



## Introducing grading at ESP Utilities Group

ESP Utilities Group is a network operator that works with housing developers, social landlords, industry and individuals to maintain the gas and electricity networks throughout the United Kingdom. ESP Utilities Group employs around 75 people in 45 unique roles.

### THE ISSUE

After 20 years in operation, ESP Utilities Group wanted to introduce a grading structure for all roles across the organisation. Their business strategy identified job grading as a priority to create clear career paths for their staff to inspire, engage and motivate them.

They did not use a formal methodology for evaluating their roles and required consultancy support to:

- Review each job description within the organisation.
- Evaluate each role within the organisation including senior management.
- Determine each role's grade and create a grading structure for all roles.
- Create a framework that could be used to carry out market salary reviews in the future.

The project addressed three key challenges:

1. Providing a consistent and equitable framework within which to manage personal development and careers.
2. Illustrating how jobs relate to each other within the organisation.
3. Providing an equitable, fair, transparent and consistent approach to how grades are defined and jobs are graded.

### OUR SOLUTION

Based on ESP Utilities Group's vision and commitment to its employees, we created a defined system of job grades throughout the organisation. Our job grading skills, built up over decades of practical experience, focus on the key things that make a real difference to each role.

The structure meant that ESP Utilities Group could introduce clear career paths for their employees which include gas and electrical engineers, as well as finance, HR and marketing personnel.

Communication was key to the project's successful implementation. Throughout the whole project, we engaged with a range of stakeholders at all levels of the business, maximising buy-in from across the organisation.

## HOW IT WORKED

### 1. Understanding the current job descriptions and reward practices in place

We carried out a diagnostics piece from the outset to identify how best to develop a framework for roles and understand ESP Utilities Group's existing approach. Our on-site work with the team enabled us to understand how their approach to reward and pay operated in the context of their culture, strategy, organisational structure, recruitment and retention, internal equity, benefits and performance management.

As part of our analysis of each role, we conducted structured interviews with the senior management team. This gave us first-hand insights about how each role contributes towards the delivery of the business strategy and ensured the senior management team were bought-in to the process.

### 2. Determining grades and introducing a proven grading system

We led the detailed evaluation of ESP Utilities Group's 45 roles using PAYgrade, in conjunction with job descriptions, organisational charts and the insights gained from our structured interviews with the senior management team. We produced a report that set out the basis of the evaluations for each role to demonstrate that an independent, unbiased and robust process was used.

### 3. Supporting the employer's commitment to employee progression

Once the evaluations were complete, we were then able to determine the grade for each role and create a suitable grading structure. PAYgrade makes the job evaluation process simple, transparent and proven. Its strong practical framework gives it credibility and supports the team in explaining their decisions. Five key factors are taken into consideration:

- Knowledge and Experience
- Scope
- Impact
- Complexity and Problem Solving
- Communication and Influencing

By putting this framework in place, clear career paths could be identified and mapped out across the organisation. This project enabled ESP Utilities Group to fully realise its ambitions to be an employer who offers excellent career opportunities, a clear career path and demonstrates its commitment to grow and develop its own people.

### 4. Supporting internal communications

Communication was key to the project's successful implementation. Working alongside the HR, we presented the project directly to employees on three separate occasions so that everyone could make these sessions; thereby ensuring they understood our approach and what the new system meant for them individually. Throughout the whole project, we engaged with a range of stakeholders across all levels of the organisation, maximising buy-in from everyone. We ensured that ESP Utilities Group had buy-in from the outset, making sure we met the needs of the business identified by key stakeholders themselves.

## OUTCOME

ESP Utilities Group are now equipped with a consistent and equitable framework within which to manage personal development and careers. Their employees understand how jobs relate to each other within the organisation and how grades are defined and jobs are graded.

By working in partnership with the team at ESP Utilities Group, as specialists in introducing job grading, we were able to make the process of job evaluation straightforward, efficient and cost-effective as the team would have required extensive additional training in how to implement job evaluation across the organisation.

We continue to provide ESP Utilities Group with job evaluation and grading support and we are also supporting them with other projects that will help them attract, retain and develop a strong talent pool of employees.



**Our experience of working with Paydata has been great. They've been very helpful and supportive – we felt they understood us from the outset and they met and exceeded expectations. The service has been excellent."**

**VICTORIA CHURTON**

Human Resources Manager  
ESP Utilities Group

To discuss how we can help with your needs, please contact us on

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