

Chief Executive note to colleagues 5 December 2012

Dear Colleagues,

I thought that it might be helpful to briefly reiterate what I said at the Colleague Forum yesterday, especially for those of you who were unable to be there.

When the survey was launched, I said that it was really important that we regularly take a long hard look at ourselves to check that we are operating as the kind of organisation we aspire to be. Part of that is about making sure we involve as many colleagues as we can in the activities and decisions that matter to us all, so I repeat my thanks to Edwin and the rest of the group who led the design and development of the survey.

There's no point in conducting surveys like this, though, unless necessary action is taken on findings. The fact that some 85% of you expect action to be taken is both a vote of confidence, but also quite a responsibility. As I explained, I believe there are some areas where we can take immediate action – because we have confidence that we understand what the survey tells us. But there are other, more complex issues where we want to better understand what lies behind the answers before acting.

That action, will not just be down to management – in some areas, individuals have an important responsibility to act too. So I don't intend to 'dump responsibility downwards', but whenever there is a message for improvement for the organisation as a whole, then it is important that we all play our parts in making the change.

The starting point of the results is that, by comparison with most of the public sector, we are doing really well. Our results make very good reading when set against results for the entire Civil Service for instance, published last week - both our peaks and our troughs are far higher. It was really encouraging to see such good results in relation to the LSB being a friendly and fun place to work, having a clear direction and actions being consistent with our values. That doesn't happen purely by chance, and I am grateful to all of you for your part in putting it in place.

But there are clear challenges as well. The Executive Group was genuinely perturbed by what was reported on bullying and discrimination, as was the Remuneration Committee. As I said, we will enlist some external help to help to explore these issues further. But, in the short-term, let me again underline the message I gave at the meeting about zero tolerance to this kind of behaviour. We have policies in place to enable such issues to be tackled formally when that is necessary. But we also need to meet our cultural aspirations of being prepared to challenge thoughtless behaviour when the impact may be unintended and unseen.

We will also re-energise our commitment to personal development. Of course, this includes training, but it also to reflect your answers about matching work to potential, improving feedback and improving performance management, all of which seem to be potentially inter-related. Again, our external help may be of use here, but in the short-term I confirmed that:

- Each individual will have a personal development budget of £1000 to spend in the remainder of 2012/2013 – Julie will re-circulate forms and guidance on applying shortly.
- We will also make sure each individual has a personal development budget next year and we will confirm its size in April, as soon as we know final decisions on the size of the budget;
- Everybody should have a very short discussion with their Line Manager before Christmas about the frequency and nature of feedback that they would find most constructive, so when people can start the New Year with clear expectations and good resolutions.

I should reiterate my remarks on pay. Let me say that I do understand the frustration recorded in the survey, but it is important to be realistic about the room for manoeuvre which exists in the current economic climate and public sector pay world generally. We continue to talk with Remco about the overall benefits package and we will continue to look for enhancements where these are practicable. But the prospects for anything more generous than the settlement achieved this year are remote in 2013-14 and both I and the Remco remain unpersuaded of the case for bonuses and complex performance related pay given the amount of cash available for increases. However, if colleagues can identify specific, easy to implement ideas from other organisations, I will be happy to consider them.

I hope that you will all take the time to read the full results and talk about them, with your Line Managers, your immediate teams and with colleagues more widely. I am particularly interested to get practical, concrete ideas on how some of the issues highlighted can be addressed. We will be debating issues in both the Gateway and the Executive Group and, in due course with the Board as we aim to develop a more comprehensive action plan to move forward from the interim actions identified in this note – and this action plan will include involving colleagues in identifying areas for improvement .

Chris