

Staff Appeals Panel

Job Evaluation Appeals

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Job Evaluation Appeals

Introduction

I am the Council's Assistant Director (HR) and have been involved in carrying out job evaluations for over 15 years for this and other councils. I have used the previous National Joint Council Scheme and implemented the computerised version of the current scheme. I was part of the team who drafted the Conventions for the Council; I was a joint Chairman of the original Job Evaluation Panel; I was the Panel's representative to the Job Evaluation Appeal Panel and I am currently the Chairman of the Job Evaluation Appeal Panel.

Whilst joint Chairman of the Job Evaluation Panel I carried out over 500 evaluations and carried out moderation exercises for these posts both across and up/down the Council.

Job Evaluation

Job evaluation is a method of determining on a systematic basis the relative importance of a number of different jobs.

Deciding the relative importance of jobs within the Council will cause anxieties as well as raise expectations for all involved as even though job evaluation evaluates the job and not the job holder, employees identify very closely with the jobs that they do.

Job evaluation does not determine grades or pay levels, but does produce a hierarchy of jobs that may not mirror everyone's perceptions.

Job evaluation is;

- A way of assessing the Council's requirements of the job
- Systematic
- Consistent
- A way of producing a hierarchy of jobs on which to base a grading structure,
- A method to ensure equal pay.

Job evaluation is not;

- Scientific
- An exact measurement of duties or tasks performed
- A way of judging performance
- A way of assessing the attributes of the employee
- A way of allocating pay rates.

It is human nature for some employees to hope that job evaluation should move them up the 'pecking order' at work, in reality jobs can move up, down or stay the same.

The Council has implemented an analytical job evaluation scheme which evaluates jobs by separately appraising individual characteristics of the role such as skills, effort, responsibility and working conditions. Each characteristic is broken down into factors and each factor is further broken down into levels.

The factors are weighted and jobs are evaluated against each factor to determine which level the job scores under each factor. Points are awarded for each level. The points for all factor levels are totalled and the total points scored decide a job's place in the ranking order.

The Council implemented the National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation Scheme which was developed by the national employers and trade unions to meet the needs of local authorities. It was designed to meet the diversity of jobs within local government, some of which are not employed by district councils, for example social workers, grave diggers and refuse collectors.

The NJC Scheme is a points-related analytical scheme which covers 13 factors with 5 – 8 levels within each of the factors.

A copy of the NJC Job Evaluation Scheme Scoring and Weighting Matrix is attached at appendix 1.

In 1998 the National Employers and the Trade Unions signed an agreement which required local authorities to work towards the harmonisation of terms and conditions of service for former officer and manual workers. A central part of this agreement was that there should be a common job evaluation scheme against which all jobs should be ranked. This was known as the Single Status Agreement and the Council started to progress work in 1999.

The Council started to develop what is the current job evaluation scheme in 2002 when the Conventions were agreed and the Job Evaluation Panel was constituted. At this stage all posts below Chief Officer level were evaluated with the exception of Craft Workers within the Works Unit (this was because they were not subject to the Single Status Agreement).

The Job Evaluation Panel decided that it should start to evaluate jobs at the top of the structure (i.e. Assistant Heads) down to the bottom carrying out moderation at appropriate points, i.e. in broad bands/levels across the authority. At the end of the evaluation process moderation took place within teams/service areas i.e. up/down the authority.

The ongoing evaluation of posts is set out in the Council's Job Evaluation Maintenance Policy and a copy is at appendix 2.

A copy of the Job Evaluation Maintenance Policy – Guidelines is at appendix 3.

Application of the Conventions

The Council's (local) conventions were agreed before evaluating any posts and the appeal process (whether at officer or member level) does not have the remit to change the convention or the Job Evaluation Panel's interpretation or application of the convention. It is the responsibility of the appeal process to ensure that the convention has been interpreted and applied consistently across the Council.

A number of the conventions have more than one statement that needs to be satisfied to allow the level to be awarded. The requirement of the job has to meet the entire context of the statement not one or two words or part of the statement to be awarded that level. A level will not be awarded unless the whole statement is met.

The Panel should have regard to 'dilution' of a factor, specifically in relation to the 4 Responsibility Factors. For example, within a team, a number of employees could have different levels of responsibility for the same budget; the evaluators need to ensure that the monetary value of the budget is not accounted for several times and that the exact nature of the responsibility is recognised. For example, an employee may receive and record cheques/cash, the manager could be a spending control officer and the Assistant Director is likely to be responsible for setting and monitoring a number of budgets. In addition, evaluators need to ensure that they consider the Accountant's role in the same budget, as finance would be their specialist area.

A copy of the Council's Conventions is attached at appendix 4.

Appeals Process

Members of the Staff Appeals Panel must have regard to the information and paperwork provided to the original Job Evaluation Panel as this, and this alone, is what the original score was awarded on. The original Job Evaluation Panel would have based their decision on the information provided in the Job Description, Person Specification, Limits of Authority Sheet and Additional Information Sheet.

The Job Evaluation Appeal Panel, in a number of the appeals, was provided with far more information both in the appeal statements and verbally at the hearing which did not reflect the examples included in the original paperwork to be evaluated by the Job Evaluation Panel. This is not to say that the later submissions do not accurately reflect the requirements of the job, it is that the information was not available to the Job Evaluation Panel. For the Job Evaluation Panel to be effective they need to possess all the relevant information.

It is worth noting that contained within the notes on the Council's Job Evaluation Appeal Statement Proforma it states;

'Please remember that you may not include in your statement any evidence that was not available to the Job Evaluation Panel.'

A copy of the Proforma has been included at appendix 5.

It is incumbent on postholders and their managers to ensure that the paperwork reflects the true nature and level of responsibilities of the role. Unless the examples on the original paperwork can demonstrate the full requirements of individual levels, both the officer and member Appeal Panels should request that the paperwork is amended appropriately so that the role can be looked at holistically by the original Job Evaluation Panel and moderated against other posts within the Council.

A copy of the Council's Job Evaluation Maintenance Policy - Appeal Procedure is attached at appendix 6.

A copy of the Council's Staff Appeal's Panel Hearings Procedure is attached at appendix 7.

A copy of the Council's Staff Appeal's Panel Hearings Procedure is attached at appendix 8.

Terminology

Benchmark posts are those where a number of posts are the same, they would have the same job description, person specification and there would be one Job Evaluation score sheet for all. Examples include, Benefit Officers, Area Housing Managers, Council Tax Assistants, Licensing Compliance Officers, Payroll Officers, HR Officers. Benchmark posts are identified as such by managers before the evaluation takes place.

Moderation is the 'sore thumbing' exercise that is carried out by the Job Evaluation Panel. This will entail looking at similar roles in terms of levels of responsibilities or tasks by the Job Evaluation Panel to ensure consistency and identify any factor or assessments which appear out of place.

Job Evaluation Panel is the Panel that carried out the original evaluation. This Panel consists of 4 evaluators, 2 management representatives and 2 trade union representatives. The Joint Chairman consists of 1 management representative and 1 trade union representative.

The Job Evaluation Appeal Panel consists of a management representative, a trade union representative and is currently chaired by the Assistant Director (HR).

Staff Appeal Panel is the Panel consisting of elected members.

Appeal Submissions and the Council's Response

Copies of the employees' appeal statements along with attachments are provided to the Staff Appeals Panel along with the Council's response.