

Agenda No: 02



PEOPLE AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 6 MAY 2021

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4 February 2021
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open

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

In attendance: Paul Campbell (Head of People and Organisational Development)
John Gray (Director of Student Experience)
Nadine Hudspeth (Director of Marketing & Communications)
Sally Cooper (WBD, Clerk)
Suzanne Clark (Minutes)

PR/010 Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Conflict of Interest

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

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/011 Minutes of the People and Remuneration Committee meeting dated 5 November 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

PR/012 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

PR/013 Annual Schedule of Business 2020/21

The Head of People and Organisational Development presented the annual schedule of business for 2020/21.

The Chair expressed a view that the schedule flowed very well and covered all items that she would have expected.

Following recent discussion around KPIs at the Winter Conference the Interim Principal / CEO suggested that an annual report be added to the schedule of business, to look

back on the year's activities and an annual plan that looks forward and contextualises the KPIs. He felt that this would help to set direction and priorities for the committee. He suggested that the meetings in May or July may be appropriate for this item. The Head of People and Organisational Development advised that a review of the schedule is included in the July meeting so it may be appropriate to include then. The Interim Principal / CEO added that he has previous experience of the Board receiving an annual HR report and suggested that the schedule of business for the Board be checked to see where would be most appropriate for this to be included. A member indicated that it could be pencilled in to the schedule for July, recognising that this could potentially be too early. It might be more appropriate to present a report early the following year when there has been the opportunity to reflect. The Interim Principal / CEO commented that the review should be formalised into a report or plan which would feed up to the Board. It was agreed that the Interim Principal / CEO and Head of People and Organisational Development would discuss this further outside of the meeting. The Head of People and Organisational Development to update the Chair.

Action: Interim Principal / CEO and Head of People and Organisational Development to discuss and agree annual reporting which can then be shared with the Chair.

The schedule was received.

PR/014 Update on 'Lets Chat' Collaboration with Weston College

The report was presented by the Director of Student Experience.

The Director of Student Experience noted the work of the Director of Marketing & Communications and the Marketing Team in supporting this initiative.

It was reported that the project is being shared as part of the AoC Conference and that Gillian Keegan, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, will also be including the work in her next ministerial update.

The Director of Marketing & Communication noted that it was extremely pleasing to see a high proportion of males engaging with the initiative. Throughout the project she has also observed a very strong culture on mental health and well-being which has been developed over a long period of time. Work with Weston College has been really productive. The colleges have learnt a lot from each other with the opportunity to share best practice and know-how, and it is felt that this will continue to be of benefit.

The Chair asked whether the project had given those involved ideas on other ways to work with partners. The Director of Marketing & Communications felt that work with Weston College in this area would continue beyond the end of the project. The colleges will continue to share content and expertise. It was felt that there were definitely areas that could support collaboration with others.

The Chair asked whether feedback has been sought from staff, learners and managers to look at the impact of the initiative. The Director of Marketing & Communications advised that she is currently collecting feedback. There has been lots of anecdotal feedback and formal feedback is being requested. The detail of this to be shared at a future meeting.

The Chair commented that the project was extremely positive on every level and thanked the College team for their work on this initiative. She felt that foundations had been laid which would be hugely important both during and following the current

pandemic. She was extremely encouraged by the investment in the health and mental well-being of staff and learners.

Action: Director of Student Experience to present feedback on the initiative to the committee at subsequent meeting.

The report was noted.

PR/015 People KPIs

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

The Chair commented that it was very useful to be able to compare data both regionally and nationally. The Committee was advised that work is ongoing to add something around diversity and inclusion to the KPIs, to identify trends in this area. Consideration is also being given to the inclusion of a measure around appraisals and the identification and follow up of staff training needs.

A member commented on the richness of information included in the report and whilst the measures were important, it was essential that focus on key areas including staff attendance, sickness and pay to income ratio was not lost. The staff to income ratio is currently looking very positive.

The Interim Principal / CEO recognised that some indicators are similar but more nuanced and he felt that there was a need to ensure the four or five key headline pieces of data with perhaps a separate table sitting under these with the data broken down further. A member added that the Committee also need to consider what is then reported up to the Board. The Chair advised that governors would appreciate less overlap and have expressed a desire to include the information on appraisals and training needs. The Interim Principal / CEO stressed the need to consider the margins used to determine RAG ratings. The Head of People and Organisational Development welcomed the comments and feedback. He acknowledged that the RAG rating methodology needs to be addressed as the colours currently show a negative picture rather than positive, since falling numbers are shown as red but for some KPIs this is in fact positive. He will look to reshape and redefine the reporting of the KPIs.

The Head of People and Organisational Development advised that work has been taking place to move away from an annual appraisal to a more fluid process, as and when needed. This will be reported on at the meeting scheduled in July which has a theme of people development. The Chair stressed that the Committee need to be able to see that there is a process in place.

The Director of Marketing & Communications asked whether Health and Safety should be managed at committee level or reported to the Board, questioning whether an annual report to the Board is sufficient. The Interim Principal / CEO indicated that he would expect to see an annual report to the Board, and whilst not wanting to duplicate effort, he suggested it might be appropriate for the report to be presented to the Committee in the first instance. Another member commented that they had experience of a draft report being presented at committee level first before being reported to the Board. It was his view that the governing body should receive an annual report and that the Committee should have an overview of the report prior to wider reporting, to enable the report to be challenged and scrutinised in more detail, before presentation to the Board, and thereby in turn providing additional assurance to the Board that there has been appropriate oversight. The Chair felt that this would be useful to note in terms of the

annual schedule of business. The Clerk confirmed that she would look to do this following the meeting.

Action: Head of People and Organisational Development to update and refine presentation of KPIs.

Action: Clerk to confirm the inclusion of the annual Health and Safety report on the annual schedule of business.

The report was noted.

PR/016 COVID Update

The report was presented by the Director of Marketing & Communications.

The Director of Marketing & Communications highlighted that since the report was produced the College had registered its first positive test from lateral flow testing. This was dealt with promptly and the learner's parents collected them.

The Director of Marketing & Communications reported that she is currently investigating whether it is possible to arrange for staff working with high needs learners to be vaccinated as a priority.

The Chair expressed her appreciation for the efforts of staff in the setting up of testing and asked whether the required resources are available to manage mass testing once the College reopens. The Interim Principal / CEO advised that preparation work around mass testing had been complete prior to the current lockdown, before being put on hold. He felt that the College would be able to facilitate weekly mass testing. However, the more problematic piece is around the daily testing that would be required if an individual tests positive. Anyone who has been in contact with the positive individual would then be required to be tested daily and, subject to a negative result, is able to remain in College. There is no way of determining what capacity is required for this. The resource required to oversee daily contact testing could be exponential, and resource would need to be front-loaded in each day. Current guidance indicates that colleges and schools may return on 8 March 2021 but this could be a phased return. The Chair advised that she was assured that the College is on top of issues presented recognising the need to identify what is reasonable.

The Chair highlighted that at the Winter Conference, the student governor had expressed concern that learners might refuse to be tested and asked what can be done to encourage testing, to ensure learners feel safe. The Interim Principal / CEO indicated that testing is not mandatory and staff and learners have to give consent. He added that many young people do not want to be tested as they feel well and also that testing could give people false confidence which would lead to them not being fully compliant with safety advice. The Director of Marketing & Communications added that any learners currently accessing college buildings are being advised that they must consent to testing as the buildings are not publicly open. There are plans in place to ensure that messaging around expected behaviours is continually reinforced, to encourage compliance. There has also been a large increase in the number of people reporting mental health challenges and the infrastructure in place is helping to signpost people appropriately. The Chair recognised the excellent work taking place in extremely challenging times.

The report was noted.

PR/017 Mid-year Safeguarding Update

The report was presented by the Director of Student Experience.

The Director of Student Experience reported that an additional two referrals had been received since production of the summary. There have been 44 referrals to date. In comparison to the same time in the previous year this is significantly lower. In light of the current situation members were advised that numbers should be treated with caution when comparing like for like. Student wellbeing services are operational throughout lockdown. There have been no reported issues involving staff. The College was contacted by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in relation to a previous member of staff and the information requested has been provided. There have been two concerns raised in relation to radicalisation. These learners are currently attending channel panels which the Director of Student Experience attends on behalf of the College. There was an additional referral recently received in relation to social media posts and the concerns have been shared with the Community Safety Team who suggested a referral to Gateshead Adult Services. A review of mandatory staff training is currently taking place. Managers have been asked to determine the training requirements of staff. Consideration is being given to the formation of a group who would meet on a periodic basis to agree training requirements, content and delivery. It was reported that 230 staff recently attended county lines training delivered by Edge North East. The sessions were also recorded for staff who were not able to attend. Feedback has been excellent and staff now feel well informed. Stay safe online training has been reviewed for staff and students. COVID addendums have been added to the College's safeguarding policies. A number of Safeguarding and Health & Safety reviews of college departments have been planned. These are supportive conversations with teams to look at their understanding of safeguarding and health and safety to help improve practice, knowledge and understanding of these key areas. 98% of students confirmed during the recent student survey that they feel safe in College.

The Director of Marketing & Communications asked whether low compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education training was an issue in any particular areas/departments. The Director of Student Experience indicated that compliance was an issue across the board. There were no particular areas where compliance was lower than others. He added that this training is a requirement for all staff and that regular reminders are shared with managers. It is recognised that for some staff technology is an issue to access the training. This is being considered and some face to face, COVID secure, delivery has taken place during recent weeks.

The Interim Principal / CEO commented on the very rich data and indicated that it would be useful to provide narrative to future reports to give context. It was highlighted that there was a potential error in the ethnicity section of the report. The Director of Student Experience confirmed that he would follow this up. The Interim Principal / CEO reflected on the number of issues reported from the Healthcare curriculum area which with 11 cases made up almost 25% of referrals. He felt that this would be interesting to investigate further. The Director of Student Experience advised that there are generally more referrals for level 1 learners. The Chair indicated she was also concerned about the number of referrals in this area but was assured that work is already taking place to investigate why this might be.

The Chair commented on the numbers of reported cases for personal or home life issues indicating that she would expect an increase rather than a decline in this area. The Chair questioned whether this could be due to learners feeling distanced from College currently. The Director of Student Experience advised that the focus for learning facilitators has been very much centred on progress and wellbeing checks with

learners. There is also a vulnerable learner list and the College has been very proactive in understanding the individual needs of learners during the period of closure and how they can be responded to. Learners have continued to be offered support and the team have continued to respond to support needs. It is felt that a lack of face to face contact could be a driver. In terms of context, the Head of People and Organisational Development asked whether it would be worthwhile looking at the number of referrals being received by other colleges in what is a very unusual year. The Director of Student Experience advised that it is very difficult to get any information of this nature from other colleges in relation to safeguarding. He is not aware of any organisation who would be willing to share the detail. The Director of Student Experience reported that Operation Encompass continues which responds to violence within the home. Referrals continue to be received. The College aims to get as much information as possible from local authorities to be able to offer support to learners. The Interim Principal / CEO recognised that other colleges may not want to be forthcoming in sharing detail and suggested that contact could be made with the AoC to discuss a piece of work, perhaps on a regional level, which could give comparable data.

The Chair commented that it was extremely useful to have the context to support the report. She was pleased to see focus on mandatory staff CPD and indicated that staff need to be encouraged to comply.

Action: Director of Student Experience to consider feasibility of sharing/obtaining regional data via AoC.

The report was noted.

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

PR/018 Permanent SPH Recruitment Update

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

The Head of People and Organisational Development reported that the deadline for applicants closed at the end of this week. Work had been carried out nationally to attract candidates, via over 900 e-shots and 150 targeted emails. 20 individuals had expressed an interest in submitting an application and 8 had had conversations with the Interim Principal / CEO or Chair. Some barriers to application were relocation, individuals having recently started in a new role, and a change of circumstances in an individual's current role.

The Interim Principal / CEO noted that, of the candidates he had spoken with, all were worthy of consideration and within that there were some particularly strong candidates. The Committee noted that the level of interest shown by candidates was promising. Candidates had been comfortable with the content of the information they had been provided with.

In relation to recruitment for Deputy Principal – Finance and Resources, there was still a period of time to go for this process and the College would continue to monitor how the matter developed

The report was noted.

PR/019 Principal's remuneration compared to the median staff salary

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/020 SPH Mid-year Performance Review

A verbal update was given by the Interim Principal / CEO.

[This item is confidential and not for publication.]

The report was noted.

PR/021 College Pay Claim 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/022 Employment Tribunal Case 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/023 Any other business

There was none.

PR/024 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 6 May 2021 at 10.00am.