

Agenda No: 02



PEOPLE AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 1 JULY 2021

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6 May 2021
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open

Present: Claire-Jane Rewcastle (Chair)
Andy Cole (Interim Principal / CEO)

In attendance: Paul Campbell (Head of People and Organisational Development)
John Gray (Director of Student Experience)
Darren Heathcote (Learner Services Manager)
Nadine Hudspeth (Director of Marketing & Communications)
Emma Moody (WBD, Clerk)
Suzanne Clark (Minutes)

PR/025 Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Conflict of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies were received.

The Chair advised that the meeting was not quorate however there were no items requiring formal approval and members agreed the meeting could go ahead.

No conflicts of interest were declared at the start of the meeting and members were reminded to declare any conflicts that arose during the discussions in the meeting.

PR/026 Minutes of the People and Remuneration Committee meeting dated 4 February 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

The Clerk confirmed that confidential sections of minutes would only be circulated to *members* of the Committee.

PR/027 Matters Arising

The Head of People and Organisational Development confirmed that following discussion with the Interim Principal / CEO it was proposed that an annual report will be presented at the first meeting of the new academic year. This will allow for reflection and the outcomes of the staff engagement survey to be included.

An update on the Lets Chat project is included on the agenda.

KPIs will also be covered on the agenda.

The Clerk confirmed that an annual Health and Safety report has been included on the annual cycle of business. In addition to this, health and safety, safeguarding and information governance is being reviewed more broadly which may have an influence on the remit of this committee. An update will be given at the next meeting.

The Director of Student Experience reported that he had been in contact with the AoC and whilst they were not able to support with the accessing of safeguarding data across the sector, they did share a link to a survey commissioned by the ETF for designated safeguarding leads. This is the first survey of its type and will provide a useful picture having collected information from key safeguarding staff. The survey has been completed and the College is waiting for the outcomes to be published. The Chair recognised that safeguarding has a degree of overlap with other committees and indicated that work will be required to refine the remit of reporting, to avoid duplication.

Action: Clerk to provide an update on discussions around the reporting and oversight of health and safety, safeguarding and information governance at the next meeting.

PR/028 Update on 'Lets Chat' Collaboration with Weston College

A verbal update was given by the Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety.

The Chair commented that she was very interested to know what further learnings have come from the project and how this is being taken forward.

The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety reported that the project was completed at the end of April and the final report has been submitted. This was very well received. There is an opportunity to put in another application. This would look to build on what has been done so far and discussions are taking place to determine what it would look like. The project group have agreed to continue to meet as a steering group, three times per year. The group will look to create resources and continue the momentum, potentially bringing in other colleges. Overall, 782 individual remote counselling sessions were delivered. 81 individuals attended a counselling support session. Individuals were given a core score. A score of 44 is deemed to be a healthy position. Following engagement with the project, scores for both males and females dropped showing a positive impact. Male scores decreased from 53 to 38 whilst females decreased from 57 to 38.

The Chair recognised the benefits to the business of having happy healthy staff and commented that the data shared is very encouraging. The Chair was delighted that there are plans in place to continue with this work. The Clerk shared positive comments in relation to the website for Let's Chat and asked what contractual arrangements are in place regarding the collaboration. The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety confirmed that discussions have taken place thus far around IP. There has also been a discussion around having an MOU. Advice will be sought following the first steering group meeting.

It was reported that 717 staff attended emotional literacy workshops. 91% of staff who attended feel more confident in this area and 92% feel they have improved their ability to understand their emotions. 100 staff achieved a mental health first aid qualification. Work is taking place to look at how these staff members are engaged to

get more involved in College initiatives around well-being. The introduction of staff well-being MOTs is being considered and staff who have completed mental health first aid training may be used to support. A number of teaching resources have been created for learners and these are being used by staff as part of personal and social development sessions. The College will look to continue to share the resources via the website. The website scored an average rating of 4.38 out of 5 for usefulness. In summary, there have been some very positive highlights. The project has been very beneficial and the College has benefited from having the expertise of partners. More staff and learners are equipped with the necessary tools to manage health and well-being. The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety was very much looking forward to continuing this work in the future.

The Chair agreed that this had been an extremely useful project. The Chair suggested that consideration be given to how the project model can be built on and any potential collaborations on other subjects and topics. The Interim Principal / CEO advised that the collaboration with Weston College was originally planned to be on financial reporting and risk register work recognising that this showed there has already been some broader thinking. The team are currently considering two further collaboration projects, one on well-being and one on finance and data reporting. Links are being developed and the College is exploring a number of opportunities.

The report was noted.

PR/029 People KPIs

The report was presented by the Head of People and Organisational Development.

The Chair indicated that she did have some initial questions in relation to sickness reporting however this had been covered and she now felt she had the required reassurance. The Clerk recognised the difficulty in benchmarking absence data and asked whether there was any additional sector intelligence in relation to the increase in sickness rates that could be shared with the Committee. The Head of People and Organisational Development indicated that whilst he didn't have any confirmed data, there is a general feeling that the sector levels of sickness absence are being impacted on by COVID, directly and indirectly. The pandemic has amplified anxiety and emotions and it is felt that this could become a long-term trend. The Head of People and Organisational Development is looking to secure additional data to be able to analyse this. He is part of a regional College network and there is an agreement in place to share data, on an annual basis. He will look to provide further detail at the next committee meeting. The Chair commented that the report was set out in a very user-friendly way.

Action: Detailed absence data to be provided by the Head of People and Organisational Development at the next meeting.

The report was noted.

PR/030 COVID Update

The report was presented by the Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety.

The Chair commented on the positive nature of the report and the level of detail which she found very helpful. The Chair asked whether Trade Unions were happy with the approach and whether there was any anecdotal feedback from staff. The Head of

People and Organisational Development confirmed that there are regular meetings with Trade Unions and they have been very involved in all actions taken. The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety advised that staff have been very positive and the College is operating well since fully re-opening. Students are adhering to guidance. The Head of People and Organisational Development added that there have been no major issues reported. Staff are looking to make the transition and some of this is around vaccinations. The College is offering the potential for phased return. Some staff will need support to manage the transition and this will be provided. The Learner Services Manager reported that he had been part of the College's testing team and that students were very appreciative of the actions being taken as they were ready to return. The Clerk highlighted that in Scotland, only 4% of learners are currently attending physical sessions with a plan to increase this to 29% by the end of the month.

The Clerk questioned whether the College would be looking to seek details of staff who have been vaccinated so as to understand the long-term resilience of the workforce and potentially in the future reduce need for testing. The Head of People and Organisational Development suggested that this could be an area for consideration and advised that discussions were taking place, having been considered at Executive Team level initially, around hybrid working for staff and learners. The focus is currently very much around health and safety and compliance but the team will also be looking at any benefits from continued home working and positive changes as a result of the period of lockdown. The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety indicated that the College has also been supplying partners with testing kits. This is working very well and shows good practice in engaging with the wider community. The Health and Safety Manager is working with managers where an individual risk assessment is required. The Chair recognised that recording evidence of immunity could be sensitive and suggested that the College may want to consider exploring further if the current testing regime does not give staff and learners the sense of safety required. The Chair recognised that there are strict policies and procedures in place to make the College as safe an environment as possible. The Interim Principal / CEO questioned the benefit of holding this data indicating that he was not aware of any organisations currently considering this. He did however suggest that it may be a future consideration, at a local level, for staff working with vulnerable groups.

The Chair advised that she was enormously impressed by the efforts of staff and asked that her appreciation be recorded.

The report was noted.

PR/031 Safeguarding Update

The report was presented by the Learner Services Manager.

It was reported that since production of the report, a further 3 referrals have been received increasing the total to date to 67.

The Chair commented positively on a very thorough report indicating that she was mindful of the impact this type of work could have on the staff involved. The Chair felt it was very positive that learners are now back in College and able to access support where required. The Clerk indicated that governors have responsibility to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to keep learners safe and that incidents are properly managed and referrals made where required. The assurance given on how cases are managed is fundamental for governors to understand. The Clerk

questioned whether there is a consistent threshold applied to referrals bearing in mind the practice apparently applied by the health and social care team. She suggested that this be explored further as part of planned governance discussions. The Clerk was concerned about compliance with CPD/training requirements in this area and indicated that in the event of an inspection this could be seen as a weakness if staff training was not up to date fully. The Learner Services Manager recognised this and advised that more understanding of the issues around compliance with CPD is required. The Learning and Development Group have recognised some issues around different cohorts of staff and are looking to finalise work on the appropriateness of training for these groups. He commented positively on the support given by the Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee, as link governor for safeguarding, who has a full understanding of this work and is very involved in the management of cases.

The report was noted.

PR/032 Equality and Diversity Report and Statement

The report was presented by the Head of People and Organisational Development.

The Chair suggested that the opening phrase of the statement be reviewed but other than that, felt that the document reads very well. She recognised the need for staff and governors to be aligned with the values within the statement.

The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety advised that she had noticed some small typos which will be amended. The College's end of year satisfaction survey results will be considered and there will be a focus on looking at under-represented groups. She suggested that this was an opportunity for a comprehensive review of the statement and that consideration be given to recent national and regional work in this area. Consideration should also be given as to how under-represented groups are involved in decision making and whether their voices are being heard. It was also an opportunity to consider the College's strategic approach and intent around equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Chair suggested that the make-up of protected characteristic sub-groups be reviewed. Are they correctly formed and would they benefit from external input from perhaps charities or organisations? This could help the College to consider how under-represented groups can be better included. The Clerk advised that she had recently attended an AoC conference where there was a very engaging speaker on equality and diversity. The Clerk has had recent discussions with the Chair of the Board and the Interim Principal / CEO to progress this as it had been hoped to engage an external speaker in this area at the Winter Conference in February. It is likely to be included for governors in the Autumn with a view to securing an engaging and stimulating speaker to develop the conversation at a governance level. The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety added that she had also attended a recent event with a very engaging speaker on this subject and confirmed that she would share the detail with the Clerk and the Chair of the Committee. The Chair felt that this was an area the Board could be better informed on. The Clerk recognised the positive work to date of the Director of Student Experience in this area to date. The Chair commented that the statement should include representational data of the local community. The Head of Organisational Development advised that historically, the College had used census data to provide this. The detail will be included once the current census data is available which will allow for comparisons to be drawn. The Chair confirmed that once the statement has been amended she was comfortable for it to be published.

Action: Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety to share details of external equality and diversity speaker with the Clerk and Chair.

The report was noted.

PR/033 Gender Pay Gap Report

The report was presented by the Head of People and Organisational Development.

The Chair felt it very interesting that there had not been as much movement as expected, recognising that data was being compared against the position in 2019. This is an area that will be revisited in more detail at a future meeting. It was confirmed that the report can be published.

The report was noted.

PR/034 Update on Strategic Risk Register

The report was presented by the Head of People and Organisational Development.

It was reported that following a recent FEC recommendation, regular updates will be given to each committee on risks associated with their area of oversight. The Interim Principal / CEO noted that the People and Remuneration Committee have one explicit recommendation around succession planning.

The report was noted.

Nadine Hudspeth, John Gray, Darren Heathcote and Suzanne Clark left the meeting at 11.10am.

PR/035 Permanent SPH Recruitment Update

The report was presented by the Head of People and Organisational Development.

This item is confidential and not for publication.

The report was noted.

PR/036 College Pay Claim Update

A verbal update was given by the Head of People and Organisational Development.

There was nothing substantial to report for this item

PR/037 ACAS / Employment Tribunal Update

The report was presented by the Head of People and Organisational Development.

This item is confidential and not for publication.

The report was noted.

PR/038 Any Other Business

There was none.

PR/039 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 1 July 2021 at 10.00am.