



Mobility of staff

Responsible Board Member(s) Simon Burton
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Summary: HRSG has considered whether the balance in the House's career development policy between competition and managed moves needs to be revised.

Summary of actions requested: The Board is invited to agree that the current career development policy be revised as set out in the Annex.

Current position

1. The House's policy on career development set out in the Staff Handbook (see Annex) commits to moving certain staff of the House within their grade to develop their experience. In addition to competitions held to fill vacancies, provision is sometimes made to move staff through "managed moves". For example, Heads of Office often reassign duties between staff in the same grade in their offices; and there are regular moves across offices for clerks and occasionally for other staff (including SCS), although it has been some years since there was last a programme of managed moves across offices of staff below band A.
2. In addition, the Clerk of the Parliaments has the right to move staff for business reasons.

Proposed policy

3. HRSG strongly endorses the House's commitment to the principle of fair and open competition. But the administration is small and opportunities for career development through competition are inevitably limited.
4. While HRSG does not recommend the establishment of a formal transfer scheme as in the Commons,¹ HRSG recommends that any member of staff should be able to express a general preference² for a move to another area of the House (subject to meeting certain criteria including having satisfactorily passed probation and not being subject to any disciplinary proceedings).
5. Any such system would need to be properly administered and expectations would need to be managed. HRSG proposes the following:

¹ <http://intranet.parliament.uk/intranet/careers-development/assets/internal-transfer-guidelines.doc>

² It would be undesirable to allow staff to "bid" for particular jobs in other offices, as that could undermine staff already in those roles.

- i. Staff wishing to be considered for a move should first talk to their line manager who will notify the Head of Office and pass the request on to the Human Resources Office. Where possible existing performance and development reviews (such as Staff Appraisal and the ADR) should be used to facilitate discussions.
 - ii. Individual requests would be collated and centrally managed by the Human Resources Office in consultation with the Heads of Office concerned. Meeting the business needs of individual offices would need to remain the priority, with different skills perhaps required at different times. Individuals wishing to move might be required to demonstrate (perhaps by way of an interview) that they have the skills and experience necessary for a new role. In addition, there could be no guarantee that staff would be offered a particular move.
 - iii. The Human Resources Office would remain available to offer career development advice to staff at any time.
 - iv. Managers should also where appropriate ensure that staff are alerted to opportunities advertised to staff of the House.
6. All Heads of Office will need to take a co-operative and positive approach to make such a system work.

Recommendation

- 7. HRSG recommends that the Board revises the current career development policy in the Staff Handbook in line with the wording set out in the Annex.**

Communications

8. Staff will be informed through the usual channels including RCN and Management Board News. The text of any revised policy will be communicated through the Staff Handbook revision process in due course.

Finance

9. HRO will manage requests within existing resources. There may be some costs to Office training budgets if mobility is increased

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Annex

Extract from the current Staff Handbook (2008)

11.2 Posting and training will take account of the needs, preference, assessed potential, and experience of each member of staff; the over-riding consideration, however, must be the needs of the House. During the early part of their service, staff at junior levels will be moved sufficiently frequently within the range of posts appropriate to their grade to provide experience of the work of the House, to develop their knowledge and skills and help establish their aptitudes and preferences. At more senior levels posting will be arranged wherever possible to take full advantage of the particular abilities of the member of staff and to continue the process of developing ability and expanding experience. Career moves, except for Clerks, will be arranged by the Human Resources Office in discussion with the relevant Heads of Office and following consultation with the staff concerned. Career moves for Clerks are arranged by the Clerk of the Parliaments.

11.3. Some offices are more specialised than others and it is desirable that staff should spend fairly long periods in them before being posted elsewhere. Nevertheless the aim will still be to ensure that staff in these areas gain sufficient experience of general Parliamentary work before they have reached a level at which a change of duties would be difficult. Suitable staff who show a strong inclination towards specialist work and who have the necessary qualifications will, whenever possible, be given the chance of developing their careers in suitable posts.....

11.5. Separate arrangements are made for posting of catering grades taking account of requirements for career development.

Proposed new Staff Handbook text

11.2 The House of Lords is committed to the principle of fair and open competition. Nevertheless management has the right to move staff for business reasons. Heads of Office may also move staff within their offices within their grade and where Heads of Office have a number of staff in the same grade performing similar roles Heads of Office are encouraged to take opportunities to deploy staff in different roles. The Clerk of the Parliaments manages the deployment of Clerks.

11.3 Staff may also register an interest in a move across Offices. In the first instance, staff should discuss any such request with their line manager who will ensure that their Head of Office and the Human Resources office are informed. Performance and development reviews should where possible be used to facilitate discussions but a request can be made at any time. The Human Resources Office will then consider all such requests in consultation with Heads of Office. There is, however, no guarantee that staff will be offered a move. Further details are available from the Human Resources Office and on the intranet at....