

# NHS Job Evaluation



**January 2005**

## **BRIEFING NOTE: Job clustering**

This briefing note is intended for use by:

- UNISON/AODP Reps
- ODP managers
- Agenda for Change job evaluation project members

### **What is job clustering and what is it used for?**

Job clustering is used to identify groups of workers within larger job groups who could have common job descriptions and person specifications. This is vital preparation for possible implementation of the NHS Job Evaluation Scheme. Jobs that are clustered together and share the same job description and person specification would be matched to the same national job profile and subsequent pay band on the Agenda for Change pay scales.

Clustering therefore helps the JE project groups to identify and move groups of staff across to the new pay system. Clustering also enables early identification of inconsistencies within and across job groups.

### **How should clusters be identified?**

While each Agenda for Change project board will have its own reporting structure and responsibilities, the people nominated as the Job Evaluation (JE) leads from Staff and Management side will oversee this exercise. The JE leads will need to engage staff representatives and managers from each job group to undertake the work in each department, so it is essential that UNISON activists come forward to act as workplace representatives.

A useful way to start is for local managers, in consultation with the JE leads and local stewards, to identify the larger job groups (e.g. theatre practitioners, Senior practitioners, Team Leaders) within the department. Once the mapping exercise is complete, groups will need to be broken down into clusters of posts where skills and responsibilities are of a similar level. For example, within your Team Leader group, you will need to look at those who have particular expertise either within a clinical specialism or in a particular setting. The JE leads should be aiming to increase the accuracy of the local job matching exercise, so it is important to make sure that the clusters are an accurate reflection of the posts in the department. To facilitate this, there will need to be partnership working between the manager, the UNISON/AODP rep and the JE lead.

## **We have existing job descriptions that use Whitley definitions – why can't we use these?**

Unless your job descriptions are very recent, it is unlikely that they will accurately describe the responsibilities and skills of each post/group of posts. The NHS Job Evaluation Scheme is a means of introducing an equal-pay based scheme across all NHS staff groups. In a few areas, current Whitley grading may be a good place to start for some staff. But for others, there is a need to start from scratch and re-examine the core roles, responsibilities and skills of posts. If revised job descriptions are based solely on Whitley or current grading, there is a real danger that the inequalities of the current system will be reproduced. This not only works against the equal pay principles of the NHS JE scheme, but also increases the likelihood that matching panel results will be inaccurate and that branches will have to spend more time than necessary supporting and advising members through the review process.

## **When does this need to be done?**

The sooner you actively engage in this work, whether as a JE lead, a manager or a steward, the better. NHS employers will be under pressure to complete their job matching by the end of March 2005, so now will be the crunch time.

## **Where can I get more help?**

Your local Job Evaluation project lead should be able to guide you through how this process is being managed in your workplace. The UNISON website: [www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk) has useful information on Agenda for Change. For more ODP specific advice, refer to documents on the AODP website: [www.aodp.org](http://www.aodp.org) There are also useful resources on the modernisation agency website with good practice from the Early Implementer sites: [www.modern.nhs.uk](http://www.modern.nhs.uk)