



Trust our knowledge and expertise

Introduction

The final term of this academic year has arrived, and I am sure that we are all looking forward to a repeat (hopefully soon!) of the sunny days we enjoyed over Easter!

As a team we are looking forward to working with, and supporting you across the range of HR issues, and people challenges that arise. Last term, we said farewell to two longstanding members of our team, Julian and Cynthia – we were sad to see them go and wished them well for the future. The schools they supported all have new assigned consultants who are already establishing strong working relationships with their new customers.

I have to mention the 'B' word as it touches HR just as it does so many areas of our national life. Of course there is a good deal of uncertainty still, but there are potential staffing implications, and there are a couple of items below that highlight the key issues.

1 April saw the introduction of new GLPC pay scales for support staff. The spinal points have been renumbered, so the grade boundaries are now different, but as they were introduced along with a pay rise, all staff paid on these pay scales will have seen a minimum of a 2% pay rise, and for those on the lower spinal points it will have been more than this. Hopefully this has all been implemented smoothly. We will be hearing more about the teachers' pay award over the course of this term.

Can we wish you a happy summer term, and we hope that all your summer events go smoothly and well. If you would like more information about any of the items in our newsletter then please contact us, or your school HR Provider.

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Training

Managing people well is a key skill that all school leaders need to have. There is an ongoing challenge to ensure that every member of staff performs well, is motivated and that this is done within the context of school policies and employment law. Added in to this mix is the challenge of case law which interprets statute and then impacts on the way employment matters should be handled.

We offer a range of training interventions that can support schools, help develop leaders and ensure consistency across the whole school – for example:

- Sessions for the whole staff group (eg on the management and reporting of sickness absence and/or Discretionary Leave)
- Sessions for the senior leadership team (eg on carrying out appraisals; understanding reorganisations and redundancy restructures)
- A central training programme to equip leaders with the skills that they need to be effective people managers

Sessions that are delivered in school can be offered on the full range of HR topics – talk to us about your needs and we can offer you a bespoke solution. Courses coming up in our central training programme are:

- 9 May (am) - Essential People Skills for Line Managers (module 1)
- 9 May (pm) – Essential People Skills for Line Managers (module 2)
- 27 September (am) – Disciplinary Processes and Investigation Skills
- 10 October (am) – Recruitment and Selection – The Skills and Techniques for Successful Recruitment
- 22 November (am) – Essential People Skills for Line Managers (module 1)
- 22 November (pm) – Essential People Skills for Line Managers (module 2)
- 28 November (all day) – Safer Recruitment

They can all be booked via the Octavo website -

<https://www.octavopartnership.org/courses/>

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National Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy

The DfE has developed a national teacher recruitment and retention strategy - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-strategy>

There are four main strands to the strategy:

- More supportive school cultures and reduced workload
- Transforming support for early years teachers
- Ensuring teaching remains an attractive career as lifestyles and aspirations change
- Making it easier for people to train to become teachers.

Work has already started in some of these areas and we have highlighted this below. In Octavo we have been working collaboratively with CHTA to offer recruitment initiatives that promote Croydon as a place to teach for a number of years, and these national initiatives will further support that work.

Partnering Croydon schools for teacher recruitment and marketing initiatives

Two recent initiatives are taking place with regards to the ongoing issues of teacher recruitment and retention:

(i) Links with Roehampton University (interviewing potential NQTs):

3 secondary schools were involved with interviewing potential NQTs at Roehampton university. Feedback was given and important links were made in relation to ITT (Initial Teacher Training) placements as well as the opportunity to select future NQTs.

(ii) Primary Return to Teaching Programme:

In partnership with the STEP Academy Trust, a two-day training programme is being delivered in June 2019 for primary returning teachers. The course aims to provide teachers with up to date knowledge on changes in education and, combined with practical activities such as classroom observation, help prepare them for a return to teaching.

Octavo would be happy to discuss future partnerships on recruitment and retention. Please contact Christine Lonsdale, christine.lonsdale@octavopartnership.org in the first instance.

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Erasmus

Erasmus is an EU programme giving education staff the opportunity to undertake CPD abroad. Having access to opportunities like this helps to promote Croydon as a destination for a teaching career.

Octavo, working in conjunction with the Council, has led the programme, initially making a successful bid for funding, and then implementing the project.

The Erasmus project for 2018-19 ends in June 2019 and with the fantastic evaluations thus far showing how much learning that it has provided, we are hopeful that our bid for 2019-20 will be successful.

5 residentials in countries in the EU were visited by 113 Croydon school staff, with feedback such as:

"It was a whole, organic experience that embodied the values, ethos and culture we were looking at. Not one little bit felt like a waste of time or energy totally packed with rich experiences and opportunities to learn and form relationships"
(Delegate on the Creative Teaching Approaches in Early Years Nov 2018)

"Being able to meet other others and liaise with them, from different parts of the world is invaluable. Time to learn, explore, think, discuss and then plan how it could be implemented with various different colleagues has numerous benefits)
(Delegate on the Visual Narrative in Teaching Feb 2019)

More information about the first course can be found on our website - <https://www.octavopartnership.org/case-studies/octavos-erasmus-project-number-1-the-springboard/>

Workload Reduction

The DfE has been taking seriously the issue of teacher workload and looking at ways in which it can support schools. They have produced a series of publications which we have highlighted in previous newsletters, and they continue to update and expand them.

The key areas covered are:

- Communications
- Curriculum Planning and Resources
- Feedback and Marking

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- Data Management
- Managing Change

For more information go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/workload-reduction-toolkit>.

Implementing your school's approach to pay

The commitment to workload is being fed into other areas of DfE guidance. The document 'Implementing your school's approach to pay' has been reviewed and now includes an introductory section about reducing workload through the pay and appraisal process. The key point is that readily available data should be used when decisions are being made, rather than creating new data to inform decisions. This approach is also being embedded in the DfE's optional model appraisal policy.

Many schools will already be doing this, and it is a further indication of the priority that the government is placing on this area of work.

Early Career Framework for Teachers

The Early Career Framework (ECF) underpins an entitlement to a fully-funded, 2-year package of structured training and support for early career teachers.

The DfE has produced further guidance around the changes to the ECF and 2-year NQT cycle.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-early-career-teachers>

Reference has been made to contributing organisations, including:
National Association of School Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT)

<https://www.nasbtt.org.uk/>

and

The Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET)

<https://www.ucet.ac.uk/>

The ECF will be available to 50,000 NQTs in their first two years of practice from **September 2021** (preceded by a trial in the North East from September 2020). It will be supported by £130m of public funds, which will be used to fund non-contact time for Year 2 NQTs, produce free curricula and training materials, fund ECF training programmes, fund time for mentors to support NQTs and provide mentor training. The Initial Training and Education (ITE) content framework will also be reviewed with

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input from UCET and NASBTT, to ensure consistency with the ECF. The ECF itself is grouped under each of the teacher standards and identifies what NQTs should learn and what they should do.

National teacher recruitment website

The DfE are providing a job board for schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/list-a-teaching-job-at-your-school-on-teaching-vacancies>

Teaching Vacancies is a free service for publicly funded schools that provide primary and secondary education in England.

Staff involved in hiring teachers for these schools can use it to:

- List a teaching job on the service for no fee, which jobseekers everywhere can access.
- View jobs they have previously listed on the service

Checking the right to work online

The Home Office has introduced a new service whereby an employee's right to work in the UK can be checked online rather than by viewing the necessary documents. To do this, you will need their date of birth, and the employee will need to give you their 'right to work share code'. If either of these is missing you will need to continue to check the right to work documents.

The service can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/view-right-to-work>. A record should be kept of the check, for example taking a screen shot of the various details. The scheme was introduced as part of the government's new code of practice on preventing illegal working and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/illegal-working-penalties-codes-of-practice-for-employers-2018>

EU Settlement Scheme

With Brexit on the agenda, the government has set up an EU Settlement Scheme which applies to EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who wish to remain in the UK. Successful applicants will be given either settled or pre-settled status. The scheme is now open and anyone who is eligible can apply now. The deadline for applying will be 30 June 2021, or 31 December 2020 if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

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As with all things Brexit related, there may be further changes to the guidance and deadlines, but as applications are free, it is worth encouraging any affected members of staff to consider applying.

More details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-applicant-information>.

Brexit: possible no deal

The impact of the various negotiations concerning Brexit seems to suggest that a no deal conclusion to the process is now unlikely. However, the nature of any deal is far from clear, and the government has published some advice highlighting potential consequences. The advice is based on the assumption of 'no deal' but due to the uncertainty, it is worth being cognisant that there may be serious potential implications for:

- The current system of sharing of details of sanctions or restrictions imposed on teachers within the EEA area
- The current system of reciprocal recognition of professional qualifications between the EU, EEA, EFTA and Switzerland

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-exit-no-deal-preparations-for-schools-in-england/eu-exit-no-deal-preparations-for-schools-in-england#checking-for-eea-regulating-authority-teacher-sanctions-or-restrictions>.

Please note that the version on the website at the time of writing was published in January and will have reflected the draft deal at that point in time.

Benchmarking

The government's financial benchmarking service for schools has been designed to support schools to compare their pattern of expenditure with similar schools. With the ever increasing pressure on school budgets, this can be helpful when trying to decide how best to manage resources.

More information can be found at <https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/Help/Guidance>.

The government has also produced a school resource management self-assessment tool which also assists with the benchmarking process and gives a RAG (Red,

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Amber,Green) rating when comparing your own school with other schools. More details can be found at -

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-resource-management-self-assessment-tool?utm_source=81467ad5-06af-4a5f-8566-749ace36fe61&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

Typically, 75%-80% (more in special schools and PRUs) of the school budget is spent on staffing. When resources reduce, inevitably there has to be a focus on the deployment of staff and planning ahead can assist schools to manage their future staffing needs effectively. Talk to your HR provider for support in managing the process of managing change effectively.

ACAS Guidance on Discipline and Grievance

The ACAS Guidance on Discipline and Grievance was updated at the end of February, to reflect changes in case law that have had an impact on the way in which processes are managed. There are only a small number of changes and they will affect the way in which Discipline and Grievances processes are implemented, but not the content of our model policies.

The main changes are:

- Giving consideration to a delay of more than 5 days for a meeting where an employee's chosen companion is unavailable (in practice, this is already usually the case in schools given the difficulties in finding suitable dates)
- New guidance about suspension which places greater emphasis on taking into account the impact on the employee. The new wording is:
"Suspension can leave individuals feeling prejudged, demotivated and devalued. It should only be used after careful consideration. It should always be made clear that suspension is not an assumption of guilt and is not considered a disciplinary sanction."

As is already the case, alternative options to full suspension should always be considered before a decision to suspend is taken. Your HR provider can supply a suspension risk/decision assessment to record your rationale should you decide to suspend.

- Recognition that a grievance process can be a stressful experience for a grievant, and that, particularly in the case of someone whose mental health has been

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affected, consideration needs to be given to providing adjustments e.g. obtaining medical advice about how to proceed fairly, holding a meeting in a neutral venue, having adjournments during the meeting. In practice, this follows the approach many schools already take to such meetings

- Highlighting that in the case of grievances, it is good practice to let those who have had allegations made about them know the outcome of the grievance. Again, in many cases this is already happening.

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Christine Lonsdale – Recruitment and Development Consultant –

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Croydon Council Services: Contact Details

Contracts of Employment: David Wiggs – HR & Finance Service Centre Support Officer - croydonschools@croydon.gov.uk or; david.wiggs@croydon.gov.uk 020 8604 7251

Recruitment Queries:

Teach in Croydon website: www.croydoneducationjobs.org.

Adverts on Croydon Council website: 020 8667 8337; vacancies@croydon.gov.uk

DBS Queries: 020 8667 8337; schoolsdb@croydon.gov.uk

Occupational Health: Ritika Singh - Ritika.Singh@croydon.gov.uk

Teachers Pensions: Vicki Langston – 020 8604 7190; Julia McDougall – 0208 604 7383; teacherspensionsteam@croydon.gov.uk

Local Government Pension Scheme: 020 8760 5768 x 62892; pensions@croydon.gov.uk

Liberata Payroll

All payroll data should be sent to: liberataschoolspayroll@liberata.com

Technical support: LiberataSchoolsTechnicalSupport@liberata.com

Team:

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