

## **MANAGEMENT BOARD**

### **2014 House of Commons/PICT Staff survey results covering note**

Note by the Staff Survey Project Team

#### **Purpose**

This note introduces McCallum Layton's survey findings and a more detailed analysis of the staff survey results and proposes a way forward. The free comments are attached for the Board to review.

#### **1. Action for the Management Board**

The Management Board is asked to:

- Consider the key messages from the staff survey results including messages from the free text comments and how these should be addressed. Our recommendations are in paragraph 4 below
- Agree the communications plan, including our proposals to publish the free comments (without departmental indicators) as soon as possible
- Consider any follow-up work the Board feel would be appropriate
- Consider options for future staff surveys.

#### **2. Background**

The outline results were published in the summer, and full corporate results earlier this month. Departments have all received their own detailed results, and TUS have received a full set. All that remains to be issued now are the departmental results to all staff (as last year), the interactive tool made available to all staff (as last year), and the free comments (as last year).

### 3 Key issues

The issues covered in the Executive Summary provided by McCallum Layton give the Management Board a clear indication of the 'hot topics' that are affecting the staff of the House of Commons/PICT this year. These key issues are as follows:

#### 3.1 *Pay & Terms & Conditions*

3.1.1 Following the A to E pay settlement, the strength of feeling on pay and conditions is much reduced. But the Management Board should be aware that there are pockets of the workforce that are feeling anxious about the impending changes to working hours and harmonisation of some terms and conditions.

#### 3.2 *Advancement*

3.2.1 There has been some improvements in the perception of opportunities for advancement by staff. The open comments suggest that some staff perceive that some colleagues are appointed to posts because their 'face fits' and not necessarily based on merit or ability. This resonates with some of the comments in last year's survey where some staff felt a lack of trust and confidence in some recruitment processes.

3.2.2 There is evidence in this year's survey that the competency framework is causing concern for some staff. Primarily, a number of comments suggest that at least some staff think that it is not fit for purpose for some roles. That said, over 70% of staff have completed the competency diagnostic to date and the overall feedback has been positive.

#### 3.3 *Handling bullying/harassment*

Belief that incidents of bullying and harassment would be tackled effectively has improved this year. Contributory factors to this improvement might include the development of the new Respect Policy<sup>1</sup> and greater support networks for line managers including the Milestones to Management programme, the HR Advisory Service and the Workplace Equality Networks.

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<sup>1</sup> But NB the new policy had not yet been launched when the fieldwork was carried out

## 4 Recommendations

- (a) **Pay & Terms and Conditions.** The pay deal was front-loaded to give upfront benefits, with the elements about time recording and working hours beginning to take effect from November (followed by increases in working hours next year). This can be expected to be unpopular, particularly with some groups of staff, and DHRC are drawing up guidance, and are working with Marianne Cwynarski on the communications aspects. BMG will oversee this.

(b) **Advancement**

There is recognition that opportunities for advancement have improved since 2012; but perceptions of prospects for advancement are still low. Many staff believe that their prospects are adversely affected by factors beyond their control. From the free comments, reasons vary between a belief that recruitment processes favour particular groups and/or that managers are predisposed to particular applicants. Another concern is that managers are sometimes perceived to give favoured staff opportunities for temporary promotion which are not open to others.

General worries like this can be difficult to validate, and do not necessarily mean a system is unfair. Indeed, recent grievances to this effect have not been upheld.

The People Strategy encourages and supports management in building the capability to use management discretion fairly, and the competency framework will over the coming months strengthen the ability to recruit on a consistent basis. We will continue to adapt the framework to take account of different job roles while balancing this with a consistent House-wide approach. Meanwhile, we suggest asking McCallum Layton to do further investigatory work with those who have expressed dissatisfaction (see para 6.2 below).

(c) **Handling bullying/harassment**

The new Respect Policy was launched before the summer break, and there is a full programme of briefings and training this autumn. Continuing Management Board support for the Respect Policy training is needed, to ensure that the message goes out clearly that it is OK to complain about unwanted treatment, and that it will be dealt with sensitively and properly.

## 5 Handling and Publication

We propose:

Date	To whom	To include
03.10.14	All staff – via email	Email from Management Board to (i) introduce the free comments and the survey results from each individual department; and (ii) set out plans for further follow-up  (all reports and results to be available on intranet including open comments without the departmental identifier. In addition, the interactive tool will be made available to staff to allow them to interrogate the results.)
w/c 06.10.14	Gary Inman – liP	Exec. Summary, all reports and open comments including departmental identifier

## 6 Follow-up Work

The Management Board are asked to consider any follow-up work that might be beneficial and/or appropriate in relation to the key issues detailed above. McCallum Layton did not identify any issues this year that they feel would benefit from qualitative follow-up work.

6.1 The total amount budgeted for the 3-year contract was £78,390. This means there is a budget of £11,000 for qualitative follow-up work in 2014. Please see breakdown of three year costs below.

Survey year	Online survey	Qual follow-up
2012	£22,330 (incl set-up)	£9,000
2013	£12,430	£11,200
2014	£12,430	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£47,190</b>	<b>£20,200</b>
	<b>£67,390</b>	

6.2 One area which could be explored is the perceptions of staff around fairness in recruitment. Follow-up work by McCallum Layton with those who have expressed concerns could help us understand the issues better (including whether this feeling is prevalent in some areas rather than others). If, beyond that, McCallum Layton have any remaining capacity within the contract, we suggest it is made available to departments for local follow-up if they wish.

## **7 Future Staff Surveys**

7.1 The 2014 HoC/PICT staff survey was the ninth consecutive year of an annual all-staff survey. Engagement levels with the survey during this time have remained consistent with percentage response rates ranging between the mid 50's and low 60's. This is the final year of the incumbent staff survey contractor McCallum Layton.

7.2 If we wish to repeat a similar approach with fieldwork next May/June, we need to start the process to engage a contractor straight away. Options to consider are:

- (i) Continue with annual staff survey on a census basis
- (ii) Move to an annual staff survey on a sample 'department' basis
- (iii) Move to an annual staff survey on a sample 'theme(s)' basis – probably to a proportion of staff House-wide, rather than a full census
- (iv) Move to a biennial/periodic staff survey – census basis

7.3 Our own preference would be for Option (iv), which is a common approach in a number of organisations, and has been suggested to us from time to time by staff and managers here.

***Jo Regan & Gavin Berman  
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