

Thu 17/06/2021 11:35

Dear Colleagues,

### **The good news**

The delay in lifting restrictions saw just a few changes. Hidden among updates on weddings, wakes, pilot events and care home visits, the Covid Operational Planning Team (C-opt) spotted an easily overlooked change in the English guidance around residential for 'out of school settings' such as youth groups and clubs. Numbers allowed to attend can rise from 6 to 30 on 21<sup>st</sup> June. There has been no change in Scotland where residential are allowed but only under considerable restrictions and the Welsh government continue to advise against school residential although an update is expected on Friday.

### **And the bad news**

Yesterday afternoon [Ofqual published their response](#) to the consultation on arrangements for non-exam assessment and fieldwork for the 2022 exams. It's disappointing that they have decided to press on with their proposals to reduce the mandatory fieldwork requirement although expressing hopes that fieldwork will still be carried out. As with last year, those that supported the proposals did so with regret but critically "the proposals were not supported by the majority of teacher or subject associations" and this gives us a broad base of support on which to continue to make the case for fieldwork. Again, as with last year, concerns over the current public health situation was cited as the main issue. We can reassure customers of our track record on covid secure fieldwork and, as the current situation at centres suggests there are plenty of teachers who are happy to bring their classes on a residential. Despite Ofqual's response painting a picture of rather nervous teachers, I can't quite square that with the ones that we know, and many will not be satisfied with a fieldwork experience of looking at plantains on a playing field.

FSC, along with other likeminded organisations have managed to generate some press coverage around the issue including in the TES, Ian will be on Radio Surrey on Saturday and several of our MPs have already been in touch with the DfE on our behalf. In Wales, proposals just out for Welsh exams sadly mirror much of Ofqual's ideas on reducing fieldwork and practical science. It's a shame on this occasion that Wales decided not to follow their usual pattern of making sure that whatever they do in response to Covid, it has to be different to England. This will clearly have some impact on our income predictions, and we will be examining the implications closely.

### **Responsiveness and Agility**

I know that you are all aware that in this everchanging situation we have to be able to respond with agility to the changing circumstances. To alleviate the overstretch, where we have gaps in particular skills the SLT has agreed a small and focussed package of recruiting and retention initiatives to be managed by the OCT. These are time limited and tied to particular skills shortages. Do encourage any friends or family to [look at our jobs list](#), it is updated frequently and please share postings on LinkedIn; Facebook; Instagram and Twitter.

### **Updated Email Distribution Lists**

HR and Digital have been working hard to update our email distribution lists and they are now live excluding the managers@ list which will be updated overnight Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June. To view the emailing listings please click [here](#). We have updated existing lists as well as creating new listings in line with our new structures and groupings. We hope this will enable internal email communications to be targeted to individuals as appropriate, however if you have any queries or feedback on where you now sit within this listings, please contact Human Resources via [hr@field-studies-council.org](mailto:hr@field-studies-council.org).

**Rebrand Feedback**

Work on the proposed FSC rebrand continues and now we want to gather some more feedback including from our customers and also from staff who don't always get a chance to check their emails, join in with the slack channels or visit the staff news site. The marketing team have produced some brand boards that give a flavour of the rebrand and have asked centre managers for help to get them displayed at centres.

**Staff Profiles for the Impact Report**

Thank you for the many responses to last week's call for 10 word staff profiles that sum up your job. We still need some from currently underrepresented teams so please do keep sending them to [j.blizzard@field-studies-council.org](mailto:j.blizzard@field-studies-council.org)

**Free Lateral Flow Tests**

Most of us are used to spluttering or sneezing our way through twice weekly lateral flow tests. The original government plan was to supply free tests until the end of June, so you may want to think about ordering some more before the deadline. Click [here](#).

**Special Mention**

The London team put in a huge effort to deliver what would have been a residential at Juniper Hall but instead became a complex multi-day and multi-site visit across 3 parks in London. The customers were clearly delighted and will be back as a residential next year:

*"I'm just writing to you to thank you very much for the amazing organization and activities planned for our students over the past two days. Special thanks to James, Lorna and Hannah who took care so wonderfully of our students. It makes a lot of difference to have a team of tutors like you guys. And the sites were also perfect for us. We are already looking forward to seeing you in Juniper Hall next Feb."*

Stay safe and keep well

Mark