

Thu 01/04/2021 13:19

Dear Colleagues,

### **Changes to government school trip advice**

There are good reasons why FSC tries to avoid sending out important information on a Friday even in normal times, but especially when so many are working reduced hours. The Department for Education don't seem to take that view. The changes to the advice on school trips sneaked out unheralded by the usual email updates late last week. It is of course good news that the advice now lines up with the Roadmap and that day visits in England can restart from 12<sup>th</sup> April and residentials from 17<sup>th</sup> May. There are of course the usual caveats that apply to all of the changes in the road map although the tone of the advice seems particularly grudging. The threat of a judicial review might have forced their hand and the government strapline "hands, face, space and fresh air" was going to make the advice look increasingly at odds with the messaging. At the time of writing, we are still waiting for Scotland and Wales to update their advice. It would however be churlish not to welcome DfE's review with its 'green light' for planning to begin, it is great news.

While the advice has changed, we are still waiting for the guidance document on how we can proceed in a Covid-Secure manner. We don't expect it to be very different from the ideas put forward by the sector. FSC of course already has so much in place and the experience of last year to draw upon. But the key piece of information – how many if any learners in a bubble can share a room- is vital for us and our waiting customers to know. The lack of information I know is making life difficult for the Operational Planning Team (OPT) and our customer services staff.

The news about reopening and the start of a return to some sort of normality does however allow us to change the request that we made about taking 50% of annual leave by the end of June. I'm pleased to say that we can now allow staff to book annual leave at a time of their choosing in line of course with the usual FSC process and seeking manager authorisation.

### **Media Coverage**

FSC's staff were not caught napping when the guidance changed and having already prepared press releases in advance for most eventualities we managed to get our comments out very early, securing some great [media coverage](#) including a short clip on Midlands Today. We will work on Midlands Today coming back to a centre when we have visitors which tends to make much better TV than me on a zoom call. The recent increase in our TV, radio and press coverage has really come out of many months of solid graft by the marketing team and BeBold Media. We have built up our profile and got our name out there, making sure that we provide comment on relevant news items, are available for interviews, provide interesting content, build relationships with journalists and do not overlook the importance of local and regional media. This is part of our much wider aim to become a trusted "go to" voice on outdoor learning and the increasing requests from media shows that our approach is bearing fruit.



### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Group (EDI)**

We had great EDI briefing from Dan House and the EDI group on Tuesday which explained the mechanics of the EDI Group, progress to date and plans for the future. The group is currently looking for new members to ensure we have a diverse representation of the workforce so if you are interested in being on the EDI Group please contact HR. You can catch up with the meeting [here](#) if you missed it.

### **Staff Rep News**

At the end of January we asked if anyone would like to be a staff rep on the Board and its sub-committees. The following people are your staff reps for the next two years: Lizzie Chaplin-Brice and

Helen Green on the Board; Di Warren on the Finance & Administration (F&A) Committee; Jane Richmond and Chloe Toorneini on the Education Strategy Committee. Helen Robertson will continue to attend Audit & Risk Management (ARM) Committee meetings as H&S Officer.

We still need another rep for the F&A and one or two for the ARM, so if you are interested please attend the all staff zoom at 12.00 on Wednesday, 7 April, to hear Jo Harris, previously a staff rep on the Education Strategy sub-committee, talking briefly on the benefits of becoming a staff rep. Then complete the  [Interest Form](#) and return it to Susan, [s.appleyard@field-studies-council.org](mailto:s.appleyard@field-studies-council.org). Further information about what being a staff representative means can be found on the FSC intranet – Document Archive/Committees and Groups/Staff Representation on Committees ( [here](#)). Information about each of the Committees can be found in the [Trustees](#) section of the intranet; minutes and papers from past meetings can be found under Document Archive/Committees and Groups/....

### **New staff contracts**

Please don't forget to sign and return your contracts to [hr@field-studies-council.org](mailto:hr@field-studies-council.org).

Many of you will be taking leave in the next few days and I hope that you enjoy some well-deserved rest before the start of what I hope will be a busier time for all of us.

Keep well and stay safe

Mark