

## Questions & Answers following Yvonne Thomas's teleconference with CRC staff

4<sup>th</sup> August 2016

Thank you for all your questions submitted for the Q&A and asked during the teleconference.

For all new questions please liaise with your line manager in the first instance.

Yvonne Thomas hosted a telephone Q&A session with staff from across the CRCs earlier this month and a summary is provided below.

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### Q1. Is there a plan for some offices to be open-plan, and open to service users?

The process for all of the work on our new buildings is the same. We get draft plans, we then bring those back to staff in order to get your comments and then hold a period of consultation. We want to make sure that our work spaces are contemporary and fit for purpose, and we also want to ensure service users have a space they are able to respect, that keeps everyone safe.

There have been stories on the internet and in the media concerning providers elsewhere who are allegedly asking staff to conduct service user supervision sessions in booths and open offices. That's not how we conduct our business because where confidentiality is required, there will be space in order to operate in a confidential manner. Risk assessments will never take second place to design or cost considerations.

### Q2. Will the Professional Services Centre (PSC) operate like a call centre e.g. will we be timed or have to put our hand up to go the toilet?

No! It's not a service centre, it's not a call centre; they will be three, modern, lovely state-of-the-art offices and I hope everyone who's going to be working in them likes them as much as I do. It will not mean any changes to the way we treat each other as professionals or the way in which we work. It's just a better environment.

### Q3. When can we expect ICT rollout?

We are hopeful that by the end of the year you should have your new devices.

### Q4. When can we expect the Case Management System (CMS) roll out?

Work on CMS is developing and - if we get through our security accreditation with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) - we should have the first iteration going into the PSC in October. The MoJ's end of the integration of CMS has been badly delayed, which has caused problems. But we will be using elements of the CMS at the PSC and that will give us a really good chance to further develop the software. Then - subject to the MoJ's gateway being available - will release the full CMS into a CRC before fully rolling the system out.

### Q5. Will the ICT roll out enable flexible working?

ICT will give flexible working provision, but the decision regarding flexible working is not purely down to ICT, because it is subject to what line managers agree with staff. Also, for some assisted technology (AT) users - unless they have very specific mobile duties - will be getting desktop equipment because otherwise as we cannot deliver a number of AT requirements or cover our duty of care to AT users.

### Q6. Can any clarification be given around timescales for redundancy?

All of those potentially affected will have meetings with their managers. Timescales will vary and depend on individual circumstances because some roles will remain longer than others. There is a commitment to work as quickly as possible in order to provide this information to you.

We envisage that we will have people leaving in a managed way through the remainder of the year and possibly into January and February of next year because there are some functions - particularly around HR, payroll, etc. - where we've got colleagues who are very capable of doing the job, but

they're in the wrong geographical place; and we want to try and make sure that they can be part of the transition.

**Q7. Will people who are being made redundant be required to work their notice periods?**

This will depend on individual circumstances.

**Q8. Will people on fixed-term contracts be leaving when they complete their terms, or will they have the chance to source alternative employment?**

We are committed to mitigating redundancies for our permanent and fixed-term contract employees. We will be identifying suitable alternative opportunities for our permanent employees first. From the remaining available vacancies, we will then look for suitable alternative opportunities for employees on fixed-term contracts. We therefore encourage you to submit an expression of interest for any roles you may be interested in.

**Q9. Is the redundancy offer of 4.5 weeks for every years' service, and not just the service after two years?**

It is for every years' service

**Q10. I am on maternity leave / sick leave. How will I know what is happening?**

We are committed to making you aware of what is happening and to discuss with you any suitable alternative opportunities. For this reason, an appropriate manager will be contact to arrange a consultation meeting.

**Q11. Can those who are being made redundant have time off for interviews or writing CVs?**

Once the consultation process is complete and your role has been made redundant, you will be able to take a reasonable amount of time off work to look for alternative opportunities and to arrange training to help your job search. You will also be provided with time off to attend the outplacement workshops delivered by Working Transitions.

**Q12. Can I get legal advice about the settlement agreement that forms part of the Enhanced Redundancy Package?**

Yes. Obtaining legal advice is a necessary part of reaching a settlement agreement. You may use a local solicitor and Interserve will pay up to £350 plus VAT towards your legal fees. It is likely that the trades unions will provide details of their solicitors who can provide this advice. This will be available to members but if contacted by non-members it is unlikely that they will be turned away.

**Q13. Why do people who are mapped and matched to a job above their current band have to go on a 'development plan'?**

This decision has been reviewed and now people will move to the higher pay band when they take up their new position on the understanding that they will undertake a development plan as agreed with their manager.

**Q14. Will a list of potential jobs be available to staff in the initial consultation meetings?**

It is hoped where there are suitable vacancies that they are available at the initial consultation meeting but unfortunately we cannot guarantee this will be the case.

**Q15. What happens if you get offered a job elsewhere while in the 'at risk' period - would you still be entitled to redundancy?**

This depends where you are in the process as people will have various leaving dates, but if you get an external job and want to be released early this will be considered alongside business needs. If you can be released then you will still get 'redundancy' but if you are still needed and cannot be released then you would have to stay or leave without a redundancy payment.

**Q16. What terms and conditions will apply to people who are seconded into different roles?**

Employees that are seconded will retain their current terms and conditions and pension.

**Q17. Secondment agreements are for a fixed term. What does that mean in our context?**

The secondment is intended to last for the duration of the contract with the Ministry of Justice that was for seven years from February 2015. If the contract is renewed or extended, then it is likely that the secondments will also be extended.

**Q18. Will secondees be treated just like CRC staff?**

In terms of your pension and your employment, you are employed by the CRC. In terms of your management, your direction and your working practices, you are seconded and therefore subject to the line management in the PSC.

**Q19. If you are made redundant, what happens to pension payments?**

Your current pension would be frozen and you then get a number of options from your pension provider.

The process is different for people aged over 55. The redundancy payment is paid with the maximum of six to seven and half weeks' pay which is the matched scheme, then there is an immediate payment to the standard retirement pension and the pension lump sum.

**Q20. What if I leave for another role outside the company before the consultation process is complete e.g. before I am made redundant?**

The company is committed to minimise redundancies. Therefore if you find a role outside the organisation before the company has had the opportunity to identify a suitable alternative vacancy for you, then you will normally be required to resign and will lose the right to redundancy payment.

**Q21. Our current team arrangement helps us to support each other. If we're going to be out in the community much more, how can we support each other and share best practice while being more isolated?**

We need to preserve the best from our culture of collaborative working and renew that practice with an increased focus on working in the community. Because of the new tools, infrastructure and techniques that teams will be using, spending more time in the community won't mean people are divorced from their colleagues in a way which could damage practice.

We are creating a knowledge management system to enable staff to bounce ideas off each other, access relevant documents and share good practice guides. Also, we are not scattering people out into the community to never, ever be back in touch with each other - you are still a team, you will all still see each other, there will still be team meetings, there will still be team events. Your interchange manager will be looking for creative ways to connect you. You will also be part of a continuous professional development community so you'll all be looking at getting together for action learning sets, for practice forums and so on.

**Q22. When can I start my PSC role?**

The PSC will mobilise in a way that reduces the impact in CRCs by trying to limit the number of requests for staff to be released without first having that work supported by the PSC. To do this, things need to mobilise in a certain order. Some staff may be released early in order to get a head start on training and learning the new role but this has to be done by negotiation between PSC and CRCs to make sure the impact on the business is not significant. The PSC team is working to a timetable and more information will be shared as soon as the timetable is agreed.

**Q23. If you do not have a relevant degree, what is the progression route for the PQF, will the criteria be changed?**

The entry requirements for the PQiP qualification (the new name for the PQF) are set by the NPS and we have no influence over the criteria for this qualification.