NICS PEOPLE STRATEGY 2013-2016

Annual People Plan
2014-15

Delivering high quality services
in a high quality organisation

Foreword by Colin Lewis, Director, Corporate HR

I am very pleased to be able to present to you the 2014/15 NICS Annual People Plan. This is the second plan of three in support of the implementation of the 2013/16 NICS People Strategy. The People Strategy can be viewed on the HR Connect homepage.

Encouraging progress has been made in implementing the commitments and obligations across each of the four themes within the strategy. A highlight report on progress was provided in the winter 2013 and spring 2014 editions of Xpress HR. We will continue to provide further updates through Xpress HR.

A major focus for us has been on work to improve and streamline the performance management system. I am pleased to say that over the next few weeks, you will all become aware of the change in culture we wish to encourage around performance appraisal reviews. This change will be accompanied by a comprehensive training solution designed to help managers to provide feedback to staff and to handle difficult conversations. I believe the new approach will better enable managers to provide the appropriate level of support to their staff to ensure that good performance is recognised and that poor performance is identified early and dealt with. I know from the NICS Staff Survey 2013 that this is an area you indicated needed to be addressed.

The 2014/15 plan will build on the progress we have achieved. The comprehensive work programme will include various initiatives designed to contribute to further increasing the level of employee engagement in the NICS, which will then translate into improved business performance. There will be a particular focus on giving visibility to positive leadership behaviours, on embedding leadership behaviours within the new NICS Competency Framework, which itself will be launched in April, and on identifying further initiatives to support well being.

In my Foreword to the launch of the People Strategy last year I concluded by saying that people are at the heart of this organisation and that together we have the potential to deliver even better quality services. The 2014/15 Annual People Plan, building on what has already been achieved, offers the opportunity to continue on this journey. I commend it to you all.
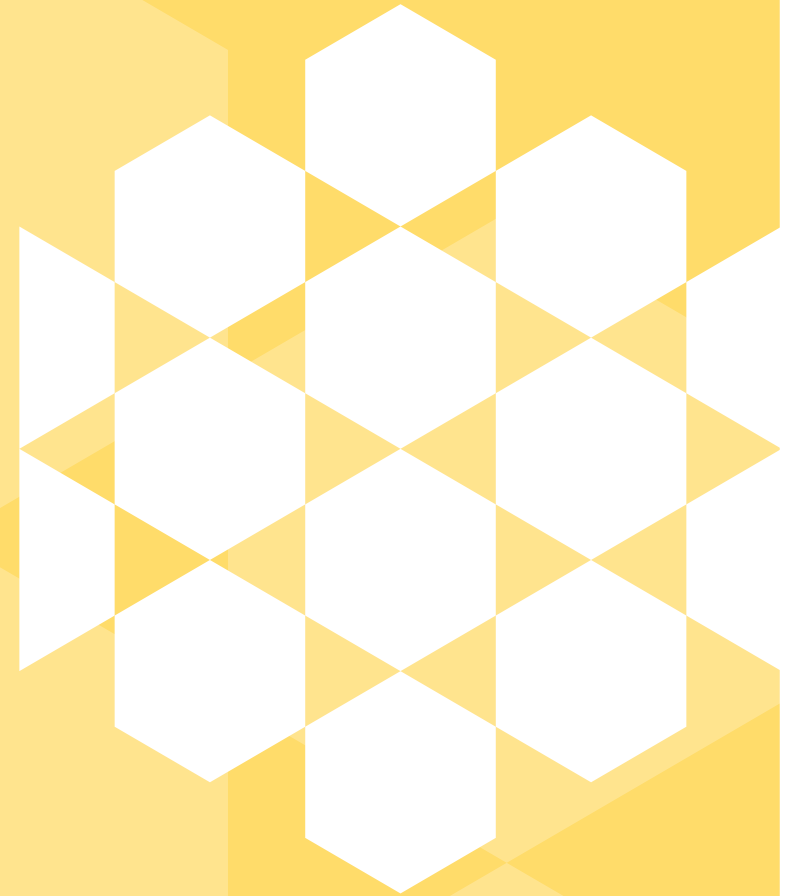
COLIN LEWIS
Director, Corporate HR

The Annual People Plan:

- acts on the commitments made in the 2013-16 People Strategy; and

- sets out activities that will deliver on those commitments that have been identified for commencement in 2014-15.

Effective Leadership

High Performance

Delivering the NI Executive's priorities through a motivated, committed and skilled workforce

Enabled Workforce

Improved Skills & Resourcing

Effective Leadership

Leadership behaviours demonstrated at all levels providing purpose, pride in performance and encouraging innovation.

High Performance

Effective performance management to ensure the workforce is focussed on delivering objectives and that staff motivation, morale and recognition are well managed.

Delivery

Providing an environment for delivery; providing the right structure, tools and support so that employees can effectively channel their energy and maximise their commitment.

Continuously develop the capability and talent of our workforce; adding knowledge, understanding and skills to deliver specific business results and the anticipated future needs of the business.

Enabled Workforce

Improved Skills & Resourcing

Effective Leadership – Direction and Purpose

Commitments

1. Ensure all staff have clear output focussed objectives linked to departmental/divisional/branch business plans.

2. Create a plan on a page that all staff can understand.

3. Commit to share with all staff, reports on progress against business plans.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
1	Refresh guidance on departmental annual business plan processes and procedures used in the NICS with regard to: a) Consistency of approach; b) Timeliness (preparation, approval, used in managing business); c) Use in setting clear output focussed and linked objectives for staff; and d) Use in communicating to staff progress against business plans.	April 2014	Confidence in senior managers increased. Higher level of employee engagement.
2(i)	Introduce a simplified Personal Performance Agreement (PPA)/Personal Development Plan (PDP) on HR Connect to reflect clear output focussed personal business objectives and the behaviours required to deliver organisational business plans.	March 2015	Simplified PPA/PDP available on HRConnect.
2(ii)	Develop communications and training to support the introduction of the simplified PPA/PDP.	March 2015	Training available and communications delivered.
3	Identify and implement activity to reflect the commitment to share with all staff updates.	March 2015	Activities implemented.

Effective Leadership – Growth

Commitments

1. Define and publish new behavioural competences for leaders at all levels.

2. Finish work to establish innovative approaches to leadership development including:

   (a) Mentoring; and

   (b) Structured programmes tailored to grade and career stages.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
1	Engage with Heads of Professions to agree competency frameworks for professional and technical and specialist staff.	December 2014	Agreement with Heads of Professions secured.
2(i)	DCAL-led mentoring initiative, already in place in five other departments, promoted to other non-participant departments.	June 2014	Increased uptake of future mentoring programmes.
2(ii)	Participating departments to conduct a formal review of the mentoring programme and report to the People Strategy thematic lead for Effective Leadership to inform future NICS mentoring programmes.	March 2015	Evaluation of mentoring programmes.
2(iii)	Establish a NICS senior women's network.	March 2015	Network established and operational.

Effective Leadership – Growth (cont'd)

Commitments

1. Define and publish new behavioural competences for leaders at all levels.

2. Finish work to establish innovative approaches to leadership development including:

   (a) Mentoring; and

   (b) Structured programmes tailored to grade and career stages.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
2(iv)	In light of feedback and experience from departments who have piloted leadership approaches, bring forward a plan for delivery of leadership development across the NICS, including: • Complete the roll-out and evaluation of the Future, Engage, Deliver approach in DCAL by 30 September 2014; • Complete and evaluate the Board Development pilot in DHSSPS by 30 June 2014; • Further refresh, develop and deliver the existing SCS Leadership Development programme for new members of the SCS in June and September/October 2014; • Participate in and evaluate Academi Wales Leadership Development Programmes; and • Continue to deliver a series of SCS Masterclasses.	March 2015	Leadership development plan identified.
2(v)	Commence phased review of essential leadership and management programmes currently delivered through the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL), taking account of leadership behaviours in the new NICS Competency Framework.	March 2015	

Effective Leadership – Engaging with Staff

Commitments

1. Ensure a personal connection between leaders and their teams through ongoing programmes to include road shows, job shadowing sessions, webcasts and online forums.

2. Lead and sponsor programmes that celebrate and value success.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
1(i)	Identify and report on examples of best practice of engaged leadership across the NICS by: • Conducting a NICS-wide staff survey; • Holding departmental focus groups across all NICS departments; and • Engaging with departmental HR Divisions across the NICS.	April 2014	Staff survey complete. At least 1 focus group held in each department.
1(ii)	Good practice examples of engaged leadership activities to be shared with departments. Dissemination of survey results to all departments.	September 2014 December 2014	
1(iii)	Give visibility to positive engaged leadership behaviours in the NICS with the aim of encouraging and replicating behaviour more widely by: • Hosting an 'Engaged Leadership' event; and • Presenting the findings at corporate event.	December 2014	

Effective Leadership – Engaging with Staff (cont'd)

Commitments

1. Ensure a personal connection between leaders and their teams through ongoing programmes to include road shows, job shadowing sessions, webcasts and online forums.

2. Lead and sponsor programmes that celebrate and value success.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
1(iv)	Evaluate the effectiveness of engagement programme in DARD which includes: • 4-weekly platform piece by DARD Permanent Secretary hosted on intranet; • Programme of visits to DARD regional offices.	March 2015	Evaluation complete and presented to Permanent Secretaries Group (PSG).
2(i)	Individual departments to promote leadership behaviours that celebrate and value success, including consideration of sponsoring programmes.	March 2015	Programmes introduced.
2(ii)	Corporate event to celebrate and value success.	December 2014	Event held.

High Performance – Talent Development

Commitment			
1. Introduce mechanisms for identifying and nurturing talent, including staff movement programmes.			
	Activities	**Milestone date**	**High level indicator**
1(i)	Develop and agree with HR Directors Group (HRDG) terms of reference for a review of the Fast Stream Scheme and commence the review. Agree with NISRA the data and evidence basis for the review.	March 2015 September 2014	Trade Union Side consultation completed and HRDG agreement secured.
1(ii)	Develop proposals for agreement by HRDG/Permanent Secretaries Group to support greater career development and staff movement: • Identify key stakeholders' needs and priorities; • Consider good practice; and • Develop options for consideration.	March 2015	HRDG to have agreed proposals; implementation plan developed.
1(iii)	Develop principles for agreement by HRDG/PSG that facilitate talent management and capacity building across NICS. Agree and implement proposals.	October 2014 March 2015	Proposals agreed and implemented.

High Performance – Performance Management

Commitment

1. Build on the change in culture around performance reviews and introduce a more streamlined approach and process to the management of poor performance.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
1(i)	Roll out communication and updated training to support the introduction of 2-box performance management system for 14/15 and link to new competency framework.	April 2014	Communication and training delivered.
1(ii)	Complete End of Year performance management reports for 2013/14. Run reports and follow up to ensure compliance.	June 2014	90% of End of Year reports completed.
1(iii)	Create PPA / PDPs for 2014/15. Run reports and follow up to ensure compliance.	June 2014	90% of PPA/PDPs created.
1(iv)	Conduct In-Year reviews for 2014/15. Run reports and follow up to ensure compliance.	November 2014	90% of In-Year reviews complete.
1(v)	Review Performance Management (PM) process to strengthen link to new competency framework and 'Plan on a Page' requirements.	September 2014	Proposal ready for review and approval.
1(vi)	Present proposal to HRDG for approval.	September 2014	HRDG approval.
1(vii)	Develop communications and training to support revised PM process.	February 2015	Communications and training available.

High Performance – Performance Management (cont'd)

Commitment

1. Build on the change in culture around performance reviews and introduce a more streamlined approach and process to the management of poor performance.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
1(viii)	Corporate HR (CHR) and Enterprise Shared Services (ESS) work together to have revised PM process implemented and supported by appropriate training and communications.	March 2015	Revised PPA/PDP available on HR Connect.
1(ix)	Liaise with CAL to implement performance management E-Learning solution.	March 2015	Satisfaction with performance management system and learning & development increased.
1(x)	Initiate an evaluation of the effectiveness and compliance of policy for 2014/15.	March 2015	Compliance levels improved.
1(xi)	Update and improve the policy on managing unsatisfactory performance.	March 2015	Revised policy implemented.

High Performance – Recognition & Reward

Commitments

1. Implement a pay award for 2014.

2. Devise a pay award for 2015.

3. Introduce methods of reward and recognition for high achievers and those staff that go the extra mile.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
1(i)	Negotiate and agree pay awards in line with NICS objectives.	June 2014	Agreement with TUS.
1(ii)	Implement 2014 pay awards for all staff.	August 2014	Pay awards implemented.
1(iii)	Introduce new pay and grading system for industrial staff.	December 2014	Agreement with ITUS.
2(i)	Review government pay guidance for 2015 and define NICS objectives for pay awards.	March 2015	Preparatory work completed.
2(ii)	Prepare submission to obtain remit from DFP Minister.	March 2015	
3(i)	Conduct research to identify existing and innovative methods of encouraging, rewarding and recognising those who demonstrate exceptional personal commitment and achievement and for those who 'go the extra mile' at all levels across the NICS.	June 2014	Research paper and proposals presented to HRDG and PSG.
3(ii)	Gather evidence to establish the impacts of those methods on employee engagement and performance more generally.		
3(iii)	Present proposals setting out potential reward and recognition methods for agreement by PSG/HRDG.	July 2014	Proposals agreed.
3(iv)	Negotiate/consult with TUS as appropriate and implement methods of reward and recognition.	March 2015	New methods introduced.

Improved Skills & Resourcing – Knowledge & Skills

Commitment			
1. Conduct a targeted skills audit across the business, exploring skills that underpin existing and known future needs.			
	Activities	**Milestone date**	**High level indicator**
1(i)	Conduct high level skills audits at departmental/divisional levels, based on an assessment of key staff development needs against departmental business priorities and the new competency framework. Provide outcomes to Corporate HR.	October 2014	Skills audits complete and reported to Corporate HR.
1(ii)	Identify common skills gaps across departments. Develop and agree an action plan to address those gaps.	March 2015	Action plan agreed.
1(iii)	Embed the new NICS Competency Framework and develop proposals for how it underpins and applies to key HR functions in relation to: • Recruitment; • Internal promotion and selection; • Performance management; • Leadership development programmes; and • Learning and development interventions.	March 2015	Trade Union Side consultation completed and HR Directors' Group agreement secured.

Improved Skills & Resourcing – Internal & External

Commitment

1. Review entry standards for new recruits.
2. Create a model redeployment scheme to manage large scale movements of staff.
3. Build on and embed working flexibilities that better meet future departmental business needs, cognisant of employment terms and conditions.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
1(i)	Review the impact of the recent decision to reinstate minimum educational qualifications in recruitment for Administrative Officer and Administrative Assistant staff.	March 2015	Review complete.
1(ii)	Evaluate the Grade 3 and Grade 5 recruitment exercises and compile lessons learned.	March 2015	Evaluation complete.
2(i)	Establish a programme to further develop agreed key proposals and recommendations arising from the 2013 scoping of Strategic Review of Staff Resourcing, to include how the new Competency Framework will underpin selection processes.	March 2015	TUS consultation completed and HRDG agreement secured to the work programme.
2(ii)	Develop a model staff redeployment scheme in consultation with departments.	March 2015	Scheme developed.
3(i)	Review effectiveness of the Workplace Flexibilities pilots agreed by HRDG and confirm flexibilities required.	June 2014	Output from pilots evaluated.
3(ii)	Consult with Central Trade Union Side on Workplace Flexibilities required.	August 2014	Package of flexibilities implemented and available.

Improved Skills & Resourcing – Internal & External (cont'd)

Commitment

1. Review entry standards for new recruits.

2. Create a model redeployment scheme to manage large scale movements of staff.

3. Build on and embed working flexibilities that better meet future departmental business needs, cognisant of employment terms and conditions.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
3(iii)	Develop project plan to deliver flexibilities within realistic timetable.	September 2014	
3(iv)	Review current policies to determine if any revisions are necessary in light of flexibilities agreed and taking into consideration the DFP Committee's Flexible Working Enquiry, once published.	October 2014	Package of flexibilities implemented and available.
3(v)	Consult and update policies to reflect any revisions as appropriate.	March 2015	
3(vi)	Engage further with Enterprise Shared Services to have system changes in place to support workplace flexibilities.	March 2015	

Improved Skills & Resourcing – Innovation in Delivery

Commitment			
1. Explore ways in which the use of technology can support an agile, flexible and mobile workforce.			
	Activities	**Milestone date**	**High level indicator**
1(i)	Complete the procurement and implementation of a Learning Management System which supports eLearning and the use of online products to complement traditional training and development methods.	December 2014	eLearning platform in place.
1(ii)	Complete an access to social media Proof of Concept and report back to PSG.	June 2014	Report produced.
1(iii)	Complete implementation and embed the new NICS Secondment policy.	March 2015	

Enabled Workforce – Engagement

Commitment			
1. Implement agreed recommendations arising from the Employee Engagement Benchmarking exercise and report.			
	Activities	**Milestone date**	**High level indicator**
1	Develop an overarching set of principles in the form of an NICS Employee Engagement Charter.	October 2014	Charter in place. Employee engagement index improved.

Enabled Workforce – Wellbeing

Commitments

1. Look to provide a range of employer funded interventions.

2. Further develop and embed new methods for reducing sickness absence.

	Activities	Milestone date	High level indicator
1	Consider the role of Mental Health First Aid to assist the NICS in the promotion of positive mental health for all staff.	September 2014	Present paper to HRDG for consideration.
2(i)	Develop an action plan to implement the recommendations agreed by PSG on Managing Attendance in the NICS.	April 2014	Action plan in place.
2(ii)	Implement actions as appropriate during 2014/15.	March 2015	Actions implemented.
2(iii)	Propose specific absence compliance measures and targets for agreement by HRDG.	April 2014	Measures and targets agreed by HRDG.
2(iv)	Produce a standard compliance report indicating departmental performance against agreed absence measures and targets – recording, return to work interviews, triggers, follow up.	June 2014	Report available and in use.
2(v)	Ensure compliance reports are actioned to ensure each department is following the agreed sickness absence procedures.	On-going	Sick absence monitoring targets achieved.
2(vi)	Initiate a review of absence compliance processes during 14/15 to determine effectiveness.	March 2015	Review commenced.

Enabled Workforce – Workplace

Commitments			
1. Create a plan to ensure staff are working in environments that are conducive to high performance.			
	Activities	**Milestone date**	**High level indicator**
1(i)	Run Proof of Concepts for use of more flexible devices, such as smart phones and tablets, log on mechanisms (e.g. Wi-Fi) and means of collaboration (such as portals), to test the business justification for enabling staff to work in more agile and flexible ways.	September 2014	Lessons learned report.
1(ii)	Consider any policy implications in the light of emerging strategy.	March 2015	
1(iii)	Continue with reform of property management arrangements arising from the Strategic Investment Board's Asset Management Strategy, one of the aims of which is to ensure that office space is suitable for the needs of the occupying department which enables it to undertake its business needs as productively and efficiently as possible.	March 2015	Reform of property management plan in place.

Glossary

This glossary provides a description of some of the terms used in the NICS Annual People Plan 2014/15.

Benchmarking - the process of gathering information about other organisations to compare against your own organisation and use that information to identify improvements in performance.

Employee engagement index - a way of measuring how engaged, or connected, staff are with the organisations they work for.

Enterprise Shared Services - a directorate within the Department of Finance and Personnel which provides shared common services to the NICS in areas such as HR, finance, IT and training.

Fast Stream Scheme – the NICS talent management programme for graduates.

Heads of Profession - a network of people appointed to the role of Head of Profession for one of the 24 professional groupings recognised within the NICS. The purpose of the network is to build capacity and capability across the NICS by providing a forum for Heads of Profession to engage with one another and also a mechanism for Corporate HR (DFP) and departmental HR Directors to engage with professions on common issues.

HR Directors Group (HRDG) - a group made up of NICS HR Directors and other senior advisers from Corporate HR, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Occupational Health Service. The group meets every two months to discuss and agree strategic-level HR issues.

NICS Competency Framework – the framework that sets out the core skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. The NICS framework outlines ten competences together with examples of effective and ineffective behaviours.

NISRA - the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

People Strategy - the NICS People Strategy 2013-16 is the high level document that sets out a series of commitments to assist in the delivery of the NI Executive's priorities through a motivated, committed and skilled workforce.

Permanent Secretaries Group (PSG) - People Sub-Group - a group made up of a number of departmental Permanent Secretaries, supported by senior advisers from Corporate HR, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and some NICS Departments. The group meets quarterly and focuses on a range of people management issues in the NICS, such as, development and talent management, resourcing, performance management, pay and reward and absence management.

Proof of Concept – evidence that a potential product or service can be successful.

Strategic Review of Staff Resourcing - an internal review of NICS' approach to staff resourcing with the aim of identifying effectiveness and efficiency improvements that take account of best practice and support the achievement of NICS and departmental business needs

Terms of reference (TOR) - set out the purpose, scope and structure of a project or a group brought together with a common goal.