

Agenda No: 02



PEOPLE AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 1 July 2021
Author: Clerk
Action: Approve
Status: Open

Present: Claire-Jane Rewcastle (Chair)
David Alexander (Principal / CEO)
Andy Cole (Strategy Advisor)
Sarah Stewart

In attendance: Paul Campbell (Head of People and Organisational Development)
Darren Heathcote (Learner Services Manager)
Nadine Hudspeth (Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety)
Sara Reay (Senior People and Organisational Development Business Partner)
Richard Ward (Head of Quality Improvement)
Emma Moody (WBD, Clerk)
Suzanne Clark (Minutes)

PR/040 Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Conflict of Interest

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

Members agreed to co-opt Sarah Stewart as a member of the Committee for the time being and to report the appointment to the Board at its meeting on 20 July.

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/041 Minutes of the People and Remuneration Committee meeting dated 6 May 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

PR/042 Matters Arising

The Clerk confirmed that work has progressed in relation to health and safety, safeguarding and information governance. These areas have been assigned to the appropriate committees. The Audit Committee will have oversight of health and safety, Finance and General Purposes Committee will have oversight of information

governance and the Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee will have oversight of safeguarding. There has been no specific responsibility assigned to the People and Remuneration Committee other than the existing oversight of training in relation to these areas. The new arrangements will be in place from September. The new Principal / CEO confirmed that he was comfortable with this arrangement.

The Head of People and Organisational Development advised that he had been in contact with other colleges to discuss the sharing of absence data, to identify any trends. There is an interest from others to share KPI information, subject to approval from their Principals. The Chair recognised the value in being able to compare the College data against that of its peers.

The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety indicated that she would share details of the external equality and diversity speaker with the Clerk and the Chair.

PR/043 People KPIs

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

In response to a question from the Chair around people leaving and risk of loss of talent, the Head of People and Organisational Development indicated that the two particular staff members left to progress their career rather than as a result of dissatisfaction with the College. Both were leaving on good terms.

The Chair asked whether the College had been successful in being able to fill these roles. The Head of People and Organisational Development indicated that one of the roles had been filled internally. Due to the specialist nature of the IT Development role, and the national shortage in this area, a development plan is in progress. The team are working to mitigate any risks/issues/gaps arising as a result of this whilst new staff are being trained and a permanent successor to the role is identified.

The Chair commented that she was assured that potential issues were being identified and that necessary steps have been taken to mitigate any risks.

The report was noted.

PR/044 COVID Update

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

It was reported that there are currently 8 positive COVID cases. 5 of these cases are staff members and 3 are students. There are currently 21 individuals self-isolating. In total, to date, there have been 181 cases. 126 of these were students, 38 were staff and there have been 17 apprentice cases.

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The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety reported on the NHS quality assurance programme currently taking place in which the College is taking part. This is to test the efficiency of lateral flow tests and requires staff to undertake a PCR test alongside the lateral flow test. 122 kits have been collected by staff to date. The PCR test is posted back and the results matched against the lateral

flow test. The programme will complete on Tuesday 6 July 2021. **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION.**

It was reported that the College has been asked to continue with the current testing regime until the end of the summer term. The expected stage 4 announcement should give further guidance on the expectations for the new term. This may require testing sites to be reinstated. The Strategy Advisor indicated that there will be a significant number of new students starting in September and having testing sites in operation will allow this to become part of the culture. He felt it would be very interesting to see the uptake of testing.

The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety reported that the College staff conference took place on 25 June 2021. There was in excess of 300 people in attendance. Detailed planning was undertaken to ensure that the event was COVID secure. **THIS ITEM IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION.** It was felt to be very positive that the team had been able to bring people together whilst ensuring everyone was kept safe.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety advised that the conference had been an interesting indicator of the mood amongst staff. It had been expected that a large number of staff would have been anxious to attend such a large event and there was an option for staff to attend remotely. On the whole, most staff were comfortable with the arrangements in place. The Learner Services Manager added that the mood in the room was extremely positive. The Head of Quality Improvement commented that generally staff are keen to get back to what they normally do, and do very well.

The Chair reflected on the positive nature of the report.

The Strategy Advisor suggested that there could be potential for localised QR codes to be introduced where learner's check-in to individual rooms. A member highlighted recent press reports indicating that schools may not have to ask whole year groups to isolate and asked whether this is applicable to colleges. The Strategy Advisor indicated that this is not yet clear. It may be that this could apply to particular age ranges. When testing was first introduced it was anticipated that individuals who had been in contact with a positive case would then undertake daily testing to avoid self-isolation and only have to isolate if they felt unwell. This may be introduced in the new term.

The Strategy Manager highlighted that the majority of people currently testing positive are likely to have received at least one vaccination which should limit the potential to be seriously affected.

The report was noted.

PR/045 Safeguarding Update – Training and Development

The report was presented by the Learner Services Manager.

The Learner Services Manager reported that there had been no requirement for the College to contact the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for the current year which was felt to be significant.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Clerk confirmed that safeguarding training is part of the induction process for governors and that a mop-up session

would be arranged for anyone who has not yet received this. The Clerk also indicated that she would contact governors with a view to capturing any safeguarding training individuals had completed outside of their governor roles.

The Clerk highlighted that the safeguarding governor and the Curriculum and Quality Standards Committee would require detailed information to allow for analysis of the data and appropriate oversight. In particular, they would wish to look at grading of concerns, and whether thresholds being applied throughout different curriculum areas were consistent.

Action: Clerk to contact governors to capture details of any safeguarding training undertaken.

The report was noted.

PR/046 Mandatory Training Review

The report was presented by the Senior People and Organisational Development Business Partner.

The Chair was assured from the report presented that the effectiveness of training is being considered and that the delivery of training is appropriate for individuals. She was assured that there is high compliance for those with the greatest contact and that there are plans in place to engage with the broader College community.

The Clerk indicated that from a regulatory and inspection perspective, current compliance rates would be seen negatively and asked whether there is a timeframe for the planned activity to ensure completion of mandatory training. The Senior People and Organisational Development Business Partner advised that an update will be provided at the next meeting. The Head of People and Organisational Development added that work around compliance has been agreed as a priority and he gave assurance that there are key milestones in place. Work is planned to look in detail at the data and agree a way forward to improve compliance whilst having a process that is suitable for all staff. It was confirmed by the Learner Services Manager that this work is being prioritised.

Action: Update on completion of mandatory training to be provided at the next meeting of this committee..

The report was noted.

PR/047 Teaching and Learning Development

The report was presented by the Head of Quality Improvement.

In addition to the information within the report, the Head of Quality Improvement gave an update on the development week which took place across week commencing 21 June 2021 and the Teacher Academy Conference which took place on 23 June 2021. In total, 173 curriculum staff signed up to the Teacher Academy Conference and 113 staff accessed the google classroom. 236 staff members accessed the teacher academy site across the week which is the highest level of engagement to date.

The Chair asked whether it would be possible for governors to have a look at the information available to staff. The Head of Quality Improvement confirmed that details would be circulated.

The Chair was encouraged by the high number of users being reported and asked whether feedback is collected from staff. The Head of Quality Improvement confirmed that feedback was collected from the Teacher Academy Conference. The feedback suggests that some of the sections need a refresh and it was acknowledged that the site is evolving. In response to a question from the Chair, the Head of Quality Improvement advised that there has been some reluctance from small pockets of staff to engage with online learning. Support is being given by coaches to increase the confidence levels of these staff in using technology. During the pandemic, the lead practitioners have been able to identify quickly where support was needed. Lots of short, in-house, training sessions were offered with video guides for some of the content and the lead practitioners reached out to staff to offer support. A significant amount of work has been undertaken with staff in relation to blended learning which has had an extremely positive impact. Feedback received from external verifiers and learners is very reflective of this.

The Chair asked whether performance review and appraisal would identify staff who have not undertaken training. The Head of People and Organisational Development indicated that it would and advised that he was very aware that there had been no PIPs (Performance Improvement Plans) issued recently. He suggested that this could be due to the training that has taken place during the pandemic. He indicated that there was currently a piece of work being undertaken with a view to using the College's Aspire process to capture the discussion between staff and managers.

The Head of People and Organisational Development reported that the Learning and Development Steering Group have a second priority area of work around collaboration. The group will be looking at any potential crossover from the work with the Teacher Academy that can be used to support non-teaching staff and shape the College's people development strategies.

Action: Head of Quality Improvement to arrange for a link to the Teacher Academy website to be shared with governors.

The report was noted.

PR/048 Aspire (Performance and Development Process)

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

The Strategy Advisor highlighted the need for professional ongoing conversations and asked whether there was an opportunity to link this to the College's expectations on managers. The Head of People and Organisational Development stressed that the emphasis for Aspire was on a simple system without any duplication. The process should be focused on the individual. It was recognised that it will take time to embed the process and the Head of People and Organisational Development confirmed that he will work closely with others in the College to support this, considering how information is captured. It was stressed that individuals are the owners of the process and this ownership will be encouraged.

The Chair noted that completion to date has been lower than hoped and asked whether there is anything that could be done to encourage people to respond in a more timely fashion. The Head of People and Organisational Development advised

that he has encouraged managers to ensure the deadline was adhered to. Data available from the system does not currently give information on the number of reviews in progress. This is an area which is under development. The Head of People and Organisational Development was confident that discussions between staff and their managers are taking place. The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety commented that the new process is much improved. It was confirmed that the system has been designed to be simple and more focused on managers having the opportunity to have a quality conversation with their teams. The Clerk suggested that a demonstration of the system could be provided to the committee members at a future meeting.

Action: Demonstration of Aspire Process to be brought by the Head of People and Organisational Development at a future meeting.

The report was noted.

PR/049 Workforce Planning

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

The Chair asked how the letters of intent were being received by staff. The Head of People and Organisational Development indicated that in previous years, staff were not informed of the plan until the last minute so this is seen to be a much-improved position.

The Strategy Advisor reported that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had received a report at their meeting on 30 June 2021 in relation to potential estates work.

The Clerk requested confirmation of the confidence levels in relation to mitigating the level of staffing resource required – in other words, how confident were management that the mitigating actions would reduce the risk of not having sufficiently and adequate staffing across all required areas. The Head of People and Organisational Development suggested that this was an area of medium risk and was very much dependent on the curriculum area / area of specialism. Many other organisations are putting out adverts currently but are similarly awaiting confirmation of actual learner numbers to progress. The committee was advised that this is an annual process and there may be a need to have larger classes in the first instance to accommodate. The Director of Marketing, Communications, Estates and Health & Safety added that the team are looking to improve communication with casual and fixed term staff to ensure they feel valued and increase the chance of retaining them in the new academic year. The Chair asked whether others felt that there was anything missing or that could be done differently. The Strategy Advisor expressed a view that this was very much about the quality of engagement with casual and fixed term staff. This group are most likely to be loyal to the organisation who have remained in positive contact.

A member highlighted that discussions had recently taken place in relation to the worst-case scenario and felt that there could be a situation where a limit is needed on the number of learners, if there is not sufficient space or staff to accommodate the delivery. The Clerk indicated that this could have a potential impact on quality of provision. The Learner Services Manager advised that the team are confident in terms of the predictions made and forecasts have been produced using data from previous years so should be fairly accurate.

The Chair welcomed the report and was assured that the College team are fully aware of the decisions that need to be made.

The report was noted.

PR/050 Strategic Risk Register (Succession Planning)

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

In response to a question from the Chair, the Strategy Manager suggested that the approach to succession planning may need to change over time. He acknowledged the challenge in relation to senior leadership and indicated that this was a challenge across the sector. The Principal / CEO and Finance Director roles are recognised to be the most challenging roles to fill, but the College had successfully recruited into both of these areas. It was suggested that the team may wish to consider other initiatives for recruitment to senior roles, and a wider talent and progression piece of work. The Strategy Advisor indicated that this is not an area that would normally be included on the strategic risk register.

The new Principal / CEO recognised the high-quality staff base and staff development programme in place and suggested that there was a need to consider the workforce strategies and use of systems in place to develop and retain staff.

The Head of People and Organisational Development reported that there are mechanisms in place through workforce development and Aspire. He added that there are strategically, critical roles and in order to futureproof the College, consideration should be given as to whether senior or other specific roles are added to the risk register.

The Clerk advised that the Audit Committee "hold" the risk register on behalf of the Board – that committee looks at the risks facing the College (as a business) and the mitigation strategy. Each Committee would be asked to test the risks and mitigations pertaining to their area and to inform the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee would expect that the People Committee test the mitigations in place in relation to any strategic workforce risks and be satisfied that they are effective. Members would need to be confident that they can provide the necessary assurance. The Audit Committee would be looking for confirmation that the risks assigned have been reviewed and scrutinised. The Chair expressed concern that this could end up a large piece of work. The Principal / CEO felt this area to be a strand of workforce planning and questioned whether it was a strategic risk. Following discussion, it was agreed that this would remain a workforce planning consideration and its inclusion on the risk register would be re-considered.

The report was noted.

Nadine Hudspeth, Darren Heathcote, Sara Reay, Richard Ward and Suzanne Clark left the meeting at 11.30am.

PR/051 Senior Postholder Evaluation

The report was presented by Andy Cole, ex CEO/Principal and Strategic Advisor.

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The report was noted.

PR/052 Senior Postholder Salaries

The report was presented by Andy Cole, ex Principal/CEO and Strategic Advisor.

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The report was noted.

PR/053 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/054 Any Other Business

There was none.

PR/055 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed on the 2021/22 meeting schedule.