

REPORT FROM UNIONS

Agenda item:

4A

Title of meeting: Employment Committee

Date of meeting: 17 June 2014

Subject: Job Evaluation

Report by: Unite/Unison

1. Purpose of report

Following the Joint Staff Committee on the 3rd April the Joint Unions were asked to produce a report highlighting issues arising from the current job evaluation system. The Joint Unions were also asked to indicate what they would want to change within the existing scheme or if they believe an alternative scheme should replace the JESS scheme.

2. Suggestions

- Provide greater levels of transparency around the scoring of job evaluation questionnaires (JEQs)
- Review the process of submitting JEQs
- Review the level of involvement of Felt Fair Panels in the evaluation process
- If greater levels of transparency cannot be achieved due to current contractual arrangements the future use of JESS should be reconsidered.

3. Background

Since the imposition of the JESS scheme on PCC staff in 2009, UNITE along with UNISON have experienced a number of issues regarding job evaluation. These issues mainly revolve around the transparency of the scheme, particularly in the scoring process.

ACAS advise that:

The aim of a job evaluation scheme is to provide a hierarchy of jobs that are free from discrimination and ‘felt to be fair’ by your employees.

Although many employees might feel that job evaluation should move them up the ‘pecking order’ at work, in reality jobs can move up, down or stay the same.

To ensure that job evaluation is ‘felt fair’ it is best to:

- **involve employee representatives and communicate with employees**
- **be thorough and systematic about gathering information**
- **ensure employees have an understanding of the basis on which jobs are to be evaluated**

- **ensure a consistent method of evaluation**

Some stand out cases that demonstrate our concerns involve a number of groups.

Window Cleaners

In September 2010 two members of Green and Clean Window Cleaners approached Unite to discuss their JEQ outcome. They had been told that they had been placed in band 4 and were 2 points below the threshold of moving into band 5. Having reviewed the JEQ they were advised to add information around outdoor working and risk assessing which had been missed from the original submission. Having done this the new JEQ was submitted and was returned with a score 18 points lower than the original.

A grievance was submitted asking for an explanation in relation to the score; the only response they received was that PCC could not reveal details of the JESS scoring system.

Cleaners and Craft Gardeners

Following discussions with Green and Clean management throughout 2012, JEQ's were submitted on behalf of Cleaners and Craft Gardeners. Both groups were unsuccessful with re-banding and in response a grievance was submitted by UNITE, which was signed by over 120 members of Green and Clean. The grievance was seeking more clarity around the scoring process and an explanation regarding the higher banding of a post within Green and Clean with a similar level of responsibility. Cleaners and Gardeners felt that they should be on the same band as Bulk Collections and wanted the difference in pay to be explained.

Following feedback from HR both sets of workers continue to be dissatisfied with the explanations given, and this was communicated in writing by UNITE in February 2013.

More recently, a further post has been added into the Green and Clean team. Green Waste collections collect and dispose of waste generated by Craft Gardeners. This work was formally part of the Craft Gardeners band 3 duties, however Green Waste Operatives are currently paid at band 4.

Civil Enforcement Officers (Parking)

CEO'S have had their post evaluated on a number of occasions since the LPR was imposed; this is mainly due to an error being made in April 2009 which placed them onto the wrong spinal point.

The latest evaluation began in the summer of 2012, when CEO's drafted a JEQ. After agreement between all teams, the completed JEQ was submitted to the Parking Manager in November 2012. CEO's were not advised of the outcome of the re-evaluation until September 2013 some 10 months later.

CEO's were unhappy at the outcome of the evaluation, as they feel their post has taken on numerous additional duties since the previous evaluation in 2010, and they believed their post was comparable to that of a Community Warden.

CEO's were given the opportunity to revisit the JEQ with an evaluator and re-submit the paperwork for evaluation, this was intended to be a form of appeal to be added to the current policy but has not yet been implemented. Following this review CEO's remained at band 5 but still feel their post is comparable to that of a Community Warden.

Portage Team

UNISON were contacted by the Portage team in late 2013 seeking advice on pay banding issues.

Portage management believe the Portage bandings need to be reviewed upwards as the job roles had expanded, making the current banding levels unrepresentative of the roles now carried out.

UNISON's advice was sought over how the re-banding of roles was carried out and what information would be of best use/needed. Unfortunately due to lack of transparency as to what information is required, UNISON could not be of much help. However the current process of re-banding was explained.

The overriding issue however for the Portage management and staff, was that due to the nature of funding for many elements of the service (such as outside funding, buying in of services, grants etc.), a re-banding up on the current income could not be sustained, as either services could not be provided (self-defeating), or possible redundancies incurred to an already stretched service.

4. Reasons for suggestions made

The joint unions believe that the examples given above, give a broad idea of the issues our members experience when using the current job evaluation process. The key areas that we feel need to be reviewed are:

Transparency

The current JEQ system is veiled in secrecy once the JEQ is submitted. Following submission, any queries from evaluators are discussed with the line manager, and there is rarely staff involvement at this stage. Once a decision is made, there is little or no feedback. This is highlighted in the case put forward from Green and Clean

Prior to submitting a JEQ, staff should have access to detailed information about the criteria for each pay band. We do not believe that the current generic band descriptors reflect the broad range of duties performed by PCC staff. An example of this is the lack of advice relating to skilled and technical manual work within the band descriptors.

The Joint Unions believe that there should be detailed explanations behind JEQ outcomes, including the release of factor scoring. Currently staff are only informed of the outcome of the evaluation. Scores or explanations are not given unless they are pursued.

A recent case involving Cat 1 Sheltered Housing Managers is a further example of this occurring. Following evaluation, staff have been advised that;

'The post of Scheme Manager Cat 1 has been analysed and I can confirm that the banding has not changed and therefore will remain at Band 5'

'The score range for band 5 is 254-275 and they have come out in the middle of this at 268. Their band will remain at band 5 unless there are significant changes to the roles and responsibilities of the post'

The current system provides no evidence or assurances to staff that their JEQ has been fully understood and marked appropriately.

Process

The current process places control of the JEQ with the line manager. Without any sign off from a line manager, a JEQ cannot proceed. This has led to occurrences where the staff are left with no choice but to accept amendments made by line managers. These disagreements normally revolve around the duties of the post. An appeals process at this stage could be used to resolve disputes over the content of a JEQ.

An issue highlighted in the CEO evaluation, is the lack of defined timescales for the JEQ to be progressed. We understand that the main focus should be to get the JEQ right, but once the JEQ is agreed there should be a set timescale for getting a final outcome. In the CEO's case, the JEQ was sat on the senior manager's desk gathering dust rather than being sent forward for scoring.

Some thought needs to be given to the need for regular re-evaluations of posts, as some posts within PCC haven't been evaluated since the LPR process first began in 2006. These posts may not have seen a single significant change, but may have evolved and developed in the 8 years since they were last looked at by an evaluator.

A formal appeals procedure needs to be introduced for staff that disagree with their JEQ outcome, but this will need a greater level of transparency in the scoring process to enable a fair and informed appeal to take place.

Felt Fair Panels

The current system of Felt Fair Panels needs to be re-thought, as often the panel has a limited understanding of the post being presented as well as a lack of knowledge of other comparable posts.

Felt Fair Panels need a greater understanding of the process of marking JEQs, they also need to be given more detail around the posts being put before them including job profile, service structure etc.

The circumstances under which a post is sent to Felt Fair also needs to be broader. Currently only posts that have been moved up a pay band or have no existing comparator are sent to Felt Fair. The joint unions view is that all posts that are evaluated should be presented to Felt Fair in some form.

The current criteria for sending posts to Felt Fair means none of the examples given in the report were discussed at Felt Fair.

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Signed by: