

Head of Human Resources – Governance and Policy (PB2)

Job summary

The Head of HR – Governance and Policy role plays a pivotal role in shaping an inclusive, sustainable and high-performing organisation. The role provides strategic leadership across the Forestry Commission's people framework, championing excellent HR policy, pensions governance, equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing, and the effective governance of all people programmes.

Working as a trusted adviser to the Executive Board and senior leaders, the post holder enables confident, well-informed decision-making, drives organisational transformation and ensures that people strategies and programmes deliver meaningful outcomes for colleagues and the organisation.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

- **HR Policy:** Set the strategic direction for HR policy, ensuring it is clear, accessible and enables managers and leaders to act confidently, consistently and fairly. Lead the ongoing evolution of people policies and guidance so they reflect organisational values, emerging best practice and the changing needs of the workforce.
- **Governance, Risk and Assurance:** Provide visible leadership on HR governance and people-related risk, creating a strong culture of accountability, transparency and continuous improvement. Anticipate change in the external environment and ensure the organisation is well-positioned to respond effectively and proportionately.
- **Strategic Advisory:** Act as a trusted strategic adviser to Senior Leadership and the Executive Board, shaping discussion and decisions on people-related opportunity, risk and organisational capability. Provide insight, challenge and assurance to support long-term sustainability and performance.
- **Employee Relations and Best Practice:** Provide strategic leadership on employee relations, setting clear expectations for fair, consistent and constructive approaches to engagement with staff and trade unions. Champion best practice and support the organisation to manage complex issues with confidence and integrity.
- **Pensions Leadership:** Accountable for the organisation's pension arrangements, ensuring they are well-governed, sustainable and clearly understood. Build confidence among colleagues and leaders in the organisation's approach to pensions through strong oversight, clear communication and effective decision-making.
- **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing:** Champion equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing across the organisation, setting a clear strategic direction and ensuring

these principles are embedded into people policies, programmes and everyday ways of working. Support the development of a culture where everyone feels valued, included and able to thrive.

- **People Programmes:** Provide strategic oversight of all people programmes, ensuring they are well-designed, outcome-focused and aligned to organisational priorities. Monitor impact and benefits, providing clear insight and assurance to the People Board and Executive Board on progress and outcomes.
- **Change and Transformation:** Support organisational change and transformation by ensuring that people policies, governance arrangements, systems and programmes enable new ways of working and strengthen organisational capability.

And any other tasks, reasonably requested by your line manager.

Location-specific information

- The role is based in the Forestry Commission National Office, Bristol.
- Blended working is available.

Skills, knowledge & experience

Essential professional and technical experience

- **Experience:** Substantial experience in a senior HR leadership role, with a strong track record of shaping policy, people programmes and governance frameworks in complex organisations.
- **Experience** of providing senior-level oversight or assurance across areas such as people policy, employee relations, pensions, equality and inclusion, wellbeing and organisational change.
- **Knowledge:** Strong understanding of UK employment law, data protection legislation, and best practices in HR compliance.
- **Skills:** Excellent communication and analytical skills, with the ability to influence senior stakeholders and present complex issues clearly and persuasively.
- **Skills:** Ability to build, review, and implement robust HR Operating systems. Proficient in KPI / Metrics / Power BI platforms.
- **Skills:** Ability to design, evaluate and improve people frameworks and operating models that support organisational strategy.
- **Qualifications:** CIPD qualification required (or equivalent experience in a Senior HR leadership role).

Desirable professional and technical experience

- **Expert Knowledge:** Deep understanding of UK employment law and HR best practices. Experience of working in, or closely with, the civil service or a large public sector organisation.
- **Strategic Thinking:** Ability to translate complex legislation into practical, user-friendly policies and operational strategies. Experienced in leading large-scale organisational change or transformation programmes using programme management methodologies.
- **Communication:** Exceptional drafting skills for high-level governance reports, policy documents, and board papers.
- **Influence:** Proven experience in negotiating with trade unions and influencing senior stakeholders in complex, committee-led environments.

Qualifications

Essential

- Requires Degree / Master's degree in HR Management or equivalent, along with Chartered CIPD membership.

Desirable

- Operational / Non-HR professional experience within complex organisations. CIPD Chartered Fellow would be desirable.

Success Profiles

- **Seeing the Big Picture**
Understanding how people policy, pensions, equality, diversity, inclusion, wellbeing and people programmes contribute to the organisation's long-term sustainability and strategic objectives.
- **Leadership**
Providing visible, inclusive leadership across the people agenda, role-modelling organisational values and creating the conditions for others to perform at their best.
- **Making Effective Decisions**
Using evidence, insight and professional judgement to balance risk, opportunity and impact, enabling confident and proportionate decision-making at senior levels.
- **Communicating and Influencing**
Building strong relationships with senior leaders, Boards, trade unions and stakeholders, and communicating complex issues clearly, credibly and persuasively.
- **Delivering at Pace**
Maintaining momentum across people programmes and priorities, responding flexibly to changing organisational needs while ensuring quality and impact.