Policy Update

The MRC Corporate Human Resources (HR) team has been working closely with the National Trade Union Side (NTUS) to develop, review and update a number of HR policies. The following policies have been revised and agreed with the NTUS:

- Health Promotion Policy
- Retirement Policy
- Redundancy and Redeployment Policy (replacing Green Book)
- Travel and Subsistence Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Annual Leave Policy
- Maternity, Adoptive and Maternity Support Leave Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy (interim policy)
- Probationary Policy

These revised policies have become effective between November 2011 and April 2012 and can all be found on KnowlegeBase. A summary of the key changes for each revised policy is outlined below, a number of the changes have been made to reflect changes in processes that have arisen from working with the RCUK Shared Services Ltd (the SSC).

Health Promotion Policy
This policy has been updated to reflect that related documents are now stored in Oracle. It has also been updated to reflect that the employee assistance programme (First Assist) has not been available for family members since 2009 due to HMRC implications.

Retirement Policy
Changes made to this policy reflect the new legislation that came into force last year with the removal of the Default Retirement Age and also changes to the Abatement rule.

Redundancy and Redeployment Policy
Further to the negotiations and the NTUS ballot in 2011, there has been significant work by both MRC Management and the NTUS to develop the Redundancy and Redeployment Policy that has replaced the ‘Green Book’.
The Redundancy and Redeployment Policy sets out the Policies and Procedures that will be followed, and includes the new provisions for CDF’s and the continued commitment to seek redeployment for employees who are at risk of redundancy. The main changes to the Compensation Terms are included in the Compensation 2011 Policy.

Travel and Subsistence Policy
The updated policy contains the revised HMRC rates, revised allowances to include VAT, and the on-line SSC iExpenses claims process which supercedes the old paper based one. It also makes reference to the Bribery Act 2010. Additionally, the new MRC Government Procurement Card (GPC) Policy has been included within the Travel and Subsistence policy as an annex.

Recruitment and Selection Policy
The Payment of Removal Expenses on First Appointment Policy is now included in the Recruitment and Selection Policy. The policy has been updated to include specific information relating to Programme Leader Track, the RCUK Preferred Supplier List (PSL) of agencies and an appendix on the recruitment of Fixed Term Contract staff.

Annual Leave Policy
This policy has been updated to reflect the Research Council method for calculating leave in hours for part-time employee, those on compressed hours or not working a standard 5-day week. The amended policy also reflects a harmonised approach to calculating leave entitlement for employees that start/leave part way through a month.

Maternity, Adoptive and Maternity Support Leave Policy
Amendments have been made to this policy to reflect new SSC processes and now clearly identifies the exact SCC forms to be used as part of those processes. The policy has been updated to align with legislation brought in during April 2011 including the provision for Additional Maternity Support Leave; where the mother/principle carer returns to work with a period of untaken maternity/adoptive leave the father/partner can take up that untaken leave as additional maternity support leave. A definitions section has been added.

Code of Conduct
The Code of Conduct has been revised initially in response to the introduction of the Bribery Act 2010. There have been a number of changes to the Code to make it more comprehensive and easier to navigate. Employees are expected to familiarise themselves with the policy. The key additions are as follows:

- Information for staff entering into public debate as detailed in the Education Reform Act 1988.
- Involvement in legal proceedings (5.6) new duty to disclose convictions.
- After leaving employment. (6) new continuing duty of confidentiality following termination.
- Bribery and Fraud (4.2) clarifying responsibilities under the Bribery Act 2010.
- Handling contracts (4.4) highlighting delegated authority to act on behalf of the MRC.
- Equality & Diversity (3.3) as policy
- Behaviour towards others (3.1) as Equality & Diversity/Bullying & Harassment policies.
- Health & Safety (3.4) clarifying basic Health & Safety duties.
- Security (3.5) clarifying basic duties relating to building security.
- Use of resources (3.6) + Use of IT resources (3.7) clarifying appropriate use of equipment provided to staff to fulfil their duties.
- Personal Data and the Data Protection Act (3.10) highlighting basic duties under the DPA and Information Security policy.
- Contact with the public (3.11) clarifying standards of conduct when dealing with communications from the general public.

**Whistleblowing Policy**
The Whistleblowing policy has been separated from the Code and both have been relocated to the Capability, Conduct, Disciplinary and Grievance section of the Knowledgebase.

**Probationary Policy**
Changes have been made to the policy following feedback from the Regions. Clarity has been added regarding employees who have been promoted or internally transferred into a new role and a clearer explanation of the 3 and 6 month probationary assessment process has also been included.

All non-confidential MRC policies are going to be placed on the MRC website over the next 4 weeks. They are being made available on the website to support those employees without access to KnowledgeBase and those who work remotely.

If you have any queries on any of the MRC HR policies you should contact your unit/regional Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP) or Unit Administrator.