

Gloucestershire County Council

uses NorthgateArinso Reward Solutions to ensure that staff are being paid equally

The organisation

Gloucestershire County Council provides a wide range of public services to the people of Gloucestershire. It employs 15,775 people across the county and serves the region's population of 575,000.

The challenge

Equal pay is an important consideration for any company but large public sector organisations must be particularly careful to ensure that all staff are paid equally, regardless of gender, ethnicity, location or age.

Pay discrimination is rarely deliberate, but litigation against local councils can damage reputations and cost thousands.

Gloucestershire County Council wanted to ensure that employees were being paid equally across the organisation and that there was no room for discrepancies between Directorates.

The solution

To assist with this aim, the Council rolled out Evaluate, from NorthgateArinso Reward Solutions, at the start of 2007. The job evaluation tool examines different job descriptions and salaries in an organisation, to ensure pay levels are consistent throughout.

Linda Hopkins, principal HR advisor at Gloucestershire County Council, explained: "Evaluate allows us to take an unbiased look at the pay structure of our organisation, to ensure we provide fair pay systems. It also allows us to examine our pay structure in relation to external market salary bands, to make sure we are attracting and retaining the best staff."

The web-hosted Evaluate solution has improved the performance, speed and efficiency of the Council's outdated database GLPC system. As it sits on a web server it is quick and easy to use with an unlimited number of users able to access the system at any one time. Also, with an increase in flexible working practices staff can log on without coming into the office.

"We have always supported flexible working for Council staff, and wanted the HR team to be able to practice what it preached," continued Hopkins. "Working from home is a huge benefit for employees and we didn't want the HR team to miss out. The job evaluation database is used by several HR staff, so we decided to move the system online."

In the process of transitioning to a hosted environment, a dummy system was set up to allow staff to pilot it, which initially ran parallel to the 'live' database. NorthgateArinso Reward Solutions worked closely with the Council throughout the process, making changes following user feedback and easing the transition.

The Benefits

When it went live, workers in the HR team experienced the benefits of NorthgateArinso's solution immediately. An unlimited number of users can now log on to the hosted system, which accesses accurate, up-to-date information quickly. Also being able to log on from home helped flexible working to become a realistic option for all employees.



"What our customer said"

"We have the confidence of knowing that we pay equally across the Council, and that job specifications are consistent and fair."

Linda Hopkins, Principal HR Advisor

"HR team members who couldn't work from home before can do so now," continued Hopkins. "As the web-based software needs very little bandwidth, we can get to information quickly, and without compromising security. Also, because it works so much faster, staff are spending less time sourcing information from the database, and more time concentrating on strategic tasks."

The Future

"We have the confidence of knowing that we pay equally across the Council, and that job specs are consistent and fair," said Hopkins. "Equal pay audits can strike fear into any local council HR manager, but we feel prepared because we've got all the information we need at our fingertips."

"We will continue to use Evaluate to ensure we are paying staff as fairly as possible. Having a fair, clearly defined salary policy keeps employees happy and reduces staff turnover."

For more information

With the skills, experience and market knowledge of NorthgateArinso behind you, you too can be well placed to translate the HR challenges your organisation is facing into powerful opportunities.

For an initial discussion about your requirements, call us on 01244 572700.
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or visit www.northgatearinso.com/uk/reward



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