

Agenda No: 02



PEOPLE AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 10 MARCH 2022

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18 November 2021
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open

Present: Claire-Jane Rewcastle (CJR – Chair)
David Alexander (DA - Principal & CEO)
Lisa Crichton-Jones (LCJ)
Sarah Stewart (SS)

In attendance: Paul Campbell (PC – Head of People and Organisational Development)
Nadine Hudspeth (NH – Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety)
Sara Reay (SR – Senior People and Organisational Development Business Partner)
Emma Moody (EM – WBD, Clerk)

PR/074 Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Conflict of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. DH sent apologies. LCJ would join the meeting late.

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/075 Minutes of the People and Remuneration Committee meeting dated 23 September 2021

SS confirmed that the speaker commissioned on EDI would lead a session in February, not September.

The Chair asked PC to confirm he would follow up with LCJ to provide information requested by her at the last meeting. PC confirmed that a meeting was scheduled in order to do so.

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23 September 2021 were otherwise agreed as a correct record.

Action: PC to confirm at next meeting what information has been shared with LCJ and feedback from meetings held.

PR/076 Matters Arising

The action log was noted.

PR/077 People and OD Annual Report 2020/21 Update

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

The Chair asked PC how the systems were supporting the team to obtain the information needed to produce this report.

PC said firstly it was difficult to extract all the information required at this stage as the data to do this was not readily available in some instances and that systems were not entirely adequate to do this. Secondly, there was a challenge finding the resource to do this within the team. Currently, PC was of the view that HR did not have the resource to pull this together but this is currently being reviewed.

The Principal/CEO recognised that the College had not produced a report of this nature for some time. The internal challenges (referred to above) did exist, and it would be particularly important to ensure good quality data could be input to and extracted from the systems the College has. In addition, staff training and engagement would be required.

The Chair asked if the timeframe to complete this was realistic. The Principal/CEO felt that the initial annual HR report would represent an interim piece of work given this has not been produced for some time and future annual reports would require development and refinement as the supporting data and systems evolved.

SS acknowledged there may be a resourcing issue to be addressed within HR and the investment required would need to be established and considered by the College Executive in due course.

The report was noted and a status update would be brought to the next meeting.

PR/078 Interim People and OD Strategy Update

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

The College strategy is to engage stakeholders in all strategic pieces of work. The core strategy is strong, changes will be to refresh and refine. The people strategy is therefore informed by this.

The Chair asked about trade union support and detail of views so far communicated in relation to the People and OD Strategy. PC confirmed there was trade union engagement at regional and local level and that they would be involved as the Strategy developed. Local Unions had more detailed interest in the process thus far, but there is still time for thoughts to be developed and for interest and views to be articulated going forward.

LCJ joined the meeting at 12.20pm.

The report was noted and a further update will be provided at the next meeting.

PR/079 Engagement and Communications Update

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

The Chair asked if the range of activities ensured a variety of engagement across the staff demographic.

NH said that it was clear measurable objectives were needed for the work. It was too early to tell if the activities were ensuring a cross section of engagement, but it would be monitored and pockets of lack of engagement would be tackled proactively and people within those pockets supported.

The Chair asked how the range of activities was determined. NH confirmed that staff were asked what they would like to see/benefit from. These views were taken into account, the process so far had been employee driven.

LCJ said it was important for College to understand "why" we were doing these things – what is the outcome we are looking to achieve. What would "good" engagement look like. LCJ also asked how this fits within the overall work being done on the people strategy.

PC referred to the source of this activity – which was the engagement survey. The College had looked at the themes and was taking forward activities designed to engage with these themes. In terms of "good" engagement and outcomes, this had not yet been sufficiently refined. NH said that the College takes soundings from comparable stakeholders and other colleges. It is created for staff, to create a better work environment for them. NH recognised the need to coordinate and streamline the planning though.

SS referred back to the staff focus groups from which feedback was obtained. One of the objectives was to ensure that survey responses were reflective of views of all staff – did they reflect the sentiments that were expressed. The team should remain mindful of this as it works through the process. PC confirmed focus groups are planned and this question would be raised consistently with those groups.

The Principal/CEO said the purpose of this exercise thus far was about recognising what was important to the staff. The College wants to be responsive to staff and demonstrate it listens to what they need.

The Chair asked about results from 12 November closing date for engagement survey. NH said it was too early to analyse results fully and survey was anonymous so analytics will not show any pockets of non-engagement.

The report was noted and the committee would be interested to hear future updates.

PR/080 Core People Key Performance Indicators

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

The covid impact on staff absences was noted, and 114 days had been lost to this. Entering the Winter also traditionally resulted in increased absence.

Long term picture **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION.**
An increase in number of mental health related, plus a couple which are unique cases.

LCJ observed that mental health absence appeared increasing across the region. The surge in cases has been exacerbated through covid and this was still very early days so numbers would likely rise. There is no one solution. It is about an individual approach, and responding early to provide support to address issues for each person as they emerge.

EM stated it would be useful for the Committee to be assured that the People Strategy and Engagement Activity would also be aligned to the mental health support needs of staff, especially as this was an emerging and identified issue of concern. PC and NH confirmed this would be taken into account.

PC confirmed that the KPIs themselves would be reviewed again over the course of the next few meetings. PC would also discuss this with LCJ and look at what NHS Trusts measure and consider the "what is this telling us" question.

LCJ asks if PC was confident that absence needs are adequately supported and managed. PC confirmed numbers in absolute terms are low. Therefore the College has good understanding of individual cases and intelligence on the same.

The report was noted and KPIs would be brought back for discussion at the next meeting.

PR/081 Mandatory Training Review (including Safeguarding) Update

The report was presented by the Senior People and Organisational Development Business Partner and the Head of Student Services and Customer Experience.

The Chair reinforced the importance of mandatory training in terms of staff and student safety. SS also reinforced the regulatory expectations to complete training where required and was pleased the HR team were reviewing mandatory training requirements across the College.

LCJ said the completion rate could never be 100%, so the Committee needed to understand its tolerance level on these training areas. The list was too extensive and what was mandatory needed to be understood and clarified. LCJ highlighted that the Committee needed to understand the risk associated with staff not completing each area of training and what this may mean in terms of meeting legislative requirements, and to seek assurance that any delay in completion would be followed up and that the Committee should continue to monitor this.

The Principal/CEO referred to H & S and third party training completion rates. The College needed to understand what follow up what was being undertaken with third parties. The College needed to consider how long was given to complete, and whether completion was timely as well as completed.

EM stated that risk should also be considered in the context of what type of liability could arise in the event a situation crystallised and mandatory training had not been completed – including what regulatory sanctions could be imposed.

LCJ said that this needed support of line managers to ensure engagement by staff – training was notoriously a difficult area for employers to address.

The report was noted.

PR/082 COVID Update

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

NH confirmed that the College continued to monitor staff unavailability for reasons due to not being vaccinated and having to self-isolate.

SS comments on trends in Europe being higher than in the UK potentially due to booster vaccination roll out. LCJ confirmed PHE data showed covid has not gone away, cases across the region especially in schools was still prevalent. People being admitted to hospital were where there was immobility, or due to vaccine dip (ie 6 months+ after second vaccine). Comorbidity and those remaining unvaccinated, continues to be a challenge.

The report was noted.

PR/083 Risk Register

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

CJR asked PC to comment on the risks allocated to this committee.

PC confirmed that R6 risk rating had not changed.

Re R19, Chair asked if this should be shared between this committee and the C&Q committee. EM said that there should be one responsible person/committee for each area of risk, so the board could identify clear ownership and oversight. However, where one committee sought assurances in relation to a particular aspect of a certain risk that did not fall within that Committee's remit, this should be confirmed to the committee with responsibility for the same, for it to take this into account.

LCJ asked whether the Committee's cycle of business supported its assessment of risks allocated to this Committee, and the gaining of it of assurances in relation to the risk mitigations for the same, and the adequacy of the same. The Principal/CEO confirmed this was an ongoing broader piece of work and in some areas, assurance frameworks had been developed. However, work was being undertaken to look at how assurances were given to committees and the Board in relation to each of the risks. This included internal and external assurance work.

A session has been arranged for governors, as part of the planned February Board meeting, on diversity of thought. This has since been rescheduled to take place in April 2022.

The report was noted and further work in relation to risk assurance framework would be undertaken in the following months.

PR/084 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

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

The Chair asked if specific work was done with staff and students in relation to this area. There was no specific training but Prevent training was delivered as part of the mandatory training.

The report was noted.

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Nadine Hudspeth and Sara Reay left the meeting.

PR/086 Current Employment Tribunal Case Update

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

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The report was noted.

PR/087 Any Other Business

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PR/088 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 10 March 2022 at 12.00pm.