

## **Workforce Board: Review of the Year**

### **Review of key achievements in 2013-14 and key issues for the next year**

1. As the period of budgetary retrenchment and organisational restructuring continues, it has been increasingly important to manage the workforce context in a way that is both fair and affordable and ensures staff feel valued and remain engaged. The Workforce Board has overseen a number of achievements that have assisted councils in dealing with these issues.

#### **Employer consensus in pay negotiations**

2. Although at the time of writing the issue of a local government pay award has yet to be resolved, we have had positive feedback about the engagement with both local authorities and regional employers in developing the employers' position. In a period of significant financial difficulties within the sector we were able to achieve a broad consensus on the size and shape of the offer. Councils have supported the view that it is fair to employees and at the limit of what the sector can afford.
3. The well-established annual seminar on schoolteacher employment issues included an additional event in York, with combined numbers making it one of the LGA's most successful ventures. Feedback has been incredibly positive with an emphasis on the help the events have provided in enabling local authorities and schools to manage the implementation of significant change in teachers' pay.
4. As well as on-going support and guidance on employment law provided to local authorities and subscriber clients through the Advisory Bulletin, website and responses to individual complex queries, the workforce team's annual employment law event continues to go from strength to strength. Attendance this year was 105 delegates, up from 85 last year.

#### **Contribution to development and introduction of new pension scheme**

5. Agreed and implemented a new more affordable benefit design for the Local Government Pension Scheme (an estimated total reduction in future costs of £600 million per annum) without any of the disruption from industrial action seen in other public service schemes.
6. Agreed with HM Treasury and LG trade unions cost management processes which will ensure the sustainability of the scheme by capping future movements in LGPS costs to a maximum of 2 per cent of payroll
7. Successfully lobbied government via the Lords on the ceasing of contracting out with talks on recycling £700 million in National Insurance contributions back into LGPS.
8. Lobbied successfully with CEEP for the removal of funding requirements from a directive on pensions which could have cost the UK between €225 billion and €963 billion.

**The Standards for employers of social workers in England**

9. The Standards for Employers of social workers were re-developed to give social work employers and those working in social work access to a pool of professional resources and information that incorporates the essentials of what supports good social work practice.
10. They aim to benefit every social worker in a local authority, health or the voluntary sector by clearly identifying the development opportunities, resources and accountability arrangements that employers should have in place.

**Organisational re-design - the Decision-Making Accountability approach (DMA)**

11. The Workforce Team have been busy delivering DMA reviews for councils, who are looking at re-designing their services and structures. Nine reviews have been completed and we are currently working with Buckinghamshire County Council's senior leadership team to design their future transformational delivery model.
12. DMA is generating much interest in social care and local government services. It is a way of ensuring that roles and structures add value to an organisation. This approach generates both cost savings and greater efficiency. Employees are empowered to make decisions and service users benefit as a result.

**Public Health**

13. Following the 2013 transfer of public health functions to local government the team has continued to provide advice especially on issues around specialist recruitment and retention. Working collaboratively with Public Health England and other key partners on events and publications, the team continues to support and promote the development of the new public health workforce, for example through publications on job evaluation, NHS pension access and development of specialist trainees.

**Health and care workforce development**

14. The integration of health and care workforces is fundamental to the future of local service delivery. The team has taken a high-profile role in national strategic discussions led by Department of Health, NHS England and Health Education England (HEE), ensuring that the role and interests of local government are taken on board for example in the 15 year workforce development plan announced by HEE.
15. The team has also worked in partnership with Skills for Care on the development of a workforce capacity planning tool designed to help prepare for Health and Social Care Act responsibilities.

**Job evaluation**

16. Working jointly with the trade unions, the team has now completed and published a full review and refresh of the guidance associated with the NJC job evaluation scheme. This work improves process efficiency and is designed to help in organisational redesign by taking account of the major changes in basic job design and purpose over recent years.

**Fire**

17. Members will be aware of the on-going dispute between the Fire Brigades Union and Government Ministers in England, Wales and Scotland. Throughout the dispute we have worked closely with the parties both separately and jointly where it is appropriate and in our gift to do so. For example, on a matter relating to capability we consulted fire authorities on a potential way forward and agreement has now been reached on most aspects.
18. Separately, there has been constructive discussion within the NJC on 'changes identified by each Side to ensure that there is a 'pay framework alongside terms and conditions in the fire and rescue service which reflect the responsibilities of, and current and future demands on, the service and the profession'.

**On-going areas of activity and arrangements for oversight**

19. As the Workforce Board will now be dissolved the key issue in many ways is the handover of appropriate oversight of on-going and emerging issues. The Workforce Team section of the business plan will be overseen by the Resources Board which will have overall accountability. However under the new arrangements, the workforce-related aspects of a variety of policy areas will be monitored by a number of boards. The main policy areas are:
  - 19.1. *Pay negotiations*
    - 19.1.1. The Resources Board relationship with the pay negotiating functions will be similar to the out-going Workforce Board arrangements. The employer side arrangements will be continuing and it is anticipated that lead members of the Resources Board with workforce responsibilities will be part of the joint council arrangements.
  - 19.2. *Pensions*
    - 19.2.1. Finalise and implement new governance arrangements for the LGPS .
    - 19.2.2. Finalise and implement Fair Deal provisions in the LGPS which provide value for authorities.
    - 19.2.3. Lobbying government to take a sensible 'objectives based; approach to the structural reform of the 89 England and Wales LGPS funds.
    - 19.2.4. Ensuring sufficient local authority representation on the Teachers' Pensions Scheme Advisory Board and that administrative costs for employers provide value.
    - 19.2.5. Achieving amendments to the European pensions directive which will avoid undue costs to local authorities through excessive regulation.
  - 19.3. *Strategic pay issues*

There are several key areas of on-going work covering all levels of the workforce for which the Resources Board will take lead responsibility:

    - 19.3.1. The relative position of local government pay in the wider public sector including the implications of the Living wage and how competitive the sector is in relation to other employers;

- 19.3.2. The role of increments, bonuses, performance and contribution-related pay in improving productivity; and
- 19.3.3. The continued political interest in the pay of senior managers.

19.4. *Social Worker career development*

With the quality of safeguarding especially being a critical on-going issue, the Workforce and Children's and Young People's Boards have begun a joint project aimed at improving the retention of good, experienced social workers. Work in-hand includes:

- 19.4.1. the development of a research report on effective management of key stages in social work careers and an associated podcast ;
- 19.4.2. a joint bid for innovation funding with the College of Social Work, including development of a "developing social workers" award scheme for employers; and
- 19.4.3. It is anticipated that the Children's and Young People's Board will wish to take a lead role in overseeing this work with updates to the Resources Board.

19.5. *Workforce dimensions of public service transformation*

- 19.5.1. There are some key practical issues about managing terms and conditions etc. which have to be dealt with as public services and therefore the people providing them become more integrated. The Workforce Team has been working with a number of key organisations to develop advice and information and will continue to do so. This includes a series of workshops to be run with The PPMA and SOLACE following a successful series last year and liaison with the Cabinet Office and Public Service Transformation Network.
- 19.5.2. The team will continue to be closely involved in ensuring the fair and efficient transfer of staff out of local government which flow from national policies such as the introduction of universal credit and the transfer of local land searches to the land registry.
- 19.5.3. It is anticipated that the Innovation and Improvement Board will wish to take a lead role in oversight of this work with updates to the Resources Board.

19.6. *Mediation*

- 19.6.1. The Workforce Team has continued to act as an independent and trusted partner in resolving disputes within councils, whether it is mediating between colleagues or resolving issues between members and senior managers.

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