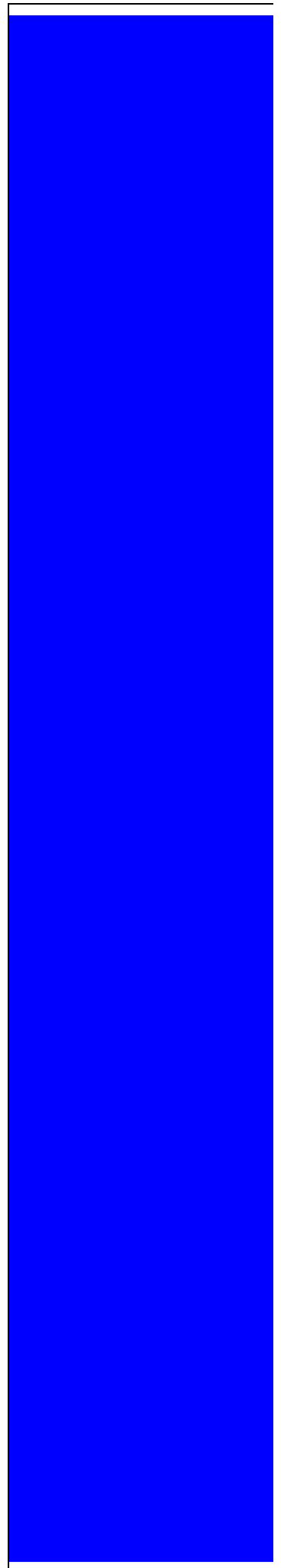


December 2003

**THE HUMAN RESOURCE  
STRATEGY FOR  
THE SCOTTISH LEGAL AID  
BOARD 2003 to 2006**

**The key to quality people  
management**



# SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD

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# THE STRATEGY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The HR vision for the Scottish Legal Aid Board is to “recruit and retain a well-motivated, well-trained and capable workforce to meet changing business strategy and employee needs”. The purpose of the Human Resources Strategy is to provide a framework to assist change, and to identify the people management priorities required to ensure that the strategic aims of the Board are met. Our HR strategy is therefore drafted to help us ensure that we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time.

This document is intended to be multi-purpose, providing relevant information to audiences with differing requirements in relation to our people management practices. This section provides information relating to the key goals in support of the Board's Corporate plan 2003-06. Behind each of these goals is the required tasks and for each. These are detailed by section in Appendix 2

## 2 THE CONTEXT

### 2.1 Developments

Our previous HR strategy was issued in June 2000 and the main achievements in people management terms since then include:

- ✓ a more adequately and appropriately resourced workforce including major re-structuring of the Applications area and developments in many others such as Policy, Audit & Compliance
- ✓ successfully recruiting good quality staff within the benchmark timescales in a very tight labour market, and retaining them, reducing our staff turnover during the last three years, from 21% to 13%
- ✓ substantially improved operational performance.
- ✓ implementation of a new performance management system, incorporating a new pay & grading structure with much more competitive pay levels, with real pay progression and better recognition of performance and competence
- ✓ implementation of a work-life balance scheme for staff which has improved productivity, staff morale and flexibility
- ✓ despite experiencing major change, an employee opinion survey in 2003, showing significantly increased staff satisfaction in key areas
- ✓ improved and more supportive environment work environment and occupational health and safety practices, and a reduction in sickness absence from 10.2 days to 7.8 days for every full-time equivalent employee
- ✓ more flexible career structures and active encouragement of training and personal development

## 2.2 Corporate Goals

As indicated in the Corporate Plan 2003-06, the Board anticipates significant changes in access to justice and the operation of legal aid during the next three years, a period of accelerated and increasingly complex change. The Board expects by March 2006 to have a very different organisation operating a substantially revised and improved legal aid service where:

- we will improve the effectiveness of the delivery of our service while achieving a reasonable balance between cost and quality
- we negotiate sufficient funds to pay competitive remuneration to recruit and retain good quality staff
- we will have fewer staff overall in core areas, with staff numbers that are expected to fall to around 280 by 2006 (assuming current workloads and excluding staffing for CLS, Part V, Civil reform, PDSO and other major developments) with the remaining staff being more specialist and at a higher level, focussing on achieving added value, rather than simply processing paper
- we expect to have substantially reduced numbers of administrative staff especially in Applications, Accounts and Facilities, mainly as a result of the investment in e-business and increased use of digital records. However, more of our staff will have skills in facilitation and project management, and we expect to have additional staff working in policy, research and possibly IS support.
- we remain at our current main premises due to the cost implications (current leases on our main premises run until 2015, and 2014) and the negative impact on our core operations that could result from a move. However, with the move to e-business for legal aid and increased use of digital records within the Board, we expected to see a growth in staff being able to work from other locations including working from home. This could also lead to increased efficiency and assist recruitment and retention of staff. We also expect to consider locations outside Edinburgh for new business activities, e.g. CLS.
- most of our internal/external communications are conducted by e-mail, whilst recognising and managing the increased data security risks associated with this.

## 2.3 Other influences

In developing the HR strategy we have taken account of remaining areas of concern highlighted by staff through the Employee Opinion Survey, undertaken in March 2003, such as improving cross departmental communications and working.

The significant changes required by the Board's e-business project focus our attention on the transformation of the Board's business from paper-based to digital systems.

We have also endeavored to align the strategy to the objectives set by the Scottish Executive for public bodies under Modernising Government and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Government initiatives.

## 3. KEY GOALS

Mindful of the context described above, and having conducted analyses of our current staff profile and arrangements (see Appendix 1), the HR Strategy contains several key goals. The required tasks in support of these and relevant priorities are more fully addressed within a working document that is Appendix 2 (sections 1 to 8).

## KEY HR GOALS

### We will:

- 1. Manage the change in workforce composition with an overall reduction in staff numbers, mainly as a result of the impact of e-business, but with increasing requirements for more specialist staff. Recruit the best available people for each job, having become better able to compete in the local job market.
- 2. Develop a more customer-focused work force, recognising the changing nature of many of our jobs and in particular, the changing skills required as the Board moves from a paper-based to a digital environment.
- 3. Endeavor to retain those employees whom we can and wish to keep, providing them with further skills development in line with changing business needs.
- 4. Ensure that our employees are communicated with effectively so they feel trusted, listened to, and involved.
- 5. Provide increased opportunities for flexibility of working, in terms of location and patterns of work, to meet changing business needs and the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce.
- 6. Continue to develop our employee reward and recognition package, ensuring that there is a correlation with efforts and results achieved.
- 7. Be considered as a fair, caring organisation, keeping abreast of changing employment legislation and providing a supportive work environment.
- 8. Contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness by reviews of HR services and HR management practices throughout the Board.

## 4. DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

### 4.1 Implementation

Our HR Strategy is reviewed every three years in line with the Corporate Plan to reflect changes in priorities and objectives. Progress against the tasks in support of our goals will be monitored throughout each year with direct links to annual Operational and HR Plans. More generally we will also be aware and respond appropriately to any risks and opportunities for the Board as public body within Edinburgh. This will include such broad areas as: ministerial policy on relocation of NDPBs in Scotland; shifts in the number and type of employers in the local market with whom we compete for staff; housing and transport policies; retirement ages; and other relevant issues as they arise.

### 4.2 Responsibility for people management

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has recently published the results of a study<sup>1</sup> of the link between how people are managed and organisational

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<sup>1</sup> *Understanding the People and Performance Link: Unlocking the black box*, CIPD Publications May 2003

performance. One of the critical conclusions of this study is that the most carefully thought through HR strategy is a waste of time unless it is embraced by line managers who have the skills and understanding necessary to engage and motivate employees.

The implementation of this HR Strategy involves the whole Board and is not simply an issue for HR specialists. HR specialists and other managers will need to work closely together to deliver this strategy, ensuring effective resource planning, and re-training/ re-deploying where necessary in order to avoid redundancies (unless in exceptional situations). All managers will need to be able to manage change effectively and be aware of and understand the Board's overall HR and e-HR strategies. This requires a refocus with new approaches to leadership and management of staff across the Board, and a major commitment to supporting staff throughout change.

#### **4.3 Resources**

Existing resources of management and HR specialists employed at the Board will deliver the HR strategy. External resources or expertise may be introduced, but only if identified to be the most cost effective solution. The identification of resources required to deliver the HR strategy will be incorporated within the Board's operational planning process.

We want a strategically focused Human Resource service in support of operational management. The Oracle HR system, linking Payroll, HR activities and data, introduces the potential for future web-usage. This may allow future use of the Intranet for devolved transactional HR activities, with self-serve access for employees and managers. These developments would allow further targetting of HR resources away from administrative activities towards working in partnership with managers.

#### **4.4 Measures of Success**

The success criteria for the HR Strategy are outlined below although it will be necessary to review these and set more specific outcomes as time progresses:

- Adjusted staff numbers and skills mix in line with key goals
- Maintaining lower staff turnover and sickness absence levels
- Benchmarked HR processes compare well against comparable organisations
- Maintaining increased employee satisfaction in key areas
- Having increased diverse working opportunities
- More flexible reward & recognition policies that promote good performance

#### **4.5 Risks**

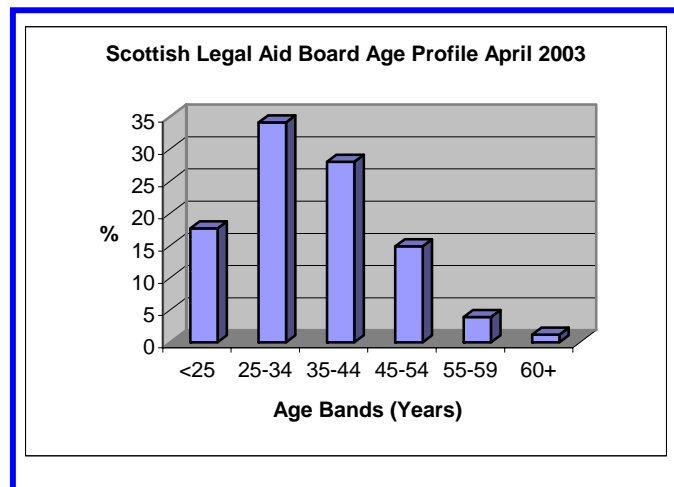
The key risks that would affect our ability to deliver the HR Strategy have been identified as:

- Grant-in-Aid must be at a level to allow us in 2005 and beyond pay competitive remuneration to recruit and retain good quality staff.
- Over the next 2-3 years the scale and pace of change will be high, which could put a strain on our available management resources, risking the timeous delivery of some objectives

## Appendix 1. Staff Profile and Planning for the future

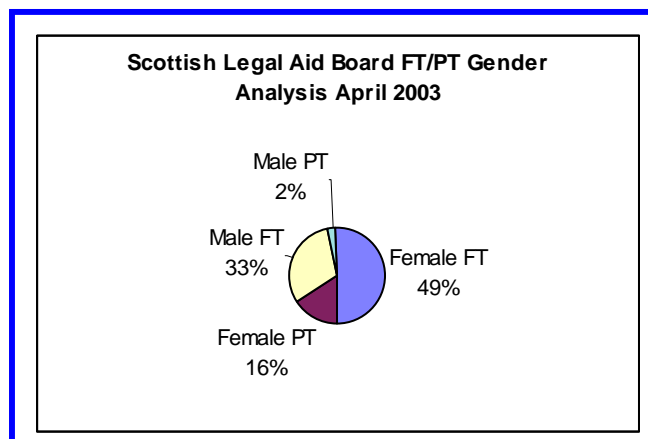
### 1. Age

The current age profile of the Board workforce highlights the need to look forward and plan to avoid a skills gap in the future. Currently approximately 20% of staff are over 45 years of age and about 50 % are under 35. The Board's heavy reliance on a relatively young staff will need to change due to changing population demographics where there is less under 35's available to recruit in already competitive market. The Board will need to consider a design of jobs and benefits that are attractive to an older workforce.



### 2. Gender and Hours

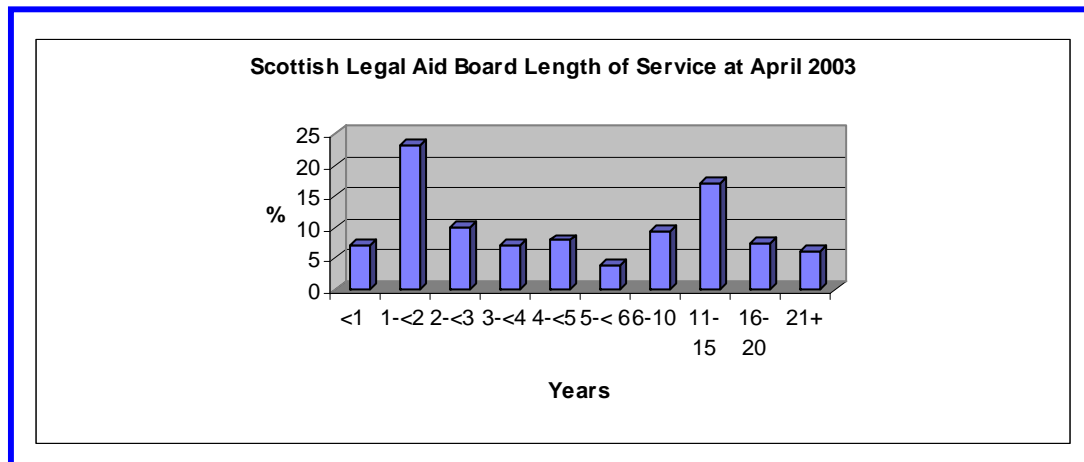
The current composition of the workforce is shown in the chart below:



There are currently approximately twice as many women employees than men, including the majority of full-time workers. Part-time workers are dominated by women where they outnumber men by around 8 to 1. This pattern appears to be in line with that in similar Scottish public sector organisations.

### 3. Length of Service

70% of staff have ten years or less service to the Board and less than 15% have been in the Board's employment for more than 15 years. Current staff turnover (excluding temporary positions not replaced) is 13.3 %.



#### 4. Market

At April 2003, the overall unemployment rate in Edinburgh City was 2.5% (males 3.8%; females 1.1%). This compares with a national rate for Scotland of 3.3% (4.9% males; 1.6% females). In Edinburgh, 30% of jobs are in Finance and Business sectors (almost double the Scottish average). The Board is operating in a very competitive labour market for administrative jobs, placing considerable pressures on recruitment and retention across a range of posts.

Given the age profile of existing staff and the labour market pressures, the Board needs to develop strategies to attract and retain key staff. Different approaches will be required to accommodate the impact of Board policy developments, changing patterns of service delivery, organisational performance, and job requirements.

## Appendix 2: HR GOALS

<b>Goal 1</b> <b>We will:</b>	<b>➤ <i>Manage the change in workforce composition with an overall reduction in staff numbers, mainly as a result of the impact of e-business but with increasing requirements for more specialist staff. Recruit the best available people for each job, having become better able to compete in the local job market.</i></b>
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We still operate in a very tight labour market and, although we now have lower staff turnover, we aim not to make any employee redundant unless in exceptional circumstances. A number of key tasks will be required in order to achieve this goal.

### **TASKS**

We will:

- conduct regular meetings between Directors and key line managers and HR, to better understand the impact of progress and to review the people issues
- develop a detailed Staffing Plan (identifying key posts required in the longer term and the options for filling internally) by March 2004
- plan to fill all administrative vacancies on a temporary basis

Then:

- monitor changes in the Edinburgh Labour Market, including the demographic profile, ensuring that our recruitment activities are targeted to appeal to the available labour pool
- further develop recruitment mechanisms, with consideration of on-line recruitment, and also to enhance the Board's profile as a "good employer"
- increase job flexibility and mobility within and between departments - in particular between the key operational areas
- develop career maps of jobs by October 2004 to assist individuals in their future job options within the Board and elsewhere
- develop best practice networks at all levels to share good practice and learn from other organisations

## Appendix 2: HR GOALS (cont.)

<b>Goal 2 We will:</b>	<b><i>Develop a more customer-focused work force, recognising the changing nature of many of our jobs and in particular, the changing skills required as the Board moves from a paper-based to a digital environment.</i></b>
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The Board's workforce operates under a range of management styles, practices and procedures. The Board is aligning its organisation, structures and staff resources to meet changing service demands. In particular, the Board's ICT strategy and e-Business project aims to provide joined-up service delivery and will mean changes to the way many staff currently work.

Key to successful service delivery, is the creation and maintenance of a fully committed, flexible and motivated workforce. The HR strategy focuses on identifying ways of releasing the full potential of staff to deliver quality services to customers.

### **TASKS**

We will:

- Provide on-going training in the use of new facilities, equipment and procedures, including the new information systems software that will be rolled out as part of the e-Business project and other systems developments.
- Conduct, through internal consultancy, management and organisation reviews. We will assess and ensure that resources are matched to the requirements of the business, and make recommendations regarding the relevant roles and grades of staff required by new processes and procedures.
- Following the design of new jobs, identify new skills required; conduct a skills audit to match existing skills; upgrade skills or re-deploy employees.
- Continue to use staff and customer feedback information to assist with service improvement e.g. targeted department surveys, questionnaires to staff and customers, feedback of exit interviews.
- Promote customer care throughout the organisation, ensuring that staff are trained in customer-care and quality issues.

Then :

- Develop further mechanisms for broadening staff knowledge and awareness of Board services.
- Identify suitable opportunities for secondments or cross-discipline team working to broaden inter-departmental understanding and to provide opportunities to challenge and refresh key staff.
- Investigate the opportunities for in-house solicitors to be seconded, on an exchange or one-way basis, to firms of solicitors.
- Discuss with managers/Exec Team / Board to identify/re-visit the Board's values, to then integrate (if agreed) into our policies.
- Review the effectiveness of the current suggestion scheme "Bright Ideas" and require managers to promote and encourage innovation.

## Appendix 2: HR GOALS (cont.)

<b>Goal 3 We will:</b>	<b><i>Endeavor to retain those employees whom we can and wish to keep, providing them with further skills development in line with changing business needs.</i></b>
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The Board has long had an environment where learning is supported and it has achieved and retained Investors in People recognition since 1998. In a climate of change, on-going learning needs to be continually promoted, to ensure that employees are equipped to carry out their jobs successfully delivering a good service to customers. We now want employees to be more proactive in their individual development. In addition to the informal learning that takes place, we want line managers to encourage greater participation in other relevant training and development activities, with a focus on externally recognised qualifications.

### **TASKS**

We will:

- Ensure ongoing delivery of first line management development training and launch a leadership and management development programme for senior/middle managers to encourage and support the development of leadership and management skills.
- Ensure ongoing involvement by Executive Team with middle managers via their “mentoring groups” and arrange managers’ away days for middle managers at least 3 times per year to to develop a consistent “management style”, share knowledge and to ensure consistent communication of current issues.
- Identify minimum IT skills and knowledge requirements for all jobs, ensuring that a minimum standard of training and competence is achieved across the Board.
- Promote externally recognised qualifications and encourage staff to undertake these wherever relevant as part of our training delivery activities.

Then:

- Review the competency framework within the performance management system to ensure that it is aligned with future organisational requirements.
- Identify and promote opportunities for secondments/mentoring arrangements for senior/middle managers internally and with other/partner organisations by 2004.
- Ensure a process for the identification of “stars” and for managing their career paths with opportunities for movement across departments.
- Provide a wider range of development opportunities/ training interventions including e-learning, shadowing, mentoring, and secondments.
- Continue to encourage staff to seek opportunities for self-directed learning, which will enhance personal or work-oriented performance.
- Consider the provision of on-line induction materials by 2006.

## Appendix 2: HR GOALS (cont.)

<b>Goal 4 We will:</b>	<b><i>Ensure that our employees are communicated with effectively so they feel trusted, listened to, and involved.</i></b>
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Effective employee communication is one of the major components of successful management and is one of the main areas identified as requiring improvement in the recent employee opinion survey. As with all aspects of people management, line managers need to accept responsibility for, embrace the need for, and develop the skills to ensure good employee communications within the Board.

Policies are needed to ensure communications are enhanced in all directions across the organisation. Structures must be put in place that allow people to work together, both within and between departments, and to communicate with the minimum of bureaucracy. Work is needed to promote faster decision-making, shorter communication paths, team working, innovation and delegation.

### **TASKS**

We will:

- Support the work of the Communications Division in devising and delivering the Internal Communications Strategy with initiatives such as:
  - further development of staff feedback mechanisms including further employee attitude surveys (scheduled initially for January 2005)
  - investigating the potential need/benefits possibly establish a Board-wide staff panel or revised JCC
  - fully embedding the Boardwide cascade team briefing system
  - the development of other internal face-to-face communication opportunities, such as seminars, question time sessions and Chief Executive's departmental visits
  - conducting a detailed analysis of departmental best practice in internal communications
  - establishing a Board-wide Intranet
  - extending the use of e-mail, intranet and other communication methods to relay messages quickly to all staff members, e.g. "Newsflashes" or briefings from the Chief Executive; the publication of "Briefly" on a monthly basis; the briefing system from the Executive Team to Board Managers; the Recorder
  - considering a wider range of communication tools to ensure equal access to information e.g. to those staff with disabilities.

Then:

- Ensure that concerns raised through various staff communications, including employee opinion surveys and exit interviews, are acted upon and fed in to any review of this Strategy, and the future development of policies, practices and procedures.
- Facilitate the use of new document management methods
- Produce a revised Staff Handbook by January 2004 followed by comprehensive internal guidelines for managers by 2005
- Improve communication mechanisms to enable cultural change, and integrate employee communication into mainstream management, with monitoring and evaluation to measure the success of communication exercises

## Appendix 2: HR GOALS (cont.)

<b>Goal 5 We will:</b>	<i>Provide increased opportunities for flexibility of working, in terms of location and patterns of work, to meet changing business needs and the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce.</i>
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We aim to have a workforce who can be flexible in their hours of work **to match business requirements** in each of the differing business areas. As we gradually move further away from a predominantly young full-time workforce, we aim to provide the flexibility that is attractive to our more diverse workforce, making them motivated, productive and viewing us as their “employer of choice”. Managers will be required to positively manage flexible working arrangements.

### **TASKS**

We will:

- Carry out an interim review of Phase 2 of the Work-Life Balance project October 2003, and produce a final report and recommendations for the Executive Team/Board by June 2004

Then:

- Further develop work/life balance opportunities, examining the scope for alternative ways of working e.g. home based working and supportive work patterns (by June 2004).
- Revise terms and conditions of employment and contracts for all staff in 2004 in light of flexible working requirements.
- Provide improved work time-capture system that can be used easily at local level and for corporate needs.
- Develop other employment policies which encourage a good work-life balance, that are family friendly or opportunity friendly, such as a career break policy.

## Appendix 2: HR GOALS (cont.)

<b>Goal 6 We will:</b>	<b><i>Continue to develop our employee reward and recognition package, ensuring that there is a correlation with efforts and results achieved.</i></b>
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The Board's current reward package, following major changes last year, provides staff with competitive, fair and equitable base pay; recognises performance and competence; offers good quality secure and affordable pension arrangements; offers scope for work/life balance alternatives; encourages active training and personal development in an improving working environment. However, the Edinburgh employment market is expected to remain very competitive and the Board must remain in a position to compete for good quality staff.

To enable managers to continue to motivate, reward appropriately and retain employees, further development of the reward strategy is needed to keep it fresh and appreciated by employees. The intent therefore is to provide staff with a flexible total reward package that allows personal preferences in the selection of benefits from an overall menu; offers more scope for work/life balance alternatives; and recognises team achievements.

### **TASKS**

We will:

- Conduct an equal pay audit, producing an action plan by July 2003.
- Assess the appropriateness of, and update the system of job evaluation.
- Ensure that the Performance Management system is aligned with future organisational requirements, and that it is used as the driver for managing performance - review by December 2003.

Then:

- Review the Board's existing pension arrangements including stakeholder, AVC arrangements, and preparation for retirement, with a view to enhancing provisions.
- Review terms & conditions of service, with increased flexibility of contracts following Work-Life Balance project outcomes.
- Examine the scope for the development of team-based incentive reward systems and some individual choice from a menu of flexible benefits, providing choice to employees and maximising the perceived value of the benefits package.
- Review ways of recognising and communicating employee achievements, by June 2004.
- Harmonise benefits by April 2005
- Develop proposals for further support of the Sports, Social and Charities Club.
- Continue to gather data from existing staff and from exit interviews in order to respond to employees' concerns.

## Appendix 2: HR GOALS (cont.)

<b>Goal 7</b>	<b><i>Be considered as a fair, caring organisation, keeping abreast of changing employment legislation and providing a supportive work environment.</i></b>
<b>We will:</b>	

To ensure that staff remain motivated and committed to the work of the Board they must feel supported in and valued for what they do. Actively being seen as a fair caring organisation will contribute to the development of a sense of loyalty and pride towards the Board as a corporate body and will enhance the " image" of the Board as an employer.

There are ever increasing legislative requirements in employment matters (see Appendix 3). Many of the forthcoming developments are in the field of Equality legislation. The Board now needs to embrace diversity in its employees, and cultivate an atmosphere in which everyone is able to succeed, regardless of any differences - including race, ethnicity, disability, gender, marital status, sexuality, age or religious belief. A diversity approach is one in which no employee feels that they must change something integral to them in order to succeed.

### TASKS

We will:

- Collect data to take account of equality monitoring responsibilities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Board's Equality Strategy objectives, and future legislative requirements informing the Board of any imbalances in the make-up of the workforce and identifying any positive action programmes needed.
- Provide training for all managers and staff on diversity awareness by February 2004 and then on an ongoing basis via Corporate Induction.
- Provide Data Protection Act training for all managers and staff by March 2004, conducting an audit throughout the Board of employees' and applicants' data.
- Ensure there are appropriate mechanisms and resources that will be alert to legislative changes, both in employment law and legal aid impact areas, and inform line managers of employment legislation developments.

Then:

- Continue to invest HR resources in our employee welfare and medical support services.
- Work with the Board's Health & Safety Officer and other Board employees to promote the Board's Health and Safety and Security policies and participate in Scotland's Health at Work (SHAW) Award Scheme.
- Review consultation arrangements with the recognised Trade Union and consider additional methods of consultation to ensure maximum staff representation in the consultative process (current levels of Trade Union membership are between 20-25% of the workforce).
- Implement the Office Accommodation And Working Environment Strategy and progress towards Disability Discrimination Act (Amendment 2004) requirements.
- Consider the Board's corporate social responsibilities and determine the expected ethical business behaviours.

## Appendix 2: HR GOALS (cont.)

<b>Goal 8 We will:</b>	<b><i>Contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness by continual reviews of HR services and HR management practices throughout the Board</i></b>
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The improvement of the effectiveness of the delivery of the Board's services while achieving a reasonable balance between cost and quality calls for more proactive HR management. To ensure ongoing alignment of the HR strategy with the organisational objectives the HR team needs a comprehensive understanding of the Board's business context and priorities. HR specialists will work closely with line management providing advice and support to achieve the Board's objectives.

### **TASKS**

We will:

- Ensure an HR input to key Board projects including E-Business; Operational System Upgrades e.g. Civil Applications, Criminal Applications, Debt Management; Document Management; Business Excellence; Race Equality; FMPR; PDSO, Part V and CLS developments; Risk management.

Then:

- Review our HR services, in line with business requirements and best practices, by August 2004, ensure the right balance between HR and line management in driving people issues.
- Further build targeted HR networks to share policies and good practice and benchmark against other relevant good proactive organisations (including relevant NDPB's; Cabinet Office "Modernising People Management" networks; Scottish Executive).
- Maintain liP recognition in 2005 and contribute to the Boards continuous improvement activities against EFQM model ("people management").
- Consider a range of methods, including the use of Oracle HR, Payroll and Intranet systems, to allow managers and staff appropriate access to useful HR information.

## Appendix 3: RECENT AND FORTHCOMING MAJOR LEGISLATION / DOCUMENTS

<b><u>THEME</u></b>	<b><u>DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION</u></b>
Employment Bill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to maternity, paternity and adoption leave</li> <li>• Work and parents taskforce</li> <li>• Tribunal changes</li> <li>• Equal pay questionnaire</li> </ul>	<b>April 2003</b>
Directive on Information and Consultation	<b>2005,2007,2008</b>
Data Protection	<b>March 2002</b>
Dignity at Work Bill	<b>Consultation stage</b>
EU Treatment Directive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race Directive</li> <li>• Sexual orientation - new Regulations</li> <li>• Religion and belief– new Regulations</li> <li>• Disability Discrimination Act Amendment</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Age (NB new challenges mean case law could pre-date this?)</li> </ul>	<b>July 2003</b> <b>Dec 2003</b> <b>Dec 2003</b> <b>Oct 2004</b> <b>2005</b> <b>2006</b>
Pensions Green Paper	<b>2005/06</b>

### **CHANGES IN LEGAL AID LEGISLATION**

Opinion on Section 34 of Legal Aid (Scotland) Act	Oct 2003
Interests of Justice Review	