



Positive Working Environment  
Annual Report  
**2005**

‘Making working life productive,  
rewarding, enjoyable and healthy’



University of  
**BRISTOL**

## What is PWE?

PWE stands for Positive Working Environment, a process with the aim of making working life at the University of Bristol productive, rewarding, enjoyable and healthy for all colleagues. This document outlines the background to PWE, objectives and achievements during 2005.

### Where has it come from?

During the summer of 2003, the University commissioned The Work Foundation to carry out a staff survey - perhaps the most thorough one ever undertaken here. This highlighted many areas where the University was doing well as an employer:

- High levels of pride in the University
- A good place to work
- Good work relationships with immediate colleagues
- Loyalty to immediate work teams
- Good range of Human Resource policies and procedures
- Opportunities for training

## It also showed that we needed to get better at:

- Developing co-operation and support across different teams
- Developing systems to ensure that managers are aware of issues on the ground
- Explaining how University-wide resources are distributed
- Fostering a stronger sense of the wider organisation
- Developing a pleasant physical working environment
- Addressing levels of stress, workload and work-life balance among some staff groups
- Aligning training and development with team and University goals
- Highlighting career development opportunities
- Developing the skills of managers and the consistent application of good management practice
- Developing and raising awareness of University-wide services available to support staff, together with policies around diversity
- Addressing issues of bullying and harassment
- Developing further our job evaluation and promotions systems
- Encouraging a different view about flexible working opportunities.

The result was the Positive Working Environment (PWE) agenda. It is worth emphasising that this is not so much a project or initiative as a process that describes the things we believe are important as an employer and a series of actions to help us deliver them. The PWE agenda can be steered and monitored from the centre, but everyone has a role in taking it forward. It should be an aspect of 'the way we do things around here', with all staff playing their part.

# What will it lead to?

**In working towards a Positive Working Environment, the University of Bristol is striving to achieve:**

- A high degree of trust and respect between all levels of staff
- A warm and friendly climate in which colleagues feel valued, and have a strong sense of loyalty to the organisation
- High quality leadership and management
- Open discussion that leads to resolution of conflict
- A measure of self-determination over how work is undertaken
- A culture where diversity is respected and valued
- A lack of exclusive clubs and cliques
- Opportunities for personal development and career progression
- A high level of creativity and job satisfaction, arising from teamwork and co-operation.

# Who is steering this?

**Action is steered and monitored by the PWE Steering Group, chaired by Professor Patricia Broadfoot, Pro Vice-Chancellor. Other members of the group are:**

- Fiona Ford, Deputy Personnel Director
- Barry Taylor, Communications and Marketing Director
- Professor Robert Fowler, Dean of Arts
- Liz Lynch, Site Services Manager
- Professor Anthony Hollander, Professor of Rheumatology & Tissue Engineering
- Professor David Muir Wood, Dean of Engineering
- Tracy Brunnock-Cook, Equality & Diversity Manager
- Christian Carter, Personnel Manager (secretary and project manager).

## What does the University plan to do and what has been achieved so far?

Action is taking place against five ‘commitments’ made to staff in January 2005. These commitments are in direct response to the issues and themes raised by University of Bristol staff in a survey undertaken by The Work Foundation during the Summer of 2003. A total of 51 actions were outlined in the ‘Commitments’ document with 35 (68%) of these having been completed or significant work taken place towards completion by the end of 2005. The following is a summary of these achievements described against each commitment area.

# Staff Support and Development

**'You will benefit from a supportive environment that helps you develop a rewarding and enjoyable career'**

- Staff Careers Adviser (new post) appointment made. Clare Brophy to start 1 March 2006
- International Staff Adviser (new post) appointed. Ri'Anna Stueber started 1 November 2005
- The first Positive Working Environment Week. Eighty different events offering a range of information, training, exercise, knowledge and above all fun for all University colleagues which was attended by over 1,200 people (20% of the workforce). As well as those that took part, over fifty University staff gave their time to help run and organise the week
- Research Staff departmental representatives now operating in 48 departments to improve communication within the department and with University policy makers
- Increased staff resources in the Staff Counselling Service
- Increased visibility of the Staff Counselling, Dignity at Work and Study and Staff Mediation Services via web pages and departmental posters
- New Staff Counselling Web site
- Careers Guidance workshops specifically for Technical Staff
- New 'Introducing flexible working into teams' workshop run on three occasions and attended by 40 managers
- Flexible working pilots implemented in two departments interest from a further three
- A working group established to develop a single staff social facilities resource
- Increased profile of Staff Volunteering opportunities
- Free places for University staff on part time and short courses run by the Public Programmes Office
- Development of a workshop to inform the University about the social facilities needs of staff as part of the NUCLEUS project
- Development of a new Staff Mental Health and Stress Group which has produced a series of recommendations for action
- A survey of professorial staff to investigate further issues around gender inequality and a report on the subject together with a series of recommendations to University Council
- Progress towards the implementation of a single 'job evaluation' scheme and single 'pay spine' covering all staff to ensure equality

- Progress towards the 'harmonisation' of terms and conditions of employment across staff groups to ensure equality
- Development of 'role profiles' and 'career pathways' for all academic staff including Research Staff
- A new 'Academics with families' group offering a combination of information and support to those with, or planning, a family
- A web survey (Careers in Research On-line Survey) providing Research Staff the opportunity to feed back important 'employment' issues to the University
- New English language improvement workshops for International colleagues
- New forums for black and ethnic minority, disabled, and gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender staff
- Implementation of an agreement limiting the use of fixed-term contracts of employment amongst academic and related staff resulting in approximately 50% of research staff moving to permanent contracts. A timetable for a similar agreement for support staff
- Targeted training provision for Research and Technical Staff including accredited management and teaching and learning qualifications
- A Research Staff conference attended by 180 staff
- A Technical Staff conference (the first of its kind) attended by 150 staff
- A Support Services conference attended by 150 staff.



# one



# two

## Leadership and management

**'Leaders, managers and supervisors will have access to appropriate, tailored, professional development to prepare them for their roles and to support them in achieving strategic and operational goals'**

- Appointment of Roffey Park to provide tailored leadership and management development to middle managers and senior leaders
- Eight Introductory Certificates and Diplomas in Management run in conjunction with City of Bristol College attended by 86 staff all of whom received an accredited management qualification (two specifically for Technical Staff and two for Research Staff)
- A programme of five half-day development and information sessions for Technical and Resource managers fast becoming an essential communication tool with this group of colleagues
- Academic supervisor (PI) management development (particularly around people management) delivered in a number of departments
- Coaching on a 1:1 basis for middle and senior managers increased to a level where one in three heads of departments and divisions, deans and PVCs have accessed the service in the past 12 months
- New mentoring scheme in development with pilots planned for early 2006.

# Communication

**'You will have the opportunity to influence the development of departmental and University practice through efficient internal communication processes, and you will be aware of the PWE support facilities open to you'**

- Development of the 'PWE Commitments' document outlining what the University will be doing to address the issues raised in the 2003 whole staff survey
- Development and launch of PWE web site. Web site promoted to new and potential staff on the Recruitment web site and in new staff 'starter packs'. Good use made of the generic 'pwe-feedback' e-mail address (151 e-mails), with all e-mail feedback personally answered
- Development of PWE logo to be used on all PWE related policies, procedures, recruitment processes, web sites and paper publications
- Five 'Positive Communications' leaflets issued offering guidance on subjects raised in the 2003 whole-staff survey. Topics covered so far have been e-mail, leadership, time management, bullying and travel to work
- New Research Staff web site launched providing a 'one-stop shop' of useful employment and career development information
- Departmental Research Staff representatives working in 48 departments across the University. The representatives work both within their own departments to bring research staff together, and meet centrally to feed back important points to University policy makers. Six times during 2005 covering topics such as fixed-term contracts, full economic costing and the Reward Agenda.
- 'Focus On Personnel' newsletter issued to all staff (November), providing a summary of the important developments in the field of employment, training and career development (three per year).
- PWE Departmental Commitments Statements developed and issued to staff in two pilot departments (Personnel Services and Site Services). Plans to expand local discussions about what PWE means to departments during 2006
- Tax-free computer purchase scheme. 150 staff took advantage of this opportunity
- Development of the travel to work web site including a tax-free cycle purchase scheme.



# three

# Physical Environment

**'The internal and external quality of buildings will be maintained at a consistent level across the whole estate. Areas of heaviest wear and tear will be prioritised during 2005/6 and 2006/7, and some of the University's oldest properties will also be brought up to a high structural quality'**

- Significant progress to make University buildings fully accessible in line with the Disability Discrimination Act. Phases 1 and 2, totalling £1 million and £2 million respectively, completed at the end of July 2005. Phase 3 work totalling £2 million has been designed and will commence shortly, to be completed by the end of July 2006. An allocation of £2 million for Phase 4, to be spent by the end of July 2007, has been made, and currently the selection of suitable projects to give maximum benefit to the University is being made in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Working Group. The total expenditure of £7 million will ensure that the University has made the required 'reasonable adjustments' to public areas for the benefit of staff, students and visitors
- Significant improvements to internal decorations (totaling £200,000). Work complete within Biological Sciences and Politics, nearing completion in the Arts Faculty complex, and work underway in the Queen's Building and 9/11 Woodland Road
- External refurbishment work in progress on University property in St Michael's Hill and Woodland Road
- Development and launch of a web-based 'job requests' service by Building Services to enable departments to generate work requests and to check job details over the University intranet. Key benefits include: convenience and speed for customers, availability of real-time information regarding jobs, reduction in paper generated requests and better utilisation of Help Desk operators
- Security risk assessments undertaken in all Faculties/Divisions to target appropriate security measures
- The bi-annual 'travel to work' web-based survey issued to all staff to guide policy development in this area.
- Intruder alarm signalling updated to enhance security
- High-visibility security staff uniforms issued and high-visibility marking of security vehicles.



# four

# Monitoring and Evaluation

**'Progress towards developing our PWE will be highlighted to all staff at regular intervals'**

- 2005 Annual Report issued to all staff
- Second all staff PWE opinion survey planned for December 2006



five

## Feedback

While the above list is extensive and represents a great deal of work by colleagues from across the University, there is still much to do. The second PWE staff survey planned for late 2006 will help us assess the impact of these developments and refine our action for the subsequent period.

If you have any queries or comments on the PWE agenda, please send these to [pwe-feedback@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:pwe-feedback@bristol.ac.uk). For the very latest news or to obtain copies of Positive Communications please see the PWE web site [www.bristol.ac.uk/pwe](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/pwe).



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Anything to add or wish to comment?  
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