

TITLE OR REPORT: RETENTION AND EQUALITIES UPDATE

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE MANAGER HUMAN RESOURCES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To update JSCC on the current position with regard to the Council's retention rate and actions being taken on equalities.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Equalities and the retention of staff are projects contained in the People Strategy. This report is to update JSCC on progress with equalities and retention in relation to our employees and progress on our equalities action plan.
- 3.2 This report will cover leavers from the Council during the period 1st January to 31st October 2009, look at the reasons for leaving and identify any retention issues that need to be addressed. It will consider the data monitored by the Council and identify any key actions that will be included in the HR Equalities Action Plan (Appendix 1) and it is proposed to review and update this report for JSCC twice yearly.

4. RETENTION

- 4.1 The turnover figure for 2008/09 was 8.57% and for 2009/10 turnover is at the rate of 5.20% for the period April to October 2009. As a benchmark, the median annual turnover per authority is 11.5% and the mean is 11% (taken from the 2009 Local Government Workforce Survey.)
- 4.2 Of those that have left the Council in the period January to October 2009, a proportion were due to reaching the end of their fixed term contract. The remainder were resignations for new jobs or relocation, retirement, dismissals, ill health, a TUPE transfer and redundancy.
- 4.3 8% of leavers (3 people) were from ethnic minority groups and 5% (2 people) had a declared disability, this reflects closely the current overall percentages of staff in the workforce.

- 4.4 The age group of leavers was spread across the full age range of employees, 11 leavers were in their 20's and 30's, 16 leavers were in the 40 to 50 age range and 13 were in the age range of 60 to 74. The lowest number of leavers was in the younger age range.
- 4.5 33% of leavers were in the grades ranging from 1 to 3. 26% were in the grade ranges of 4 to 6. 28% in the range of 7 to 9 and 13% were in the range of grades 10 to 13, with two leavers at grade 13, a retirement and resignation for a new job.
- 4.6 The number of male and female leavers reflects the overall make up of the organisation.
- 4.7 The overall turnover rate remains low and no problems about retention have been identified from the leaver data.

5. EQUALITIES PERFORMANCE

We are maintaining our performance indicators BV11a, b and c and BV 16a and b.

- α BV 11a - top 5% of earners that are women is currently at 28.14%
- α BV 11b - top 5% of earners that are disabled is at 16.89%
- α BV 11c - top 5% of earners that are from ethnic minority groups remains at 0%. We are still improving our levels of ethnic minority employees and are aspiring through succession planning to make progress against this.
- α BV16a - Percentage of employees with a disability is slightly over target at 5.88%
- α Bv16b - Percentage of employees from an ethnic minority group is just on target at 7.6%

Over the last period we have had a good reflection on our overall work on equalities, the Council's use of resources assessment on Workforce Planning had a significant section on equalities and the assessment achieved a level 3. (exceeds minimum requirements – performs well). The Equalities Peer review in September had a significant emphasis on the equalities in employment and this also achieved a level 3 against the old equalities standard. This equates to level 2 or “achieving” against the new equalities framework. These were the results we were aspiring to achieve.

6. EQUALITIES DATA

- 6.1 We collect equalities data from our employees and potential employees through the recruitment process. We also periodically request updates from all employees, however a significant number of staff choose not to provide the information.
- 6.2 Under the specific public sector duties of Gender Equality, Race Equality and Disability Equality we now collect a broader range of equalities information and data. We recently wrote to all staff where we have gap in equalities data. Over 50% of the letters were returned and data held on current employees was dramatically improved.

- 6.3 It is planned to repeat the exercise in Spring 2010. Once letters have been returned, we will review the success of the letter and follow up with further information to individuals via direct telephone calls, face to face meetings etc. to see if we can encourage them to provide the equalities data and provide assurances regarding confidentiality and proper use and storage of data.

7. UPDATE ON HR EQUALITIES ACTION PLAN

7.1 Equal Pay Review beginning October 2009

The first meeting of the Equal Pay Review took place in mid September 2009. This group determined the key areas for review and how the group would communicate as work was completed. Reports for all aspects have been pulled together and the analysis is under way.

7.2 Review Reorganisation Policy and provide Policy Guidance

The reorganisation policy has been looked at and comprehensive guidance produced for management to ensure that this process is approached in a consistent and fair way. This guidance is now on the intranet.

7.3 Re- Issue Data Collection letter

This is covered in paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 above.

7.4 Continue with Healthy Lifestyle Days for staff Oct and Dec 2009.

On 13th October a further very successful healthy lifestyle day took place with a very large waiting list in readiness for the December date. There was also another successful benefits day on 19th November. Further dates will be identified for year 2010.

7.5 Complete online recruitment and go live in November 2009.

The online recruitment project has been tested and we plan to go live on both phase 1 (internal recruitment) and phase 2 (70% external recruitment) in December. This will allow external recruitment to take place online, allowing application forms to be completed and submitted online and data will be directly inserted into the HR Payroll System.

7.6 Market Forces Payment Policy review

Equality impact assessment identified that this policy required a review. This was completed and aspects of the review checked by the Legal Services Department. The policy was improved to ensure that thorough research and proof of research was completed in order to determine the need for Market Forces payments and reduce the risk of unequal application of the policy.

7.7 Equalities Data Collection spreadsheets to be updated to include all areas to be monitored.

The spreadsheets used by HR to collect data on training and recruitment have been updated to include Religion, Age and Sexuality to ensure that NHDC are monitoring all aspects of employment as expected.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Equalities monitoring and Equalities in the workplace are supported by the following, non-exhaustive, list of legislation and regulations.

Equal Pay Act 1970
Race Relations Act 1976
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
Public Interest at Work Act 1998
Human Rights Act 1998
Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
Gender Recognition Act 2004
Civil Partnership Act 2004
Equality Act 2006
Employment Equality (sexual orientation) Regulations. 2003
Employment Equality (religion or belief) Regulations. 2003
Employment Equality (sex discrimination) Regulations. 2005
Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Employment Nov 2005
Public Sector Equality Duties - Race (2002), Disability (2006), Gender (2007)

- 8.2 As can be seen from the above list the Council needs to be aware of, and take account of, a large amount of legislation which affect this area. Additionally in the Queen's Speech in December 2008 the Government indicated they will introduce a Single Equalities Bill during the current Parliament. It is not known when this will be published and it is not yet possible to advise on the affect it will have on the issues covered in this report.

9. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 All actions mentioned in the report can be accommodated from within existing budgets.
- 9.2 Risks relating to workforce planning and equalities and diversity are currently Top Risks for NHDC. These risks are monitored by the Audit and Risk Panel.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The HR Implications are outlined in the body of the report.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 JSCC to note the update on retention and progress with equalities.

12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 HR Equalities Action Plan

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

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HR Equalities Action Plan					APPENDIX 1
Key Actions	Detail/Task	Dates for Delivery	Responsible Roles	Milestones	Measured Success
Recruit a workforce that reflects the diversity of North Herts.	EIA on full recruitment process to identify any potential problems	Feb-09	ERO	All key policies EIA reviewed	Representative Workforce
Eliminate discrimination in all our policies, practices and procedures.	Perform adequate EIA's to identify any areas of concern. Develop action plans to resolve any problems	Feb-09	ERO	All key policies EIA reviewed	Equalities action plan in place and worked towards
Equality of opportunity in all areas of employment, recruitment, selection T&D, staff retention and promotion.	1) EIA on L&D, Recruitment, regular reviews of Retention and report twice yearly to JSCC to highlight any problems and actions to rectify, 2) EIA on staff promotion.	1) March 2009. 2) EIA on Staff promotion Mar/Apr 09	ERO	JSCC report completed. EIA's completed	Equality action plan in place and worked towards.
Those seeking employment, training or promotion will be considered solely on the basis of their competencies, relevant experience, qualifications and skills.	EIA's and monitoring	Ongoing	HRA/ AAHRA and Managers	Ongoing	Representative Workforce.
Fair treatment will be ensured for redundancy, disciplinaries and grievances.	EIA of policies and processes and monitoring.	1) All relevant policies EIA reviewed by April 09	ERO	EIA reviews completed and actions identified.	No grievances based on Fairness of policies are upheld.

Staff will be consulted for their views on a wide range of issues and results will be reported to PARC and cabinet	1) Staff Attitude survey bi annually. Reports to PARC and Cabinet and equalities actions input onto action plan. 2) Adhoc surveys via intranet on issues that arise. Equalities actions highlighted input onto equalities action plan	1) 2009 and bi annually. 2) Ongoing	HOHR and ERO	Staff survey issued and results reported to PARC. Equalities action plan up to date	Satisfied employees
TU and SCF consultation in development of Council policies on employment issues.	Regular JSCC meetings, SCF meetings and TU Liaison meetings. Policy review process embeds consultation	Ongoing	ERO/ HOHR	consultation takes place.	Employees feel consulted and included in policy development
Employment policies will be regularly reviewed and consultation will take place with employees, TU and SCF.	Policy review process with equality impact assessments included. Key policies EIA completed. TU and SCF consultation included in process	Ongoing	ERO	EIA's completed. Policies reviewed on time. Consultation takes place.	Employees feel consulted and included in policy development
Council will monitor recruitment and selection of staff, make up of workforce by grade, T&D opportunities, promotion, grievances and disciplinaries and leavers.	Collate data. Analyse date. Identify actions	Ongoing	HRA/L&D, ERO	Ongoing monitoring takes place. Equalities action plans kept up to date.	Representative workforce and Equal application of policies across the workforce.

Strive to collect data for equality monitoring from all employees and use this to ensure that equality of opportunity is applied in all areas of employment.	Collect data from new recruits. Issue letter regularly requesting updated information from employees.	Feb 09 and annually	HRA	Letter for 09 is out to employees. Managers to promote and encourage completion. Hr to follow up	Improved data held on employees to help us improve equalities.
Demonstrate our commitment to equalities and social inclusion. To aim to attract a diverse workforce that reflects, at all levels of the organisation, the local community.	1) Improve data held on employees so that we can accurately measure demographics of the organisation. 2) To complete EIA's to the EIA review timetable. 3) To monitor retention and identify any issues	1) February 09 and annually. 2) In line with review timetable. 3) 6 monthly	1) HRA/ AAHR 2) ERO 3) ERO	Letter for 09 is out to employees. EIA timetable maintained JSCC reports issued 6 monthly	Improved data held on employees to help us improve equalities. Up to date EIA timetable JSCC reports delivered.
To promote the image of NHDC as an employer who has an attractive benefits package and also values and encourages work life balance.	1) Details in adverts, applications packs. 2) reinforced at interview benefits days, 3) benefits statement pilot 4) extending eligibility for flexible working.	1) ongoing. 2) ongoing 3) twice yearly 4) April 09	HRSM/ ERO	Benefits Days take place. Flexible policy updated and in place.	Improved satisfaction re NHDC benefits.
To continually improve the Councils recruitment policies and processes and implement an effective move to online recruitment.	1) Develop a user friendly on line recruitment section on our website, which will increase number of applications 2) Broaden our advertising base within minority groups	1) April 09 2) 09/10	HRSM/ HRA	online recruitment in place	Equal and accessible recruitment in place.

Encourage Managers to apply market forces policy equally	1) Improve Justification Form 2) Improve Review process	Feb-09	ERO	Update policy	Market forces payments more clearly justified and accurately reviewed
Improve ability to monitor application of key HR policies	1) Have all action under key policies logged onto TREN. 2) Diarise regular review of action under policies taken and equalities	1) Jan 2009 2) Diaries up dated Feb 2009	ERO	regular monitoring of action taken under HR policies	Accurate Monitoring takes place
Improve consistency of action under attendance procedure	1) Attendance Management training for managers funded and delivered 2) Accurate data to managers quarterly 3) information to directorate teams for review by strategic directors	1) 09/10 2) Data issued to Hos by end of first month after end of quarter 3) as required	ERO	Attendance Procedure applied consistently across organisation and in line with HR advice.	Improved attendance.
Improve equalities data on employees	Letter to all employees annually onto action plan as annual action.	Feb-09	ERO	letter sent	improved data on employees to help improve equalities in organisation.
Broaden Monitoring of Recruitment to include Age, Religion and Belief and Sexuality.	Amend spreadsheet and Begin the new monitoring	Apr-09	HRSM/HRA	improved monitoring taking place	Actions in place on the equalities action plan to support minority groups.
Review short listing and interview questions to ensure accuracy and that competency based questions used that are job specific.	HR Assistant Advisor	Ongoing	AAHR	improved monitoring taking place	Reflective workforce in place.

Consider broadening the monitoring of the training completed incl. Disability, Rel/Bel, Sexuality& Age	Amend spreadsheet and Begin the new monitoring	Apr-09	L&DM	Monitoring Takes place	Actions in place on the equalities action plan to support minority groups.
Consider having a budget policy	Review Budget planning documentation and develop policy	Poss. April 09	L&DM	Budget policy in place	Budget policy applied
Investigate the potential of cross referencing LMS reporting with the HR Payroll system reports.	Consider costs and practicalities	2009/10	L&DM	costing and investigation into practicalities completed,	Simpler and more accurate equalities monitoring can take place.