

## Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

12 December 2016

### Update on Talent Management initiatives

**Summary:** To update the Board on the progress made against the 2015 -2020 Talent strategy 2015-2020 and gain agreement on direction of travel and next steps.

**Resource implications:**

Potential resource implications at divisional level when Directors review staffing commitment to the career pathways project.

**EU Referendum implications:**

No – beyond the ongoing need to ensure a talented and capable workforce to deal with any of the post Brexit scenarios

**Timings:**

Work is ongoing- details will be designed to fit into existing performance management cycle.

**Action required by Board:**

The Board are asked to note progress to date and agreements at the November CET that:

- All agency staff have a discussion with their manager about their career plans and how the agency could help them to achieve these. This will not necessitate use of the 9 box grid.
- Career conversations using the 9 box grid are extended to include grade 6 and assessors for 2017 in addition to SCS staff who received them last year.
- Succession planning be reviewed again at the Talent Review Board in 2017 with the additional consideration of 'business critical' roles
- Directors will assess their capability and succession planning needs, within Divisional/Directorate SMTS where appropriate, making reference to the career conversations and 9 box grids of Grade 6 staff.
- CET noted the progress of the Career Pathways Project and project plan and agreed to review support for the project within their own teams.
- These areas not involved with the project will agree separate timelines for progress and ensure internal communications are sent to staff explaining their position.

**Links:** CET paper on Performance Management November 2016

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**Which of the five themes in the Corporate Plan 2013/2018 does the paper support?**

Theme 5: Achieving excellence – a well-run, efficient and effective organisation. People strategy

**If relevant, which Business Plan strategic activity does it support?**

Organisational Excellence

**CET Sponsor:** Vanessa Birchall-Scott, Director of Human Resources

## Update on Talent management

### 1.0 Background:

The Agency approved a Talent and Succession strategy for 2015-2020 in Jan 2015, with the aims of:

- developing future leaders into senior roles,
- improving succession planning;
- improving access to internal and external learning opportunities (Civil Service and Department of Health);
- developing career pathways to increase internal movement and broadening career opportunities and;
- demonstrating our commitment to developing talent.

### 2.0 Progress to date

In addition to the opportunities already available for development for all staff internally and via Civil Service Learning (CSL) a number of initiatives have commenced. This includes a Head of Talent and Learning taking up post in August 2015 and a seconded career pathways lead joining in July 2016. Further initiatives are listed below:

#### 2.1 Talent Identification and development

- Formal career conversations were held using a 9 box grid as a tool, initially in 2015 with CET and their direct reports within the Senior Leadership Group and then in 2016 to also include all SCS (excluding assessors) plus two pilot Divisions of Policy and IE&S. Internal training and support was provided. 360 feedback was extended in 2016 to all SCS in line with CS requirements.
- The first agency Talent Board was convened in May 2016 and Terms of Reference agreed. The 56 individuals who had career conversations/9 box grid markings were reviewed. Directors agreed a range of approaches to keep career conversations 'alive' and extend opportunities for internal development.
- The composition of groups linked to major work streams e.g. Brexit and the Buckingham Palace Road accommodation move, included wherever possible those identified as benefitting from such development from the talent conversations.
- Action Learning Sets targeted at high potential senior staff are to commence January 2017.
- The agency has strengthened its internal coaching pool, planning a relaunch in 2017 once coaches have achieved an accredited qualification.
- A number of senior staff have obtained places on CS\DH Leadership Programmes where relevant.
- CET has confirmed the agency expectation that all newly appointed managers undertake management training and those who manage people keep their skills up to date by regular reference in their PDP. A reminder of this will be sent out internally early in 2017 to tie to new opportunities being available internally and with the relaunched CSL.

- An agency wide training needs analysis took place in 2016 leading to the development of more detailed plans and with CET agreement to progress these with divisions.

## **2.2 Succession planning**

This was assessed in each Centre/Division at Director and SCS level in 2015 and the results reviewed at the May 2016 Talent Review Board. These demonstrated that while the Agency had robust emergency plans in place, there were only obvious potential successors to replace Directors in 4 out of 10 Directorates\Divisions although three of the remaining 7 had plans in place. Below Director level longer term succession planning arrangements varied in terms of potential successors and actions in place to address. The T.R Board also noted that 66% of the senior staff who had had formal talent conversations in 2016 were aged over 50 and despite the lack of an absolute retirement age this could also impact on succession planning. The TB agreed that actions undertaken with Talent will cascade to more junior roles and improve the flow of Talent to support succession planning. Ultimately all senior/critical roles are considered with a view to there being the likelihood of potential successors who could be considered alongside external candidates for these roles.

## **2.3 Career pathways work.**

All participating divisions are making good progress on developing a skills and knowledge framework for at least two junior grades which will be published in Dec 2016. An interim career pathway tool has been designed to allow people to compare skills, qualifications and knowledge required at their current grade/role to others across the agency. The career pathways project is reviewing its IT requirements and how this will be supported by Taleo Career Development and Cloud Learning applications being introduced as part of the new HR Information System in early 2017.

The people survey results have showed initial improvements e.g. B24 “there are opportunities for me to develop my career in the agency” from: 33% to 40% between 2014 and 2016, B25 “learning and development activities I have completed while working for the agency are helping me to develop my career”: 38% to 44%, between 2014 and 2016. The intention is to continue to monitor this feedback and add further measures, including exploring approaches to support staff in (diversely) underrepresented groups and monitor progress in this area.

## **3.0 Plans agreed for 2017**

Developing talent within the organisation is as much about having conversations, raising awareness and demonstrating the commitment of the Agency to developing its talent as it is about the processes and tools used to support these. In addition to progressing initiatives noted above, future plans include

### 3.1 Talent

- All Agency staff have a discussion with their manager about their career plans and how the Agency could help them to achieve these. HR will issue guidance to managers about how and when to hold this type of conversation, which will not require use of the 9 box grid tool for more junior staff.
- Career conversations using the 9 box grid (copy of revised grid enclosed appendix 1) will be extended to include grade 6 for 2017 and potentially Grade 7s in 2018.
- Assessors in the relevant grades will be included in 2017, with the proviso that relevant Directors agree the approach.

### 3.2 Career Pathways

CET recognise that:

- divisional resources are needed to ensure the Career Pathways project continues at pace and for some this means a further commitment of resources.
- Those Divisions not fully involved in the project to date will agree separate timelines for their inclusion and ensure internal communications to their staff.
- The pathways work will link with recruitment and a need to ensure job descriptions align with the skills and knowledge based competencies for posts recruited to after Jan 2017.
- Additional grades will be added to the tool as will an indication of training needed to support staff interested in moving to a new role.

### 3.3 Succession planning

Directors will initially assess their capability and succession planning needs within Centres\Divisions, at their own Senior Manager Team meetings, making reference to the career conversations and 9 box grids of SCS and Grade 6 staff. The 2017 Talent Review Board would then consider SCS and high potential grade 6 staff. This data will also enable interventions to be designed for the 'aspiring SCS' – a group highlighted during initial succession planning discussions in 2016.

Succession planning as commenced in 2015 will:

- be reviewed at the 2017 Talent Review Board with more detailed plans for each divisions and
- the additional consideration of 'business critical' roles at all levels which will consider the risk of loss of a person together with the impact of the loss, and what contingency plans are to be set in place to cover where necessary both in emergency\short term and for possible succession arrangements.

**3.4 Assessing success** HR colleagues are establishing baseline statistics for staff movement, including diversity analysis.

Nov 2016