

STAFF NOTICE 66

Personnel Division
Silvan House
Edinburgh EH12 7AT

Notice To All Staff

File Ref: PP9

REQUESTS FOR TRANSFER WITHIN THE FC

Introduction

1. This Staff Notice re-launches a new transfer register within the FC. Staff Notice 66 dated March 2001 should now be deleted.

Why change the procedures?

2. Feedback from the first staff survey, and the follow up Connect workshops, highlighted some concerns about the current procedures and raised doubts as to whether all staff were aware of the opportunities to request a career development move. The system has therefore been amended to ensure that sound career development moves are given proper consideration and that these are logged on a database to which FDM/Conservator level managers will have access via a password protected function (contact your Customer Services Manager to obtain the password – for FC/FR Jean Lindsay on 0131 314 6338, for FE David Taylor on 0131 314 6379). In addition, the transfer register will also include information from staff who are coming to the end of a specialist tour, returning from a secondment or career break, thus providing for the first time one record of all staff who need to move.

What is a Development Transfer?

3. The Commission's aim is to organise a transfer for developmental reasons where it will clearly benefit both the individual and the organisation. The individual will either be:

- ❑ one who has the ability to learn and make a good contribution in another job at the same level and there is a clear need to extend their range of experience for the benefit of the FC; or
- ❑ one who has clear potential for promotion in the short to medium term and there would be clear benefits to both the individual and organisation to widen their range of knowledge or experience.

4. Requests for transfer will not be accepted where poor performance procedures, such as a trial period, are either appropriate or are being applied.

Summary of the changes

5. The main changes are:

- ❑ Staff will complete a [transfer request form](#) (available on eConnect Personnel content area, Transfer Register folder) to record their request for a developmental or compassionate transfer when this cannot be accommodated within their own unit. Staff coming to the end of specialist tour, career break or returning from a secondment will also be included on the register;
- ❑ Line managers (either the Reporting Officer or Confirming Officer) will 'sign off' the application, with the FDM/Conservator's agreement, indicating whether it has their support. They will route it to the Territorial Director/Chief Conservator/Head of Division/Chief Executive Forest Research. All requests will be passed to Personnel Services;
- ❑ For requests for career development moves, individuals will be asked to specify on the application form the personal development objectives they are trying to achieve by the change of job;
- ❑ Details will be transferred on to the 'online [Transfer Register](#)'. Managers at FDM/Conservator level and above will be able to view this information by using a password-protected function. Transfers will be arranged by Personnel Services, HQ.

Moves within National/Territorial Areas

6. Territorial Directors, Chief Conservators and Chief Executive Forest Research will be expected to accommodate any legitimate development or compassionate transfer requests where these can be met within their area of responsibility.

How do I go about requesting a move?

Development Move

7. Development needs are usually identified from a Performance Management review, a Personal Development Plan or an unsuccessful application for promotion.

8. Within the overall criteria in paragraph 3, reasons for requesting a transfer on developmental grounds could include:

- ◇ to gain a balanced range of forestry experience e.g. a Woodland Officer wishing to move to an FE FM Forester post;

- ◇ to gain experience of different forestry environments within the same function e.g. an HM Forester moving from an upland forestry location to a lowland forestry location.
- ◇ to develop a new area of knowledge e.g. a Finance Officer moving to the Personnel function.

9. The line manager will confirm on the form whether they think that the request is reasonable, (for example, that the individual has the potential to benefit from a move, that the career development aims are realistic and achievable and are not ones that can be accommodated in the unit). The line management team should also be satisfied that the development reasons are compelling and likely to be of benefit to the FC. The line management team will forward it to the Territorial Director, Chief Conservator, Head of Division. Approved requests, that cannot be met locally, will be passed to the Customer Services Manager in Personnel, Silvan House.

10. Development transfer requests will be logged on the register by Personnel when:

- it is clear from the individual's previous track record that he/she has the potential, ability and motivation to benefit from a move; and
- he/she has not already had various moves which have offered development opportunities; and
- the development aims cannot be met from within the current unit or the national/territorial area; and
- clear benefits for the FC outweigh the costs that may be involved.

Compassionate Moves

11. Staff applying to move for compassionate reasons will include the reasons for the compassionate request. Reasons for requesting a transfer on compassionate grounds could include:

- A move to a different part of the country to accompany a spouse or partner.

Managers will be expected to make a decision, with advice from Personnel Services, on whether the compassionate reasons are compelling enough to justify a move on public interest terms and should communicate their decision to the individual.

Personnel will exclude any personal information from the register that the individual would prefer not be disclosed.

End of Career Specialist Tours

12. Personnel staff will aim to discuss the options with an individual in this group around 18 months before the tour is due to end. After the discussion, the individual will complete the transfer form, the contents of which will be needed to help Personnel identify suitable posts with other managers. Details will be included on the register.

End of Career Breaks/Secondments

13. Although these situations are not 'transfers' in the strict sense because the individual will usually be returning to their original location, Personnel Services will ask for a transfer form to be completed to aid the process of finding a post. These will be put on the register but are normally given priority over other requests.

What action is taken once the form is completed?

14. Senior managers will forward the form electronically to their Customer Services contact (see paragraph 2 above). Personnel Services will add the form onto the on line Transfer Register, which will be regularly updated. Access to the information will be password protected and only made available to FDMs/Conservators/Heads of Divisions/Territorial Directors/Chief Conservators/Chief Executive Forest Research and Personnel staff.

Action by unit managers when a vacancy arises

15. Prior to filling any vacancy the FDM/Conservator/Head of Branch will be asked by the Customer Services Manager to consider the suitability of staff registered on the [Transfer Register](#) for example by considering the desired development goals against the main duties for the vacant post. The presumption will be that registered request applications will be accommodated in suitable vacant posts before Personnel will trawl the post or fill the post by other means. Staff can only be considered for a transfer to a post in their current Pay Band.

16. If the manager thinks that they may be able to offer a suitable post, they should initially contact their Personnel Services contact who acts as 'broker' in all situations.

What expenses can I get if I obtain a transfer to another location?

17. The Transfer Request form asks individuals whether or not they are prepared to move on voluntary transfer terms i.e. are prepared to meet all costs associated with the transfer. Staff whose development transfer is accepted as meeting all the conditions in paragraphs 3 and 10 will, however, usually be able to move on public interest terms.

Public interest terms will also apply for:

- People returning from career breaks and secondments who cannot be accommodated at their last permanent duty station and have to take up a post elsewhere;
- Staff leaving a specialist tour in Forest Research;
- Compassionate transfer cases (see paragraph 11).

Career Development Policy and Advice

18. The Forestry Commission is committed to the development of staff. Responsibility for this is shared between the individual and the line manager who between them will agree a [Training and Development Plan](#) (available on eConnect) which identifies development needs and the method of pursuing this. Development can also be obtained 'on the job' through the provision of new duties, responsibilities, coaching and job-swaps between team members. Other needs can be met through secondments and career development transfers.

Career development advice can be obtained from local Personnel contacts and Customer Service Managers in HQ and staff are encouraged to make use of this service if he/she wishes to move to a different kind of job.

Who do I speak to for any help or advice regarding these procedures?

18. Get in touch with your Personnel Services contact as detailed in the [Personnel People](#) area on eConnect.

W J Anderson
Personnel Division
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