what could be claimed and for greater flexibility where possible. It was also reported that employees found the information on relocation difficult to find and understand. In light of this feedback, information on relocation expenses will now be combined and made available in a clear and more concise policy and procedure, together with an additional guidance booklet for employees who are relocating.

The research also indicated that, among the employees who have not relocated, the most significant factors influencing their decisions about relocation were family reasons such as a partner's career/income and having children in school. In contrast, financial issues were found to be the least important factor. As a result, the new Relocation Expenses policy has extended the support offered to the partners of employees who are relocating and additional support will be considered for those with caring responsibilities (for both dependant children and adults), to assist them in considering relocating.

FC Trade Unions

The FCTU have been consulted as part of the policy development process and their feedback has been considered. Feedback from the FCTU did not specifically relate to equality and diversity issues but included concern about employees with little savings or on low incomes having to pay upfront for items then claiming back reimbursement

from FC later. It has been clarified that the procedure will allow employees to claim the anticipated amount in advance of making the expenditure in certain circumstances, to avoid employees being disadvantaged. The FCTU also queried the process for seeking feedback from employees who have relocated. Confirmation was given by the Relocation Team that feedback questionnaires are issued to all employees at the end of the relocation process and if they have used the services of the FC's relocation company then they will also issue a separate feedback questionnaire. The information gathered is analysed by the Relocation Team.

Diversity Internal Staff Forum

The Forum was given the opportunity to comment on the principles of the policy and the proposed changes to the procedure in September 2012. The Forum raised the same concern as the FCTU regarding the move to reimbursement of actual expenditure and costs once the expenditure has been incurred. They made several additional comments which were taken into account but were not related to equality and diversity issues.

9. What gaps are there in the available evidence?

	Describe the gaps and what you have done to fill them, or why you cannot fill them.
Age	No gaps identified.
Disability	No gaps identified.
Gender	No gaps identified.
Gender Reassignment	Information in relation to gender identity is not currently captured in the REBUS system and as per Civil Service guidelines we will not be introducing any amendments to capture this data. However we do capture evidence via our Staff Survey (most recent survey carried out in autumn 2011), although this cannot be linked to data in relation to employee relocation.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Information in relation to marriage and civil partnership is not currently fully captured on the REBUS system. Plans are being progressed to upgrade the data capture facilities.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Information in relation to pregnancy is only recorded in the REBUS system where a MATB1 has been issued by a midwife confirming that the employee is within 11 weeks of their Expected Week of Confinement (EWC). Line managers will be aware of individuals who have advised of their pregnancy before this time, but it is not collectively available for analysis.
Race	No gaps identified.
Religion and	Information in relation to religion and belief is not currently

Belief	captured in the REBUS system, and plans are being progressed to upgrade the data capture facilities. The FC does capture evidence via our Staff Survey (most recent survey carried out in autumn 2011), although this cannot be linked to data in relation to employee relocation.
Sexual Orientation	Information in relation to sexual orientation is not currently captured in the REBUS system, and plans are being progressed to upgrade the data capture facilities. The FC does capture evidence via our Staff Survey (most recent survey carried out in autumn 2011), although this cannot be linked to data in relation to employee relocation.

10. What does all the evidence tell you about the actual or likely impact on different groups?

	Positive Impact	Negative impact	High, Medium or Low	Comments
Age		X	Medium	<p>The evidence shows that the policy and procedure could have an impact on staff in the lower age ranges. In particular, there were a disproportionate number of relocation cases involving staff in the 25-34 age range, as compared with the proportion of staff of this age in the FC workforce.</p> <p>There is no clear evidence to indicate the reason for this trend, however it is possible that younger employees are likely to have fewer family responsibilities and long-standing ties to a particular location. This is supported by research carried out by the Social and Economic Research Group within Forest Research as part of this review, which investigated FC employees' willingness to relocate.</p> <p>However there is no evidence to indicate that the low numbers of older staff who have relocated is related to the FC's relocation procedure and/or its application.</p>

<p>Disability</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>Medium</p>	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any positive or negative impact on staff with disabilities.</p> <p>The new Relocation Expenses procedure will offer additional support to staff with disabilities or caring responsibilities who incur additional costs during the relocation process, to enable them to consider and/or take up post in a different location.</p> <p>The FC would also consider any reasonable adjustments that are needed to enable an employee with a disability to carry out a particular post, before making a decision to appoint them to that post.</p>
<p>Gender</p>		<p>X</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>The evidence indicates that the policy and procedure may have a greater impact on male staff, since a disproportionate number of relocation cases have involved men.</p> <p>Analysis of the pay bands of staff who have relocated also indicates that relocation is most prevalent among those in pay bands 5 and above, with 73% of the relocation cases involving staff in these pay bands. This is compared with only 45% of staff in the FC workforce overall being employed in PB 5 and above.</p> <p>Staff in pay bands 5 and above also have a mobility obligation within their contract which enables FC to relocate them to anywhere in the UK, so this trend is not unexpected. However given that there are more male staff in the higher pay bands, this may explain the disproportionate number of</p>

				<p>transfers involving men.</p> <p>It also seems likely that female staff may have greater responsibility for caring for children and other dependants than their male counterparts, which is likely to impact on their ability/desire to relocate. In the Staff Survey 2011, 37% of those who completed the survey have caring responsibilities. Although this group was not analysed by gender, we know from external research that women generally take on greater responsibility for caring. For example this is supported by research by Carers UK (http://www.carersuk.org/media/k2/attachments/Facts_about_carers_2012.pdf).</p> <p>The FC's Relocation Expenses procedure already provides support for those with caring responsibilities during their relocation, including assistance with transporting relatives to a care home at the new location or reimbursement for childcare costs incurred as a result of the relocation process. However the availability of this support will be emphasised in the new procedure.</p>
Gender reassignment	X		Low	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any positive or negative impact on those staff who are undergoing gender reassignment.
Marriage and Civil Partnership		X	Medium	Under the previous transfer expenses procedure, the sum provided as a transfer grant would have been higher for employees who were married, in a Civil Partnership or in an established relationship, than for single staff. Staff in Civil Partnerships were treated the

				<p>same as married staff.</p> <p>However this does not appear to have deterred single staff from relocating, as this group accounted for 53% of the relocation cases.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the new policy and procedure will remove this distinction so that provision of relocation expenses is not based on marital status, but on individual circumstances.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	X		Low	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that the policy and procedure will have any positive or negative impact on those staff who are pregnant or within the maternity period.</p>
Race	X		Medium	<p>Overall, the numbers of staff from different ethnic groups who have relocated is broadly consistent with the FC workforce.</p> <p>However the number of relocation cases involving staff in the White – Other group was higher than the number in the FC workforce, suggesting that there has been a small positive impact for this group. There was no evidence to suggest that this was linked to a particular location, job role or management decision.</p>
Religion and Belief	X		Low	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any positive or negative impact on staff as a result of their religion or belief.</p>
Sexual Orientation	X		Low	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any positive or negative impact on staff as a result of their sexual orientation.</p>

11. What have you changed in the initiative to reduce or eliminate any negative impact?

Under the new Relocation Expenses policy and procedure, marital status will no longer be taken into consideration in determining the amount of transfer grant or other relocation expenses payable. This will made reimbursement more consistent.

Additional support will be offered to staff with caring responsibilities which may impact on their ability to take up post at another location. This may have increase mobility among female staff. Enhanced support will also be offered to the partners of staff who are relocating.

12. Where negative impact can not be reduced, give the reasons why.

As part of this review, research into employee attitudes towards relocation was carried out by the Social and Economic Research Group within Forest Research. The findings of this research indicated that the most significant influences on employees' willingness to relocate were family reasons such as having children in school, partner's employment and other personal links to the local area and community. It may therefore be difficult for the FC to increase the mobility of different groups of staff, for example female staff or those in the older age ranges, as their decisions to relocate (or not) are more likely to be based on their own personal circumstances than the relocation package provided by FC.

13. Does this initiative fulfil the General Equality Duty?

	Comment
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.	<p>The policy and procedure aim to provide a fair and transparent process for the reimbursement of relocation expenses.</p> <p>The FC's Relocation Expenses package will be offered to all employees who are successful in securing a post in a new location, or who are management posted into an alternative role. The specific package of financial assistance that is provided to an employee will be catered to their own personal circumstances.</p> <p>Support will be provided equally to any employee who meets the eligibility criteria, regardless of their protected characteristics. Details of the types of expenses that employees may be entitled to claim, and the eligibility criteria, are clearly set out in the Relocation Expenses procedure.</p> <p>Where appropriate reasonable adjustments will be</p>

	<p>considered and additional support will be considered to assist individuals with disabilities or health concerns with any additional costs that they incur during the relocation process as a result of their disability/health concern.</p> <p>In the event that an employee did not believe the Relocation Expenses procedure had been applied in a fair and consistent manner, they could choose to raise a grievance under the FC's Grievance procedure and have this investigated.</p>
<p>Advance equality of opportunity.</p>	<p>The opportunity to apply for recruitment competitions and internal trawls is open equally to all permanent and fixed term employees within the FC.</p> <p>For successful candidates, the relocation assistance that the FC provides will not take into account the protected characteristics of the employee involved, but will instead be determined by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether the posting is permanent or temporary; • whether they can travel daily to the new location or will require a home move; • whether they own or rent a property at the old location; • whether they plan to rent or buy a property at the new location; • average house prices in the old and new locations; and • other factors relating to the circumstances of their relocation.
<p>Foster good relations.</p>	<p>The aim of the Relocation Expenses policy and procedure is to increase mobility among FC staff. Given that employee mobility is most often in the interests of the FC, the Relocation Expenses policy ensures that employees are fairly and consistently reimbursed for the additional expenses that they incur.</p> <p>Employees whose relocation will require a home move will be given special paid leave to allow them to visit their new work location, for example to look for accommodation, schools and employment</p>

	<p>for their partner, and on the day of their home move.</p> <p>The FC also provides support for the partners and families of employees who are relocating, for example to help them to secure employment in the new location where appropriate, in order to ease the relocation process. The offer of support from the FC's Employee Assistance Programme is also extended to employees' partners and families.</p> <p>The Relocation Team is also available to provide advice and support to employees during the process.</p>
<p>14. Describe the arrangements to measure and monitor the actual impact of this initiative on people from the protected characteristic groups.</p>	
<p>How will you measure the effects of the initiative?</p>	<p>The Relocation Team will monitor the application of the procedure by recording details of all employees who relocate.</p> <p>Feedback will be received from the FCTU on the application of the policy and procedure in specific cases.</p> <p>Individuals and managers may also feedback on the application of the procedure, via the Relocation Team or local HR Operations Managers.</p> <p>Responses to the biennial Staff Survey and employee complaints raised through the FC's Grievance procedure will also be monitored for any complaints/concerns raised in relation to the fairness or consistency of the procedure and its application.</p> <p>If appropriate, the above feedback may result in amendments to the procedure to ensure fairness and consistency of application in future.</p>
<p>What type of information is needed for monitoring and how often will it be analysed?</p>	<p>The Relocation Team will record the personal details and protected characteristics of employees who relocate and this will be analysed annually.</p>
<p>How will you engage stakeholders* in implementation, monitoring and review?</p>	<p>The policy and procedure will be approved by the HR Management Board and the HR Service Board, which represents the business.</p> <p>They have been developed in consultation with the FC Trade Unions. The FCTU may provide feedback</p>

	<p>on the policy, procedure or People Matters Guide and will be consulted when a review is carried out.</p> <p>Individuals and managers may also provide feedback. Business engagement will be carried out if a significant review of the policy and procedure is carried out.</p>
Who will be responsible for the monitoring and review?	HR Policy
15. What is the review date for this Equality Analysis?	
Date of next review(s)	The policy and procedure will be reviewed in April 2016, or earlier if dictated by other policy changes or legislative changes.
What could trigger an early revision?	Changes required by HM Revenue and Customs or the Civil Service Management Code, issues identified through monitoring of relocation cases, or feedback from the FCTU, managers or individuals employees.
16. Senior manager sign off	
<p>I agree with this Equality Analysis and its supporting evidence relating to this initiative and that it demonstrates that it advances or will advance, the three aims of the General Equality Duty.</p>	
Name	Helen Paterson
Signature	
Job Title	Head of Pay and Policy
Date	20/03/2013