

CITY HOSPITALS SUNDERLAND NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JULY 2007

HR UPDATE

ELECTRONIC STAFF RECORD (ESR)

Weekly and monthly staff have now received their first pay via the new system.

There were only 3 queries for weekly paid staff to the ESR Helpline, none of which were pay related.

The following issues were raised by monthly paid staff -

- Around 10 staff were incorrectly paid, usually where moves to new posts had defaulted them to the minimum of the pay scale
- 2 staff had their hours reduced from the wrong date
- Some pay slips were delivered to the wrong point
- Around 20 staff believed the job titles quoted in their pay slips were incorrect
- A small number of queries about on call and overtime payments and miscellaneous deductions such as parking fees
- 4 staff whose increased hours under Agenda for Change had not been actioned
- 3 staff had incorrect bank details recorded and therefore received late payment of their salary

These issues were investigated and rectified where necessary. Some of the issues were routine queries, which could have arisen prior to ESR being used, with others being due to late or non-communication of details by managers, again unrelated to ESR go-live.

Checks with some key staff side representatives identified that no major issues had been reported by their members, and their view is that the transition has been relatively smooth for the majority of employees.

Financial Management have had some difficulties with ESR, particularly with whole time equivalent reports, and this has been raised with external support teams to identify the reasons for this. Some staff with split cost centres have also appeared incorrectly in Financial Management reports, and this is being investigated. Some staff moves, particularly nursing staff rotations, have not

been reflected within ESR due to non-communication of these changes to the HR team and communications systems are being clarified with relevant managers so that in future ESR holds the correct cost centre.

IPS has not been updated since May 2007 and HR information is not available from the Data Repository system from May 2007 onwards. Standard ESR reports are being identified and tested with external support requested to ensure that these work effectively. It is expected that these will be in use in August 2007.

Whilst all staff have generally worked well with the new system, resolving problems together where necessary, there remain some operational issues, particularly around communication between directorate managers and staff now using ESR. These will be discussed at future ESR Project Team meetings.

Overall the transition is viewed as being successful by the external ESR Support team and further reports will identify progress to make use of the system more effectively.

MODERNISING MEDICAL CAREERS (MMC) UPDATE – MEDICAL TRAINING APPLICATION SERVICE (MTAS)

Following major problems with the MTAS recruitment system for junior doctors in England and the resultant potential difficulties for Trusts and junior doctors at house change on 1 August 2007, the Secretary for State has issued a commitment that additional support will be given where necessary to ensure that no doctors are without jobs on 1 August 2007.

The work required to achieve this has been discussed with the SHA, the Northern Deanery and all Trusts within the Deanery to ensure that an “Employment Opportunity” initiative is rolled out.

CHS’ role is to “make reasonable effort to support employees” – to review the skills of individual doctors and where possible ring-fence and appoint to appropriate employment opportunities, which may not be medical/same posts.

Action for CHS

- 1) Identify doctors at risk, i.e. who do not have jobs for 1 August 2007 house change.
- 2) Confirm their employment status and eligibility for support, i.e. MTAS applicants who are in NHS employment on 31 July and are progressing to Round 2
- 3) Identify employment opportunities within CHS
- 4) Set up a fair and equitable mechanism for recruiting eligible doctors to employment opportunities
- 5) Ensure applicants access counselling and mentoring

Issues for CHS to note:

- Doctors whose contracts extend beyond 31 July 2007 are to continue. If they end before 31 October 2007 these doctors should be offered an employment opportunity
- Employment opportunities should cover a range of options both clinical and non clinical – where CHS can demonstrate the doctor will bring the necessary expertise and work needed by employer.
- The employment opportunity should be from 1 August to 31 October 2007 at the latest
- If the employment offered is considered fair and appropriate, and the doctor turns it down CHS is not obliged to offer another.
- Current contracts should not be extended. This is not an offer of continuity of employment. Notice of termination of contract will be given and a new fixed term contract be issued for the employment opportunity. (A draft offer letter template was received on 18th July).
- An employment opportunity is not:
 - a) A training opportunity
 - b) Specific salary guaranteed – salary will be related to job
 - c) Full time
 - d) Out of hours protected
- CHS should consider using this opportunity to fill gaps in specialties where Round 2 recruitment is expected to take place late in October 2007.

RETROSPECTIVE CRB CHECKS

Employers in the NHS have been urged to carry out background checks on all staff after it emerged that thousands of health service workers have not been vetted.

An investigation by the BBC found that 68% of health Trusts in the UK do not routinely run checks on staff who began working there before the CRB was set up in 2002.

CRB checks have been mandatory for all new staff with access to patients in the course of their normal duties since February 2005. While Trusts are able to carry out checks on workers recruited before that date, they are not required by law to do so.

Children's charities have urged NHS employers to check all staff, prioritising those who work directly with children. But some Trusts have expressed

concern at the cost of funding potentially thousands of extra CRB checks. Enhanced checks currently cost £36 per applicant.

NHS Employers has stated that it hoped the new vetting and barring scheme for people who work with children and vulnerable adults, due to be introduced in Autumn 2008, would make a difference.

The Department of Health said it was working with NHS Employers to develop guidance relating to staff who were employed before mandatory CRB checks were introduced.

FLEXIBLE WORKING QUALITY MARK/NATIONAL WORK FROM HOME DAY

Employer groups have wholeheartedly backed a Quality Mark recently launched by skills envoy, Sir Digby Jones to enable businesses to improve recruitment and retention rates by offering flexible working.

The CBI and the British Chamber of Commerce have joined the TUC and the EOC as official supporters of the initiative. Under the new mark, organisations can gain a recognition stamp for introducing 'smarter working' practices, such as non-standard hours and home working, into their workplace.

Jones, former director-general of the CBI, claimed the stamp would help organisations attract top employees. Businesses registering for the seal of approval will have their operational, client and employee benefits working practices assessed by not-for-profit body Work Wise UK over a 2-day period.

Friday 18 May 2007 was national 'Work from Home Day', which was part of a week-long campaign to encourage the widespread adoption of smarter working practices.

The initiative was supported by the CBI, TUC and British Chamber of Commerce.

Research published last week found up to a third of the UK's employees now work outside traditional working hours. This is mainly due to developments in technology, which are enabling people to work virtually anywhere.

Telecoms giant BT, one of the UK's biggest employers, has long promoted the benefits of flexible working and it is now the norm across its 100k workforce.

The HR Department is currently reviewing the Trust's Flexible Working Policy including, in conjunction with the Head of IM&T, the development of proposals for a home working policy. It is expected that these proposals will be presented later this year.

EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

City Hospitals has recently been visited by a Disability Employment Adviser from Jobcentre Plus, and has completed documentation to apply for reaccreditation of "2 tick" Symbol Status, which it received in 1995 to recognise positive practice within the employment of disabled people. This applies not only to its work to treat current employees who become disabled in a positive manner, but also to positive practice in recruiting people with disabilities.

The Adviser has indicated that City Hospitals has taken forward initiatives under the Disability Discrimination Act and its amendments, to further its practices to promote positive employment practices, with its work on impact assessment of employment policies being further advanced than the practices of many other employers within the area. Work which is currently underway is reviewing the way in which procedures operate in both recruiting and retaining disabled people, to ensure these work effectively in practice.

The Trust expects to hear formally within the next few weeks whether it has received reaccreditation of its "two tick" symbol status.

EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE

Disability Rights Commission Names And Shames 65 Public Authorities For Failing To Produce A Disability Equality Scheme

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has named and shamed 65 public authorities that have failed to provide evidence of a disability equality scheme, which is required under the disability equality duty, despite a deadline of December 2006 and subsequent warning letters.

Local councils, health trusts, colleges, universities, museums and fire services were among those warned by the DRC at the beginning of March 2007. However at the end of March 2007, 65 bodies had still not provided any evidence that the required schemes were in place.

The duty is meant to ensure that all public bodies pay "due regard" to the promotion of equality for disabled people in every area of their work, including employment.

The DRC will now be considering issuing compliance notices to offending organisations, which could lead to court action. The naming and shaming exercise follows an audit carried out by the Government's Office for Disability Issues, to check whether disability equality schemes had been published.

The DRC, which is responsible for enforcing the duty, is currently revising its list of those that do not comply.

'Super-Union' Unite Plans To Boost Membership By Targeting Casual Workers And The Young

New super-union Unite will measure its success in numbers, attempting to boost its membership by targeting casual staff and the young.

The union, approximately 2 million-strong, which was formed on 1 May 2007, by the merger of the Transport and General Workers' Union (T&G) and Amicus will use 10% of its £150m annual income to unionise new workers.

Tony Woodley, the joint general secretary of the UK's biggest union has stated that he wants to stem the decline of what was T&G and Amicus, which he sees as the result of the 'casualisation' of the UK's workforce and that Unite would fight for non-permanent workers' rights and fair treatment of young people.

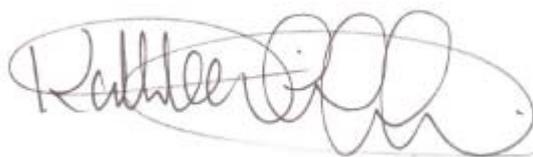
Unite was launched on 1 May, which was International Workers' Day and will have significant power in private sectors including transport, manufacturing, aviation and finance.

UNITE IN NUMBERS

Sector	Members
Manufacturing	660,000
Public Services	250,000
Transport	250,000
Finance	200,000
Engineering	150,000
Automotive	120,000
Food, Drink & Tobacco	100,000
Others	240,000

RECOMMENDATION

Directors are asked to note the content of this report.



Kath Griffin
Director of Human Resources

Ken Bremner
Chief Executive

