

Thu 31/10/2024 08:31

Dear Colleagues,

Braced for the Budget

At the time of writing, the Chancellor is about to get to her feet to announce the budget. Sam and the finance team are already crunching the numbers relating to announcements that have already been made and we are expecting further impacts on staff costs. As I'm sure most of you know, staff costs are our largest outgoing so even small changes can have a big impact. We will shortly be in a better position to finalise our own budget that will be going to November's Finance and Administration Committee. I will keep you posted.

Education Strategy Committee

A quick update from our recent meeting: there was much discussion on how best to develop our profile in Scotland as we continue to evolve our ideas around day provision. We agreed to move free education resources from the digital hub to the website and establish a digital products innovation group to see how we can develop these further. We were updated on national policy, and our contribution to the current Curriculum Review to ensure fieldwork continues to be important.

Trustees were pleased to read the fabulous customer reviews this year, overall we are meeting or exceeding expectations of 90% of customers as we continue to improve on our very high standards. Well done all.

Biodiversity Team

I wanted to make you aware of changes to the Biodiversity team. We identified a pressing need to refocus this area of work and, following a review and a formal consultation process, we have implemented a new team structure. This unfortunately means that some of the team may be leaving within the next month. These are never easy decisions for the charity to make, and I would ask you to show your usual sensitivity to the team members who are impacted. I'm sure you will join me in wishing them well for the future.

New IHasco Module Sexual Harassment Awareness

A new duty came into force on 26 October 2024 requiring UK employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their employment under the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023.

Field Studies Council already has robust EDI and Anti-Harassment policies in place as part of our  [Staff Handbook October 2024.pdf](#). To further enhance these policies all staff are required to complete the IHasco module *Sexual Harassment Awareness*. This 30-minute module is mandatory training for **all staff** and will be added to your individual IHasco dashboard from 1st November 2024. This module will also be assigned to all future new starters as part of their induction programme.

All managers are requested to complete the module by no later than 30 November 2024, with all other staff completing the training by 31 January 2025.

Westfield Health and Westfield Rewards

As we are rapidly moving through the year, don't forget that our staff benefits package through [Westfield Health](#) allows you to claim some of the costs of appointments and treatments. This includes regular check-ups with the dentist or optician but also a range of therapies. The annual allowance for claims starts with each calendar year and can't be carried over, so don't leave it until December to try to make the most of it.

[Westfield Rewards](#) offers a range of discounts for everyday grocery shopping through to special offers on larger purchases which you may find handy in the run up to Christmas. You will need to activate your account using your work email address and if you can't find your account number you can call the customer helpline on 0114 250 2000 or email enquiries@westfieldhealth.com

Welcome to Field Studies Council

Joe Downie has joined the team at Epping Forest as Tutor.

Previous catch ups can be found on the staff news website [here](#).

Best regards

Mark