

## **General Guide to Single Status Job Evaluation**

### **Context**

This general guide serves as an introduction to the process and how it relates to library staff working in local authorities. The levels suggested in the document are not legally binding and will not guarantee individuals similar levels. Posts will be evaluated as they currently stand, but may this may be used as a general guide to what is a reasonable expectation of the process and outcome.

### **Introduction**

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has developed a job evaluation scheme which reflects the range of jobs in Scottish unitary authorities. This scheme was based on the work carried out in England and Wales by the National Joint Council for Local Government.

The scheme seeks to use a single framework to achieve grading structures. COSLA has provided a manual to Scottish local authorities but Councils are implementing the scheme differently within the context of their own local circumstances.

This document seeks to give an introduction to the Single Status Job Evaluation for library staff. The process involves the evaluation of individual circumstances. There is no value in reiterating the single status documentation here and it is not possible to provide examples for all the different library posts that exist. However, by using three broad categories of staff, this document should help members gain a better level of expectation and understanding of the job evaluation process.

The broad categories are:

1. Frontline library staff in community and school libraries
2. Professional staff in community libraries and school librarians
3. Library Service Managers

Comments are made for groups of staff where there is a specific relevance. The full scheme gives definitions and guidance notes, and readers are asked to refer to it.

- **Each job is evaluated as it currently stands, so is workplace specific, task-specific and should be based on normal patterns of use and users.**
- **It is important to remember that it is the predominant task in normal work which is evaluated.**
- **Including tasks in more than one factor is seen as double-counting.**

There are 4 important guiding principles.

- a) This is about the post and not personal so all information about how it has been evaluated can be requested and should be provided under Freedom of Information legislation.
- b) The base assumption is that the post holder is fully trained, experienced and is performing to a competent standard.
- c) The jobs are evaluated as they currently stand, not taking into account future developments or previous practice.

d) The focus is on job content – not driven by meeting previous levels of pay, status etc.

There are 13 Factors about which staff will be asked to provide information. The factors are intended to assess the demands of the job in two ways:

- a) The nature and/or degree of demand
- b) The frequency and/or duration of demand

### **The 13 Factor Framework**

1. Working Environment
2. Physical Co-ordination
3. Physical Effort
4. Mental Skills
5. Concentration
6. Communication Skills
7. Dealing with Relationships
8. Responsibility for Employees
9. Responsibility for Services to Others
10. Responsibility for Financial Resources
11. Responsibility for Physical and Information Resources
12. Initiative and Independence
13. Knowledge

Each Factor has a number of Levels and scoring is based on the Level. The number of Levels varies from Factor to Factor. Level 1 is the lowest and Level 9 (Factor 13 only) is the highest. The scores will be used to determine job grades.

#### **1. Working Environment**

This covers all aspects of the physical environmental working conditions in which the job is undertaken, including dirt, smells and noise resulting from both the physical environment and contact or work with people.

Library staff normally work indoors. Specifically disagreeable, unpleasant, uncomfortable or hazardous conditions might include for library staff dust, dirt, temperature extremes and variations, humidity, noise or smells. Whilst there might be levels of noise which might be mildly disagreeable, it is unlikely it continues for more than 40% of working time. Other hazardous conditions relating to the working environment (unavoidable, integral parts of the job) may include risk of illness or injury arising from exposure to diseases, lone working or work locations.

Library staff work predominantly indoors or travelling between locations, which does not normally involve prolonged (more than 60% of working time) exposure to unpleasant, disagreeable or hazardous conditions. (Level 1)

#### **2. Physical Co-ordination**

This factor looks at the predominant physical skills or co-ordination required to do the job in the course of normal working.

Library staff may find their predominant task requiring physical co-ordination comes from one of these:

- Manual or finger dexterity – keyboarding, filing, arranging books, operation of

library management systems

- Hand-eye co-ordination – using microfiche, arranging books
- Driving skills – where this is an essential part of the post – such as mobile library driver, or where driving is a recruitment criteria for travel between designated work places.
- Keyboarding skills – a high level of precision but not usually speed

Library staff are likely to require moderate precision in the use of dexterity, co-ordination and/or senses. (Level 2)

### **3. Physical Effort**

Factor 3 moves on to look at the type, amount, continuity and frequency of physical effort required to do the job. Physical effort in the normal course of working includes standing, walking, lifting, carrying (weight is not a factor), pulling, pushing, working in awkward positions such as bending, crouching, stretching; sitting, standing or working in constrained positions.

Library staff are normally required to use a degree of physical effort in their daily work. Whilst standing and walking may be regarded by many as relatively effortless, it is the frequency and continuous nature of the activity which is important. Many library staff spend long periods standing or walking. (The term frequently equates to 41-60% of working time.) Library staff may work in slightly awkward positions on a periodic basis (5-20% of working time– during the process of shelving resources, moving furniture, connecting up electrical equipment, and resources.

Library staff are likely to have the greatest demand required as part of the usual routine of the job involving primarily limited physical effort on a regular basis or considerable physical effort on a periodic basis or a high degree of physical effort on an occasional basis. (Level 2)

### **4. Mental Skills**

This factor focuses on the range of thinking skills and mental skills required for the job, irrespective of initiative and independence. It relates from planning and scheduling to exercising judgment and creativity.

Library posts vary greatly and so will the degree of mental skills required. Many library staff are involved in scheduling and planning, such as staff rotas, community library cover, class visits, mobile library routes etc., as part of their normal routine.

Library staff will interpret information or situations, and solve generally similar problems and/or schedule work and activities for themselves/other for more than a week in advance. (Level 2)

School librarians and some public library staff, for example, will be required to create and maintain a plan for activities up to a year in advance or analyse complex information, problems or situations, and contribute to the development of strategies or plans for implementation up to 3 years ahead. (Level 4) Evaluators might take the view that the plans are cyclical and this would reduce the rating to Level 3.

Working on a progressively demanding scale, a Senior Manager will hold a post which predominantly requires mental skills to analyse complex information, problems or situations, and to develop strategies or plans requiring very complex planning activity. (Level 5).

## 5. Concentration

This factor considers the nature, degree and duration of concentration, mental alertness and attention required to do the job on a day-to-day, rather than exceptional basis.

Library staff will require differing levels of concentration for varying lengths of time.

- General concentration will be required for completing regular tasks, enhanced attention will be required for preparing reports or shelving books, and focussed concentration will be required when supervising use by children or adults with special needs, making presentations or leading learning activities.
- Limited – can determine own priorities, unaffected by interruptions or can concentrate solely on task at hand.
- Considerable – less control over deadlines, has to deal with interruptions or is required to switch between tasks.
- High – working to externally set deadlines, required to concentrate on repetitive work, working environment includes unavoidable interruptions, dealing with simultaneous or conflicting demands or the post-holder has to switch between a range of activities.

Library staff may find that the highest concentration required by the job, on a day-to-day basis is a general mental and sensory attention. They may experience limited or considerable degree of work related pressure for short periods of enhanced mental or sensory attention with a limited degree of work-related pressure. (Level 1) There may be an argument to be put forward for Level 2, on the grounds that frontline staff may predominantly have a *high degree of work-related pressure*.

School librarians and some public library staff, for example, may find that the highest concentration required by the job, on a day-to-day basis is either lengthy (between 1 and 2 hours at a time) periods of enhanced mental and sensory attention and a high degree of work related pressure or short periods of focused mental or sensory attention with a considerable degree of work-related pressure. (Level 3)

Working on a progressively demanding scale, a Senior Manager will hold a post in which the highest concentration required by the job, on a day-to-day basis is either prolonged (more than 2 hours at a time) or lengthy periods of enhanced mental or sensory attention with a high degree of work-related pressure. (Level 5)

## 6. Communication Skills

The majority of these features must be a regular part of the job.

Library work requires communication for different purposes, of various levels of sensitivity or status and to different audiences. Most library staff will be required to seek and explain information, some will be involved in training and others in formal advocacy.

For example, passing on information about services, explaining use of online reference sources, developing, delivering and evaluating information skills programmes or presenting the Council's case for changes to service provision.

Library staff may find that the most demanding type of communication routinely required in the job is communication with immediate work colleagues only; or exchanging information of a routine nature, usually orally with colleagues in other departments and/or other contacts such as suppliers, clients or the public; or seeking and/or providing information, orally or in writing with

colleagues in other departments or other contacts including the public, who are familiar with the subject matter. (Level 1)

School librarians and some public library staff, for example, may find that the most demanding type of communication routinely required in the job is eliciting and/or explaining information, orally or in writing, with contacts unlikely to be unfamiliar with the subject matter; or exercising communication skills in advising, guiding, persuading in order to inform others; or delivering informal training or presentations to colleagues or others who are familiar with the subject matter. (Level 3)

Working on a progressively demanding scale, a Senior Manager will hold a post in which the most demanding type of communication routinely required in the job is either eliciting and/or explaining complex and contentious information with a range of audiences including non-specialists; or exercising highly developed communication skills in advising, counselling, negotiating, persuading or informal advocacy, in order to convince others to adopt courses of action they might not otherwise wish to take. (Level 5)

## **7. Dealing with Relationships**

This factor looks at the demands made by people-related features of the job. It includes the interpersonal skills needed to deal with and/or care for other people who are upset, difficult, angry, confused, have special needs or are disadvantaged in some way. It also considers the needs to cope with abuse, aggression, the threat of violence, and/or to deal with conflict.

Library work includes contact with people including the public, elected members, suppliers, other council employees and partners from external organisations. However, most of this contact is incidental and it is important to remember that evaluation is based on the frequency and duration of the contact, as part of normal working life. The definitions of demanding are:

- Slightly demanding – mainstream children over the age of 5 or who subject the post-holder to casual abuse, such as swearing
- Significantly demanding – includes pre-five children
- Substantially demanding – those with learning difficulties
- Severely demanding – those with special physical/educational/social needs

It should be noted that Scottish Executive policy includes the integration of children with additional education support needs into mainstream classes and that school librarians will provide support for and meet the educational needs of all pupils.

Library staff may find that their job places additional demands on them from circumstances or behaviour of people with whom they have incidental contact or the job involves a requirement as an integral part of the job to work with, deal with or come into contact with people who make slight additional demands on the post-holder in terms of being abusive, threatening, disadvantaged or otherwise demanding for up to 20% of the working time. (Level 1)

School librarians and some public library staff, for example, may find that their job involves a requirement to work with, deal with or come into contact with people who make slight additional demands on the post-holder in terms of being abusive, threatening, disadvantaged or otherwise demanding for more than 20% of the working time. (Level 2)

## **8. Responsibility for Employees**

This factor looks at the nature of the responsibility rather than the number of employees.

For many, library work includes responsibility for the supervision, co-ordination or management of employees or equivalent others. Equivalent others include volunteers, work experience students or trainees and students on placement for practical experience.

Many school librarians do not have a responsibility for supervising staff, as few have library assistants. They are likely to be graded at Level 1, as they have limited responsibility linked to working with volunteers, work experience students or trainees and students on placement.

Supervisory library staff may find that their job involves day to day responsibility for supervision, co-ordination and/or training of a team of employees or others. This includes instructing, allocating and checking work, advising and guiding, and/or providing on-the-job training or co-ordinating training and/or (formal or information) performance appraisal. (Level 3)

Working on a progressively demanding scale, a Senior Manager will hold a post which involves departmental or functional responsibility for the management, direction, co-ordination, development and effective deployment of employees or others. This includes determining departmental/functional/ priorities and targets and reviewing activities and working methods. The post-holder will also be responsible for managing and monitoring the implementation of the authority's personnel framework. (Level 6)

## **9. Responsibility for Services to Others**

This factor looks at the nature and degree of the responsibility which the post-holder has for individuals or groups (including the public), other than employees supervised or managed by the post-holder. This includes health and safety.

The role of frontline library staff is to apply rather than enforce Council policy. They may find that their job requires them to provide advice, guidance or other forms of assistance; apply or implement regulations (such as Acceptable Use Policies). School librarians and some public library staff will be involved in the assessment of users' needs, for example for information skills work, undertaking ICT courses or reader development. They may also be involved in designing, developing, implementing and/or improving services or processes (such as Information Skills programmes, carrying out self-evaluation of services and developing, implementing and reviewing library development plans).

Library staff may find that their job predominantly involves either delivering front-line service to individuals, groups of people, or internal/external customers by undertaking tasks or processes, or applying regulations or Council policy. (Level 2)

School librarians and some public library staff, for example, may find that their job predominantly involves responsibility for services to individuals, groups of people, through either: an assessment of their basic needs or service requirements and implementation of programmes of service activities or processes; or enforcing regulations on Council policy; or ensuring compliance to standards/specifications in the quality and delivery of contracted services; or contributing to the assessment of complex needs or service requirements and monitoring the quality and delivery of service. (Level 4)

For example, assessment of the information literacy needs of new pupil intakes; or development, implementation and review of reader development programmes; or library book supply; or taking part in self-evaluation of the quality and contribution of services.

Working on a progressively demanding scale, a Senior Manager will hold a post which predominantly involves responsibility for services or being accountable to the Head of Service for the long term nature, quality and level of a single service, and for determining future provision. (Level 6)

### **10. Responsibility for Financial Resources**

This factor looks at the range of direct and indirect responsibilities for financial resources, handling money, processing invoices, accounting for finances and other budgetary responsibilities.

Library staff may find that their job requires them to take receipt of cash relating to library charges and check or be responsible for financial documentation such as invoices, requisitions or delivery notes. Some librarians may argue that their job involves contributing to setting and monitoring small to considerable budgets, and ensuring value for money and/or effective utilisation of resources (Level3), but this may not be the predominant feature of their financial responsibility.

Library staff and school librarians may find that their job predominantly involves responsibility for handling cash or processing cheques, invoices or equivalent on a regular or daily basis; or accounting, for auditing, or security of, small (under £100,000) to considerable (£500k-£5m) sums of money, in the form of cash, cheques, direct debits, invoices or equivalent; or being accountable for, or monitoring, small to considerable expenditures from an agreed budget or equivalent income. (Level 2)

Working on a progressively demanding scale, a Senior Manager will hold a post which predominantly involves responsibility for managing budgets, ensuring probity, leading the budget process at service level and contributing to longer term financial planning to meet service needs. (Level 5)

### **11. Responsibility for Physical and Information Resources**

This factor looks at different levels of responsibility for different types of resources, excluding human resources. It takes into account primary responsibility (the main types of resources for which the post-holder is responsible) and secondary responsibility (any other resources the post-holder may have – not in terms of value but in terms of frequency or duration).

Frontline staff may find their job involves ensuring that PCs, microfilm readers, photocopiers etc are in good working order and reporting faults when these occur. Others will be involved in the data input relating to users or resources; or ordering of supplies. Many library staff will have responsibility for selecting, acquiring and disposal of stock. School librarians are likely to have access to information of a confidential and personal nature, such as medical information. Community library staff may have key-holder responsibilities.

Library staff may find that their job involves a primary responsibility for proper use and safekeeping of physical resources such as equipment of moderate value. This may include daily checks and/or reporting of faults; or handling or processing of routine manual or computerised information such as data input or filing; or requisitioning supplies for immediate use. (Level 1)

School librarians and some public library staff, for example, may find that their job involves a primary responsibility for proper use and safekeeping of expensive equipment including daily checks and/or reporting of faults; or handling or processing of confidential, personal, manual or computerised information for example, creating and/or updating files or keeping records; or ordering and/or stock control of a limited range of supplies; or limited responsibility for security of equipment or buildings – this may include setting of alarms and key-holder responsibility. (Level 2)

Working on a progressively demanding scale, a Senior Manager will hold a post which involves a primary responsibility for tendering, procurement and deployment of resources at a functional level; or long-term planning of the Council's physical or information resources to meet service or other requirements. (Level 5)

## **12. Initiative and Independence**

This factor looks at problems the post-holder must deal with in the course of normal working and the extent to which advice and guidance is available. The advice and guidance might be in the form of supervision, procedures, policy, precedent, strategy and statute.

Library structures are hierarchical by nature with a lot of regulation and procedural direction. When considering this factor, it must be remembered that much of the initiative and independence in library work, has to be approved by line managers before progression. For others, such as school librarians, the initiative and independence is within a resource limited to the school.

Library staff may find that their job predominantly involves working from instructions or established practice, but requires initiative to make routine decisions and problems are referred to a supervisor/ manager. Supervision is readily available as and when required. (Level 2)

School librarians and some public library staff, for example, may find that their job predominantly involves working within established procedures/policy guidelines to progress a limited range of activities. The work may involve responding independently to unanticipated problems/situations and making decisions/exercising initiative with ready access to manager/more senior officers for advice and guidance on serious problems. The work is subject overall to professional advice and managerial direction. The job holder may have an occasional input to the development of policy and strategy. (Level 4)

Working on a progressively demanding scale, a Senior Manager will hold a post which predominantly involves working within the Council's policy framework, using wide discretion and initiative over a broad range of activities, where advice is not readily accessible. The work is subject to general managerial direction. The post-holder will be required to lead the development of strategy and policy and the implementation and monitoring of legislation, and regulation. (Level 6)

## **13. Knowledge**

This factor considers what the post-holder needs to know to do the job. It includes practical, procedural, policy, and organisational knowledge, as well as knowledge of equipment, literacy and numeracy, theories and concepts. It takes into account breadth and complexity of knowledge and **minimum** qualifications required to do the job. It does not take into account the original recruitment criteria.

The difficulty for many library staff and the profession is that the chartership qualification might have been a recruitment criteria but this is not the minimum qualification required to do the job. It should be noted that chartership may be used in the "desirable" rather than "essential" criteria

when short-listing and appointing applicants for a post.

It is important to remember that the evaluation is based on the minimum qualification, not the qualifications of the individual. So, for many school librarians, a general degree (in-depth theoretical knowledge) and a professional qualification (further) is the minimum. Qualification beyond this level does not attract advanced scoring. Similarly, experience may be desirable but it is not usually essential.

Library staff may find that their job requires predominantly comprehensive knowledge of a range of related tasks some of which, singly or in combination, are relatively complex; and of the operations of equipment associated with those tasks. Greater literacy and numeracy are required. The post-holder also needs procedural knowledge of their own job, and an understanding of the work of others, acquired through education, on-the-job training, or job related experience. Job holders will require moderate amounts of relevant working experience to become fully competent and familiar with all aspects of the job. (Level 3)

School librarians and some public library staff, for example, may find that their job requires predominantly technical, specialist and in-depth theoretical knowledge. The post-holder needs further knowledge acquired through either education, vocational qualification, on- or off-the-job training, or job-related experience. The post-holder also requires a considerable period of relevant working experience to become fully competent and familiar with all aspects of the job. The post-holder may contribute to internal working groups considering the operational implications of initiatives, developments or changes in legislation. (Level 6)

Working on a progressively demanding scale, a Senior Manager will hold a post which requires breadth and depth of technical, specialist and/or in-depth theoretical knowledge; a substantial period of relevant working experience; and an in-depth understanding of proposed initiatives, developments in legislation in the external environment in which the Council operates. This will enable the post-holder to provide specialist advice in a functional, professional, industry or national capacity to represent the Authority on an ad hoc basis on external bodies considering a professional or functional response to change. (Level 7)

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this is a general guide to the process and how it relates to library staff working in local authorities. Each job will be evaluated as it currently stands and it is not possible to provide examples in this document for all the different library posts that exist.

For more information, library staff should make enquiries through their employer or trade union.

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