

Human Resources Strategy

Scottish Information Commissioner



Scottish Information
Commissioner

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Glossary and abbreviations

Term used	Explanation
The Commissioner	The Scottish Information Commissioner
HR	Human Resources

Introduction

1. This document sets out the Commissioner's vision of how the organisation manages HR in support of their strategic aims:

The Commissioner's office will:

1. support the on-going development of Scottish public sector culture and practice where the sharing and disclosing information is routine, and which actively serves openness, transparency and the public interest
2. help people to be familiar with their rights to access information and exercise them knowledgeably and responsibly
3. enable and support Scottish public authorities to develop and maintain high standards of FOI policy and practice. We will do this through a combination of regulation, advice and assistance, and appropriate collaboration. This includes promoting and embedding FOI in good communication, excellent customer service, creation and management of records and in supporting efficient, equitable and accountable delivery of statutory functions
4. contribute positively to Scotland being respected as a world-leader in openness, transparency, and access to information law, policy and practice. Including supporting the development of Scottish access to information law to ensure it remains fit for purpose
5. be recognised as an organisation of accessible experts, that is run efficiently, governed effectively and leads by example in the delivery of its statutory functions. We will ensure that delivery of our functions meets and keeps pace with recognised standards and national public service improvements, and is delivered openly and transparently.

2. The HR strategy sets out what the Commissioner aims to achieve with, and for, staff at all levels and in doing so provides a framework for the focus and setting of operational objectives and activity to develop people and talent.
3. The development areas identified in this document form the basis of an activity list, which will be prioritised and delivered through the operational plan.

Vision

4. Freedom of Information law sits at the heart of what we do: staff sit at the heart of who we are and how we deliver what we do.
5. The Commissioner is committed to their staff and to providing them with a challenging but motivating and enjoyable place to work. The Commissioner seeks to challenge and support every individual to achieve their personal goals and organisational objectives in an environment of mutual openness, consideration and co-operation.
6. The Commissioner and the Senior Management Team will do this through the organisation's HR systems and practices, under the strategic themes of:
 - (i) Excellent leadership
 - (ii) Developing and managing talent
 - (iii) Promoting workplace diversity and equality

- (iv) Active and effective workforce and resource planning
- (v) Communication - talking and listening to each other
- (vi) Performance management and accountability

Human Resources – Strategic Themes

Leadership

7. We aim to inspire and motivate the organisation to achieve excellence and push the boundaries. We want to create an environment in which we are unafraid of being open to well-managed risk.
8. We recognise the need for strategy and vision which defines who we are as a team and where we are going, but also focus on operational management. We manage our operational objectives, plans and targets which have explicit links to strategic and operational plans. To achieve our leadership aims we :
 - Ensure our leaders have the skills, knowledge and experience to be excellent leaders (and managers)
 - Expect our leaders to have clear objectives that can be defined and measured to show effective leadership
 - Lead by example
 - Review, monitor and report on our achievements positively, critically and fairly, learning from practice, and recognising and acknowledging success

Developing and managing talent

9. We have talented teams and talented individuals. Our aim is to develop the individual and our teams so they contribute to the achievement of both team and personal aims, and feel empowered to do so. As an organisation we will create opportunities to enable learning and development, working in partnership with staff at all levels. We aim to have a workforce whose expertise is recognised and acknowledged widely.
10. We already provide training to a high standard and seize opportunities to do a lot with little resource and we:
 - Ensure we have a comprehensive learning and development plan that incorporates; individual learning and development (L&D) objectives from personal development plans (which include professional CPD), team development, management development, statutory annual training and other organisation-wide training.
 - Define both performance and quality standards and targets, and ensure staff have the skills to deliver them and measure against them.
 - Ensure we have a consistent approach to training and induction of new staff, or staff changing jobs.

- Monitor the effectiveness of L&D activity.

11. To achieve our L&D aims we need to:

- Understand what our L&D needs are at both individual and team level, through such approaches as an organisation-wide training needs analysis and/ or skills audit to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Continue to develop and refine our approach to setting performance and quality standards and targets, and to ensuring staff have the skills to deliver them and measure against them
- Ensure our communications strategy includes the sharing and dissemination of good practice and learning.
- Benchmark our approach, L&D costs and activity against other organisations.

Promoting workplace diversity and equality

12. We aim to promote diversity and equality actively in everything we do, say and publish, and be recognised for our culture and commitment to the dignity of the individual and best HR practice.

13. We are proud of our inclusive culture which is reflected in our HR policies and procedures, and approach. We demonstrate recognised good practice in critical areas such as recruitment and in providing equalities training.

14. To achieve our diversity and equality aims for HR we need to:

- Review and update as needed our equality policy to ensure that it positively promotes and encourages diversity and equality in the way we manage HR.
- Review and update as needed the systems (including policies and procedures) by which we manage HR, to ensure we give a positive message about how we promote and deliver diversity and equality
- Ensure that all strategic decisions, and policies impacting HR are equality impact assessed
- Review the systems in place for monitoring, reporting on and promoting equality and diversity to ensure they are proactive rather than reactive.

Workforce and resource planning

15. We aim to monitor and plan resources actively, embedding a risk-based approach to forward planning and contingency management.

16. We monitor and plan HR in a structured, forward-looking way. We ensure we are well-informed by taking into account projections of business volumes, budgets, contingencies and the need for business continuity. As part of this approach we:

- Review staffing structures and levels regularly in light of current and forecast workloads bearing in mind the budget restrictions imposed on us by the SPCB and that the level of allocated funding is not totally within our control.

- Have an effective management reporting system to enable the SMT to monitor and review key workforce statistics such as staff in post (headcount and FTE) vacancies, absence and sickness levels, grievance and disciplinary actions, staff turnover, use of external consultants and agency workers.
- Update our contingency plans for succession and business continuity
- Review the Employee Handbook and other HR policies annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose and compliant with legislation.
- Take a risk-based approach that ensures we have in place adequate arrangements to mitigate the risk arising from funding arrangements. This risk includes the relationships with external stakeholders, a reduced work-force that concentrates a range of functions in fewer individuals, and our ability to fund statutory, mandatory and strategically important functions.

Ensure our approach automatically considers the impact of decisions, policies and business development on HRs and workloads.

Communication – talking and listening to each other

17. We aim to work in an organisation where regular, open and constructive communication is used and encouraged and embed this in our policies and practices where possible. We will listen with empathy and speak with respect.
18. We already encourage openness and try to consult with the whole organisation at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way on a range of issues that affect us. We have good communication tools such as our internal blog, but recognise that we also need to consider how effective we are at listening.
19. We talk and listen, and consult with staff over a range of issues, policies and proposals.

Performance management and accountability

20. We aim to be in a position where we set all staff and managers challenging but realistic objectives, derived from personal and corporate aims, which contribute demonstrably to the success of the organisation,.
21. We have a proportionate and effective performance management system which covers:
 - What the business is trying to achieve
 - Individuals' roles in helping the business achieve its goals
 - The skill and competencies individuals need to fulfil their role
 - The standards of performance required
 - How individuals can develop their performance and contribute to development of the organisation
 - How individuals are doing
 - Identifying when there are performance problems and what to do about them.

22. We have robust staff governance and management policies and systems in place that ensure the performance and development framework is applied consistently and to all levels in the organisation.

23. To achieve our HR performance management aims, we need to:

- Ensure our performance and development framework is reviewed regularly, outcomes monitored and reported on, and every individual made aware they are empowered to dedicate time and resource to operating it to the standards required
- Ensure we have the competencies to do our jobs efficiently, effectively and economically

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