

Hounslow Homes

simplifies job evaluation and equal pay reviews

The organisation

Hounslow Homes is an Arms Length Management Organisation with a contract to manage and maintain the housing stock of the London Borough of Hounslow. The organisation's 600 staff, 50% of who are 'blue collar', work across a wide range of disciplines and were successful in achieving the highest possible three star rating by the Audit Commission in 2005. Hounslow Homes also achieved the government's decency standard across the whole of the Council's housing stock in 2007.

The situation

Job evaluation has always been carried out manually by Hounslow Homes. However, the paper-based system they used was proving to be inefficient and so a better solution was required.

In addition, partly because Hounslow is a very diverse area, an equal pay review solution was needed to ensure that the reality of employment in Hounslow Homes matches up to its stated commitment to equality.

The solution

Hounslow Homes streamlined their approach to job evaluation by using Evaluate, a tried and tested solution from NorthgateArinso Reward Solutions. They later chose NorthgateArinso's Equal Pay Reviewer to assess their equal pay compliance.

Efficiency and objectivity in job evaluation

Evaluate can support any point-factor job evaluation framework, including Hounslow Homes' choice of the Greater London Provincial Council approach.

"Initially there was a considerable task to check our employee data and correct any inconsistencies before populating the Evaluate database," says Graham Spiller, Head of HR. "But that was in itself a useful exercise and once complete meant we were confident about the accuracy and usefulness of the data.

Parminder Nijjar, Senior HR Advisor, explains how Evaluate has proved its worth in practice:

"Evaluate maintains results of each job evaluation and holds them ready for online access. It has proved to be very easy to use and everyone has adapted to it quite quickly. Its workflow-based environment is especially effective at making sure that tasks are completed on the right schedule and monitored too."

"But there's more to Evaluate than its ease of use and efficiency. I particularly like the way that it has brought excellent objectivity to the evaluation process. It takes a very analytical approach, so the process is carried out without the subjective judgements that could otherwise cause inconsistencies."

The usability and objectivity of Evaluate have combined to enable Hounslow Homes to find a particularly efficient way of completing the job evaluation exercise, as Parminder explains: "I know that one way to carry out the evaluation exercise is to hold extensive one-to-one interviews with managers and staff, but we have found it possible to base things on job descriptions."

"The reporting capability of Evaluate has also proved to be of considerable benefit in terms of transparency. Managers have been able to see the method we used, and in all but a few cases have agreed with the evaluation we have made."



"What our customer said"

"Equal Pay Reviewer has all the tools we need and means we aren't relying on a manual process. We have access to comprehensive data presented in charts and graphs which can be quickly understood."

Graham Spiller, Head of HR

Setting the scene for pay equality

The use of Evaluate to complete an objective and transparent evaluation was itself a valuable exercise in terms of identifying any pay inequality. To complete the process, Hounslow Homes went on to adopt NorthgateArinso's Equal Pay Reviewer solution.

One of the drivers for investing in looking at equal pay is the range of new duties Hounslow Homes are likely to face once the new Equality Bill becomes law. But more importantly, as an Equal Opportunities Employer the organisation is committed to equal pay regardless of the legislative environment.

"Equal Pay Reviewer is enabling Hounslow Homes to get an accurate picture, with lots of useful data," says Graham Spiller. "It is important that we establish with some certainty whether there are any 'glass ceilings' within the organisation linked to age, gender or ethnicity."

"The review will enable us to make management decisions around equal pay, as well as equipping us to answer any questions from stakeholders about our remuneration performance. Equal Pay Reviewer has all the tools we need and means we aren't relying on a manual process. We have access to comprehensive data presented in charts and graphs which can be quickly understood."

"We have found that the systems driven approach we are using in both the job evaluation and equal pay exercises has helped to eliminate subjectivity from these difficult areas. We are happy to recommend NorthgateArinso's solutions to other organisations looking to take the next step forward in ensuring equality in employment."

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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