

## **Workforce Update**

### **Purpose**

For information.

### **Summary**

This report sets out the key workforce policy developments that have taken place since the last Board meeting. The updates are routine in that there are no new policy developments at this stage. One decision is requested on taking forward the agreed idea for a diversity champion.

### **Recommendations**

That Members of the Resources Board:

1. Note the report; and
2. Take forward the decision on a diversity champion.

### **Action**

As directed by members.

**Contact officer:** Naomi Cooke  
**Position:** Head of Workforce  
**Phone no:** 0207 664 3299  
**Email:** [naomi.cooke@local.gov.uk](mailto:naomi.cooke@local.gov.uk)

## **Workforce Update**

### **Background**

1. This report sets asks members to take forward the agreed appointment of a diversity champion and provides updates on other programmes, some pay negotiating groups and pensions.

### **Proposal for an LGA Equality and Diversity Champion**

2. It was agreed at the June meeting of the Resources Board that a Board member should be identified as the "Equality and Diversity Champion" for the LGA. Members asked for more detail on the suggested role
3. The chosen member may be one of the lead members (but not necessarily); it was agreed that a discussion aimed at identifying a volunteer would take place at the September Board meeting.

### Scope

4. The primary focus of the champion will be on the directly employed workforce, though there may be situations where the LGA is asked for views on diversity in the wider workforce. It is not envisaged that the role would cover social diversity more generally.
5. The role should cover what the sector does to promote workforce diversity in all its forms. So although the main territory will be avoiding discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnicity, disability and sexuality, there will also be issues around age and religion. The role will of course cover specific activity around the gender pay gap.
6. There are others areas of Government policy relating to employment for people leaving the armed forces and prison which will be relevant.

### Duties

7. The champion will be expected to:
  - 7.1 Be the face of the LGA on workforce diversity issues;
  - 7.2 Clear copy;
  - 7.3 Sign correspondence, including letters to ministers, where needed;
  - 7.4 Be named in media quotes;
  - 7.5 Attend agreed meetings and events, including occasionally, speaking invitations if necessary (perhaps "ministerial roundtables" where political input is needed for instance).

8. Members are asked to take appropriate steps to identify an equality and diversity champion and to note that our work on the three programmes discussed in paragraphs 9-13 below is closely related to our approach to equality and diversity.

#### **Disability Confident (former “two ticks” scheme)**

9. LGA has recently worked with DWP to gain its Disability Confident Leader status. This now means that the Workforce team can help support other councils across the regions to achieve their Leader status and in turn support other employers to change the way that they recruit and retain employees with a disability. Work on this will begin this autumn with DWP.

#### **Health and Wellbeing**

10. The Workforce team have developed a Health and Wellbeing review to evaluate the:
  - 10.1 Effectiveness of Occupational Health services in supporting good organisational practices for promoting health and well-being and preventing ill health.
  - 10.2 Effectiveness of sickness management policies and procedures in supporting managers and staff to manage ill health.
  - 10.3 Effectiveness of health and wellbeing initiatives and supporting mechanisms to promote a healthy workplace.
11. The review is independent and provides an objective assessment of the effectiveness of health promotion activities, including identifying, describing and making recommendations for changes that the organisation may wish to consider. It will also highlight any aspects of the organisational practice that are positive and should be built upon in relation to Health and Wellbeing.

#### **Return to Work Programmes**

12. As well as meeting the Gold Standard for Returner programmes, the Workforce team have received confirmation of support from the Government Equalities Office to run five return to work programmes for the following hard to recruit professions:
  - 12.1 Return to social work, 2-5 years career break, cohort two;
  - 12.2 Return to social work, 5-10 years career break, cohort one;
  - 12.3 Return to local government, ICT;
  - 12.4 Return to local government, legal;
  - 12.5 Return to local government, planners.
13. Discussions are now underway with GEO to agree the MoU for this £1.1 million project.

## **Pay negotiations**

### Local Government Services

14. Work continues to implement the new pay spine.
15. UNISON sought leave to appeal in the sleep-ins National Minimum Wage case on 8 August 2018 that was last heard in the Court of Appeal and we are awaiting announcement of the Supreme Court's response. If the appeal is accepted, then it is likely to be heard later next year. In the meantime the LGA continues to assist councils on this issue.

### Fire

16. Discussions have continued on the potential to reach agreement on broadening the role of firefighters in return for a pay award that would be higher than that which would otherwise be expected over the next two to three years. The negotiation within the National Joint Council, which is a UK-wide body, continues to be constructive in nature. Lead employee representatives are aware of the financial limitations within which fire and rescue authorities are working and the need therefore to be able to secure additional funding from governments.
17. Indications from Scottish Government remain that it is prepared to fund an increase in firefighter pay. This is expected to be sufficient to cover both the negotiations through the NJC and a number of local issues. However, it is showing signs of impatience and a desire to be able to now move forward quickly in introducing the new role in Scotland.
18. While expressing his view that any outcome must also work well for Wales, the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services in Wales has indicated that he is happy for further discussion to take place. As part of that, meetings are taking place with senior civil servants. Welsh Government has also indicated that should it be prepared to provide the funding it would wish to move forward quickly thereafter in introducing the new role in Wales.
19. The situation in Northern Ireland remains challenging given the given the unique political circumstances there.
20. Talks are continuing with government in England. The Minister for Policing and Fire has been provided with further information following discussion with NJC representatives. This information covered the rationale, how the role could look, and included information on fairness (including comparison with other public sector pay settlements), increased productivity, gains for the public purse, and the potential impact on recruitment, retention and diversity. Discussions have taken place with civil servants over the recess period to identify a position which it is hoped the Minister will be prepared to support and take forward to Treasury and other departments as appropriate. Separately he has asked the employers about fire and rescue authorities' ability to fund an increase from their existing budgets and reserves. A detailed response has been provided. There had also been a suggestion from the Minister, subject to NJC agreement, of facilitating an Independent Review to assess whether a firefighter was receiving a fair salary for the current role. Such a review would only be applicable to England and the reference to the current role

was surprising but in any case it has been rejected by the employees' side of the NJC pointing out that 'in any case the real issue is not placing a value on the work of firefighters nor being able to negotiate solutions, the NJC does that regularly. The real issue is one of underfunding...'

21. The time it is taking to be able to secure commitment to additional funding across the UK is also now impacting upon the patience of the employee representatives. The Employers' side of the NJC has suggested that an uplift of 2.0 per cent on basic pay be applied while negotiations continue. The Fire Brigades Union is consulting its members on that suggestion. However, although its communication recognised the progress made within the NJC negotiation about how the role would look, it also set out that it would now be considering what next steps it could take if necessary to do so. This is likely to be in preparation for some form of industrial action in the future should it consider it necessary.

### Schoolteachers

22. The Government has published its [response on the teachers' pay award for 2018-19](#). In summary:
  - 22.1 3.5 per cent to the minimum/maximum of the main pay range;
  - 22.2 2 per cent to the minimum/maximum of the upper pay range, leading practitioner pay range; and
  - 22.3 1.5 per cent to the minimum/maximum of the leadership pay ranges.
22. A key issue regarding the DfE response is we believe that for the first time a core recommendation on pay from the Review Body has been rejected, namely that the 3.5 per cent should cover all ranges.
23. At present the details on where the additional funding for the 'pay grant' will come from and how it will be distributed are not clear. However, it is clear that there will be no new money from the Treasury and the money will be found from within the existing DfE budget. The Minister's statement also only confirms that funding would be available for 2018-19 and 2019-20 and is silent on what happens after that period.
24. The National Employers Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) has been invited to respond, as a statutory consultee, by the 3 September 2018 and local authority leads have fed into the submitted response that is attached at **Appendix A**.

### **Police Staff pay**

25. The Police Staff Council Employers Side has received a pay and conditions claim from the Trade Unions for 2018. The key element of this is for a 5 per cent increase or £1,000, whichever is the greater on all PSC pay points from 1 September 2018. The Employers' Side is undertaking a consultation on this claim via the APCC, NPCC and Home Office and will respond to the Trade Union Side in September.

### **HM Treasury Public Service Pensions Cost Management**

26. The results of the HM Treasury public service pensions cost management process are due in mid-September. Early indications are that the results may have a detrimental impact on employer costs which could be in excess of 2 per cent of payroll. Although, discussions continue with MHCLG and HMT on how the outcome of the LGPS's own cost management process will impact on those results, there are no such local processes in place for the Teachers or Firefighters schemes where the HMT results will have a direct impact.
27. At the time of writing the HMT results were due on 13 September and if this is a case an update will be made available for Members at the Board.

### **Implications for Wales**

28. The pay negotiations and pension policy sections above cover Welsh councils, whereas the strategic elements of the LGA's work do not directly apply to Welsh councils.

### **Financial Implications**

29. The outlined activities are within the work programme and therefore have been budgeted for.

### **Next steps**

30. Members are asked to note the report and take forward the decision on a diversity champion.