

COVER LETTER TO: ADDENDUM TO CIRCULAR LGRJF/01 - NOVEMBER 2009

To: Chief Executives of District Councils, arc21 & SWaMP 2008

Cc: DoE Local Government Division, Public Service Commission

Dear Colleague

1. The attached addendum is to be read in conjunction with the Vacancy Control Procedures currently operating within local government. This has been agreed by the Local Government Reform Joint Forum (LGRJF) and is promulgated under the authority of the Local Government Staff Commission under Section 40(4) (f) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.
2. In accordance with the Northern Ireland Executive's Guiding Principles all employing authorities should immediately engage with their local NIJC recognised Trade Unions to consider application and implementation arrangements.
3. Until the formal establishment of the Local Forum all local government Employers must consult/negotiate with the NIJC Trade Unions on application of the Vacancy Control measures.
4. In the event that interpretation matters arise or clarification is necessary contact should in the first instance be made with the Staff Commission, or the LGRJF Joint Leads.



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LGSC



B GRAHAM
LGRJF TUS Lead



M TAGGART
LGRJF Employers' Lead

09 NOVEMBER 2009

INFORMATION BULLETIN - 09 NOVEMBER 2009

ADDENDUM TO CIRCULAR LGRJF/01

VACANCY CONTROL SYSTEM - DETAILED PROCEDURE

This Addendum should be read in conjunction with Circular LGRJF/01 – September 2009 *Vacancy Control System – Detailed Procedure* and its covering letter. The Addendum is intended to clarify some aspects of the Vacancy Control System and provide an update on other aspects.

1.0 Consultation and Negotiation with Recognised Trade Unions

In accordance with the NI Executive's Guiding Principles and the provisions of Circular LGRJF/02 – *Model Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements for Local Consultation and Negotiation Forums at Transition Committee Level* all employing authorities should immediately engage with their local NIJC recognised Trade Unions to consider application and implementation arrangements for the Vacancy Control System.

2.0 Phasing of Introduction of “at risk” Posts

The vacancy control system, with effect from 01 October 2009, has applied to vacancies for the following posts in the **phase 1 “at risk” category** i.e.:

- Chief Executive
- Directors
- Heads of Service
- PAs to Chief Executives, Directors and Heads of Service
- Member Services

The Joint Forum is keeping the phasing of “at risk” posts under review and will discuss phase 2 implementation at its meeting on 25 November 2009, further advice will be issued thereafter.

Where posts have been formally identified as being “at risk” and other vacancies arise which are not in the “at risk” category a council must first consider retraining, re-skilling or re-deploying the existing staff in “at risk” posts in order to mitigate against any potential redundancies before taking any further action.

3.0 Restricted Pools

For clarity, paragraph **2. Application** on page 2. of the Detailed Guidance states:

“ ... all 26 councils (including Environmental Health and Building Control Group Committees), arc21 and SWaMP 2008 will implement the Vacancy Control System uniformly across local government ...”

Therefore in considering the use of restricted pools in accordance with **Step 3** on page 9 of the Detailed Procedure the restricted pool identified at the third bullet point i.e.

- “at risk” staff across all the 26 councils

should be taken to include all 26 councils (including Environmental Health Building Control Group Committees) arc21 and SWaMP 2008.

4.0 Posts Excluded from Vacancy Control Procedures

Rather than provide a model letter to councils for issue to staff in “at risk” posts the Joint Forum has agreed to supplement the information on the phased introduction of “at risk” posts with the following information on posts which are not “at risk”. Employers should ensure that this information is communicated to all staff.

The following posts are excluded from Vacancy Control Procedures:

- The majority of operational posts in councils which are necessary for the effective implementation of councils’ functions.
- Posts in which the staff are not “at risk”, and which, following full consideration of the options available including detailed examination of retraining, would not be suitable redeployment opportunities.
- Posts for which the necessary skills and experience do not exist within the system.

These posts should be publicly advertised in the normal way, following full engagement with the trade unions at the local joint forums as described at 1.0 above, as outlined in the Local Government Staff Commission’s Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection.

5.0 Monitoring and Review Arrangements

In order for the Independent Secretariat to make progress reports to the Joint Forum as outlined in paragraph 3.5 of the Detailed Procedure, councils should submit copies of all completed Vacancy Control System Proformas (Appendix 3 of the Detailed Procedure) to Lisa O’Neill at Commission House **by Monday 07 December 2009** for the period 01 October - 30 November 2009. Further advice on the next monitoring period will be issued in due course.

A Word or PDF version of the Vacancy Control System Proforma is available on request from the Commission.

The Detailed Procedures will be kept under review by the Joint Forum on an ongoing basis.

6.0 For More Information Please Contact:

LGRJF Independent Secretariat; Commission House, 18-22 Gordon Street, BELFAST, BT1 2LG; Tel: (028) 9031 3200; Email: lgrjf@lgsc.org.uk