# **logo_colourBOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

**Human Resources and Development Committee**

Thursday 5 September 2024 at 5.00pm **Room K-TO-624, Kingsway Campus** (MS Teams option available)

## Minute of the Human Resources and Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 5 September 2024 at 5.00pm, in Room K-TO-624, Kingsway Campus.

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| **PRESENT:** | Donald Mackenzie | Stephen Oakley |
|  | Brian Lawrie | Simon Hewitt |
|  | Jackie Buchanan | Matthew Beattie |
|  | Carri Cusick |  |

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| **IN ATTENDANCE:** | Steven Taylor (Vice Principal Support Services and Operations) | |
|  | Abi Mawhirt (Head of People and Organisation Development) |  |
|  | Penny Muir (Board Administrator) |  |
|  | Sandy Fowler (Health & Safety Officer) |  |
|  | Scott Anderson (Independent Board Observer) |  |

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|  | **WELCOME**  D Mackenzie welcomed committee members to the Human Resources & Development Committee meeting. A Mawhirt was welcomed back following her maternity leave, and S Anderson was introduced as the Independent Observer for the Board. |
|  | **APOLOGIES**  Apologies received from Billy Grace, Karen Buchanan, Julie Grace, Daniel Rosie and Neil Lowden. |
|  | **DECLARATIONS OF CONNECTION & INTEREST**  There were no declarations of connection & interests. |
|  | **MINUTE OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**  The minute of the meeting held on 2 May 2024 was approved as an accurate record. |
|  | **MATTERS ARISING**  The matters arisings are closed. |
|  | **PRESENTATION - HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING MANAGEMENT**  S Fowler presented the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Management report.  It was noted that a significant outcome from the audit highlighted the importance of training, with all risk assessments and required safety checks being up to date.  S Fowler highlighted various Health and Safety components and elements were aligned with the college's policies and noted that a collaborative effort is being made to address areas for improvement, such as first aid.  As a result, five training modules were developed, including a four-hour face-to-face session.  S Fowler highlighted that Health and Safety courses are mandatory, with a themed year every three years requiring staff to complete the training by the end of January. Although progress was delayed for some staff a 97.38% completion rate was achieved, with those missing due to long term absence, maternity leave etc.  S Fowler highlighted the performance statistics which include Accident Incidents and Near Misses (AINM), with 214 recorded events across all three campuses- a 15% reduction from last year. Despite a slight increase in reported incidents, greater awareness and reporting are being encouraged, with a three-year window needed to assess trends accurately.  In terms of accidents, S Fowler highlighted there were five student and two employee cases, marking a slight increase compared to the previous year. The College is preparing to implement its safety audit plan for 2024-25, with a review app issued to 38 departments. This app, featuring 40 questions, will allow grading of results within a 10-day window, followed by monitoring and analysis. The plan is to share progress with the wider staff group soon, with initial feedback being largely positive.  The detailed and positive presentation was welcomed by the Committee.  D Mackenzie asked about analysis of the more serious RIDDOR reported accidents. S Fowler responded that the People Team are involved in capturing data and identifying patterns, ensuring deeper scrutiny of treatment categories and outcomes. There is an ongoing effort to investigate incidents thoroughly and prevent future accidents. D Mackenzie asked if there was a need for specific departments to adopt more preventive measures, to which it was confirmed that more visits and training were focused on areas where incidents had occurred. Re-inductions for students or staff were also conducted upon their return, and training signed off accordingly.  S Fowler stated that the college is in the process of sharing risk assessments across all departments. An online departmental risk assessment bank is being developed, which will facilitate further review as needed. S Oakley enquired about how the system in place correlates with other information and practice. S Fowler mentioned that the college follows the HEC 65 module, which covers policy, organisation, and implementation that data will be shared across the college via a portal with 52 questions. S Oakley also asked whether accident trends by month suggest the need for enhanced inductions, to which S Fowler noted that while inductions are conducted, the data needs further analysis to identify and address potential patterns.  C Cusick raised the question of how the college's figures compare to other institutions and welcomed the use of Power Apps to facilitate staff compliance. However, C Cusick expressed disappointment at the low completion rate for mandatory training at the initial deadline, asking whether this was due to performance issues or cultural factors. S Taylor acknowledged that time constraints and priorities had impacted completion rates, but changes are being made to better allocate time for training, including a dedicated session during the scheduled staff development day.  S Hewitt acknowledged the mandatory training and emphasised that while there is still work to be done, the approach implemented by S Fowler has had a significant positive impact. S Fowler's efforts, time, and care in this area were commended, with an expectation of continued improvement.  S Hewitt expressed his congratulations on the progress made so far.  B Lawrie highlighted the importance of the four-hour course, noting its value, particularly on the employee side. He indicated that there are always areas for improvement regarding responsibility for H&S and found it beneficial to be able to compare reports.  D Mackenzie asked how wellbeing is measured and explored in a non-incidental way. S Fowler responded by explaining that the college runs numerous campaigns focussing on mental health and wellbeing, including mental health first aid. Data is captured from these initiatives to direct support efforts, with the People Team playing a key role in moving this forward. Mental health first aiders are also being utilised, and their work is guided by the data collected.  S Taylor added that there is a lot of ongoing support provided through the People Team, including counselling and liaison services. For students, the Student Services team, Learner & Community Engagement Team, and Students’ Association all provides support, with a range of resources and evaluation processes in place. S Taylor noted that data on wellbeing was also included in the staff survey report.  D Mackenzie thanked S Fowler for the positive presentation. |
|  | **PEOPLE, OD & COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**  S Taylor reported that the Voluntary Severance (VS) scheme was opened from April to June 2024, attracting 11 applications, which allowed for the redevelopment of certain areas to generate additional savings. The total savings from VS during the 2023/2024 academic year amounted to £366,931. The VS scheme will be reopened, with information being submitted to the Board for approval to extend the scheme for another 3-4 years.  Regarding development activities, S Taylor highlighted the decision was made not to live stream the all-staff development day, allowing for better engagement. Over 400 individuals attended the event, which featured a panel discussion focused on strategic and economic developments. The day focussed on two key themes: Artificial Intelligence and behaviour management /supporting staff in handling student behaviour issues, providing clarity on what is and is not acceptable.  S Hewitt noted that the entire agenda for the day was built around the staff survey feedback, addressing key themes raised by staff, and setting expectations for the upcoming year.  S Taylor also highlighted the focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its implications, particularly in relation to student use and issues like plagiarism. Staff are exploring ways to develop teaching materials and approaches to address these concerns, with a practical, workshop-based session also planned for the all-staff development day on 14th of November 2024.  S Taylor noted the staff awards and graduation were cited as highlights of the year, especially the student-nominated awards, which were positively received.  In terms of workforce wellbeing, an initiative called "Just One Hour" was developed to encourage staff to dedicate one hour per month to a wellbeing activity, acknowledging the challenges of time constraints. The initiative is in its final stages, with various wellbeing opportunities being planned. Leadership coaching will also be launched alongside this effort.  B Lawrie enquired about the approval of the VS scheme by the Scottish Funding Council and whether any guidelines were provided regarding costs and savings. S Taylor confirmed that the scheme must generate savings within a two-year period and that the council requests details if any applications are unusual, high-value, or cause for concern.  S Oakley emphasised the value of leadership coaching, particularly in supporting the transition of teaching staff, and expressed optimism about the future events and the benefit of these. S Taylor confirmed that the leadership coaching extended beyond traditional line management and includes a broad range of staff.  C Cusick expressed interest in the college's use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and co-pilot technology. S Taylor noted that this was an area of great interest, with a range of staff developing and reviewing different uses.  S Oakley commended the influence of staff development on personal growth, while J Buchanan asked for more information on workforce planning.  S Taylor explained that the workforce planning event was part of ongoing work with the Regional Chairs and SFC. HR and Finance practitioners attended the event, with contributions from NHS 24 on how they manage workforce demands and from Audit Scotland on the financial and environmental impacts affecting workforce planning. The discussions highlighted that some colleges have not yet conducted such analysis, with growth and decline in specific economic and curriculum areas being key factors.  The report was welcomed. |
|  | **2024 STAFF SURVEY FEEDBACK & ACTIONS**  S Taylor presented the findings from the biennial staff survey, noting that overall feedback has been positive, with staff engagement remaining consistently high, which is a good result for any organisation.  Whilst the survey shows a positive position overall, there were areas of decline, particularly in learning and growth. The survey also highlighted a need for improvement in areas related to goals, strategy, and staff's optimism for the future. These results were not surprising, and actions have been taken to address them. One of these actions includes changes to the all-staff development day, creating more opportunities for staff, and shifting the focus towards a positive outlook for the future rather than dwelling on past challenges. There is a push to change the narrative, focusing on transitioning to a more forward-looking and optimistic approach, as there is clear demand and need.  The platform "Peachy Mondays" was used to facilitate anonymous two-way conversations during the process, with 120 detailed conversations taking place, many of which focused on mental health and wellbeing. The discussions highlighted the support that is needed, and efforts were made to address areas of concern for individuals.  Regarding data use, S Taylor highlighted that early actions have been taken, particularly in CPD learning (Continuing Professional Development). There have been discussions at director level, where department-specific data has been reviewed, and the next steps are being progressed to discuss feedback and actions at team level. Directors are working on how to address these findings within their teams. Managers have until the end of September to have conversations with their teams, and feedback will be provided to staff about the changes and improvements made. This process will be managed at team level, and efforts are being made to ensure that both figures and staff comments are addressed.  C Cusick raised the topic of relatable leadership, asking what people mean by "relatable." S Taylor responded by noting that relatable leadership traits include a broad range of qualities seen in leaders and line managers, including skills and experience. There is an ongoing effort to develop leadership in a way that aligns with these traits, with a focus on leadership skills development, not just management skills.  B Lawrie discussed that recent pay awards are now having a positive impact on staff morale, although there are differing views about the future. This was recognised.  M Beattie noted that students seem more engaged and enthusiastic this year, with the recent Freshers event being a big success. There are plans to reintroduce Re-Freshers activities in January, as students have shown a high level of enthusiasm and readiness.  The report and actions being progressed were welcomed by the Committee. |
|  | **NATIONAL BARGAINING UPDATE**  S Taylor provided a National Bargaining Update, he reported that pay agreements have been reached for both academic and support staff. A three-year agreement has been secured for support staff and a four-year agreement for academic staff. Payments for academic staff will be made in October 2024.  Measures have been taken to mitigate the impact of back pay for a small number of support staff on universal credit and this offering would be available to academic staff affected as well.  The key achievement of these agreements is the resolution of industrial action, including strike action. As a result, the college now has a clearer path for financial planning through to 2026. This upfront planning will allow for better management of finances. While there are still some national disputes, S Taylor expressed hope that these will be resolved at a national level.  D Mackenzie raised a question regarding local implications, particularly around the academic staff payments being delayed until October. S Taylor confirmed there were no additional local concerns.  B Lawrie noted the challenges faced by individuals whose benefits were affected by the pay increase, particularly those at the lower end of the pay scale. He also raised concerns about whether the situation with support staff could have further inflationary impacts. It was noted that the academic deal for year 4 was likely to set an expectation for support staff and that this would feature in the forthcoming negotiations. S Taylor confirmed that the college pays significantly above the Real Living Wage for all roles.  S Oakley commented, from the trade union’s perspective, the local discussions around industrial action had been highly collaborative, both parties worked together to address challenges, successfully building trust and managing a complex and potentially damaging situation.  D Mackenzie thanked S Taylor for the update. |
|  | **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**  S Taylor summarised the paper presented, noting that there were no changes to the risks allocated to the Human & Resources & Development Committee. |
|  | **HR METRICS**  S Taylor summarised this report.  S Taylor presented the report, focusing on the absence data and the improved accuracy as the previous double counting issue had now passed.    S Taylor noted that staff turnover had increased over the summer, with several employees moving on to other roles. While there is no specific pattern to the turnover, it does represent a noticeable change.  C Cusick enquired whether the turnover primarily involved academic teaching staff, to which S Taylor responded that it was a mix of academic and support roles spread across different areas.  B Lawrie asked about the process of filling these vacancies. S Taylor acknowledged that while the situation is manageable, it takes time and can cause challenges, particularly in filling timetables as they work through the hiring process.  The Committee noted the range of HR Metrics. |
|  | **MEETING MINUTES/UPDATES**  The Joint Consultative Committee (JCF) and Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HS&W) minutes were noted. |
|  | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**  Thursday 21 November 2024 at 5:00pm in Room K-TO-624, Kingsway Campus |

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| **Action Point Summary** |  |  |
| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Date** |
| No action points were noted |  |  |