

APPROVED – formally approved by the committee



PEOPLE COMMITTEE

20 SEPTEMBER 2023

Present: Ann Barnes (Chair), Gary Buxton, Professor Daniela Caselli, Professor Danielle George, Jatin Patel and Robin Philips.

In attendance for all items: Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell (President and Vice-Chancellor), Patrick Hackett (Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer), Banji Adewumi (Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion), Adèle Mackinlay (Director of People and Organisational Development), Sara Sawicki (Employment Solicitor), and Jane Holland (Governance Manager) (minutes).

In attendance for item 8 – Helen Brewis, Head of Wellbeing.

In attendance for item 10 – Carol Platts, Head of Employee Relations Team.

In attendance for item 11 – Sameena Rashid, BAME Staff Network Group Co-chair.

1 Welcome

Noted: the Chair welcomed members to the first People Committee meeting of academic year 2023-24. Attendees were invited to introduce themselves.

2 Declaration of Interests

Noted: that there were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.

3 Review of the Committee's Terms of Reference and Membership

Noted: that the terms of reference and membership were reviewed. No suggestions for amendments were received.

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2023

Noted: the minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2023 were approved, subject to the following amendments:

- i. The final sentence of minute 6 viii. would be removed, as it may not be relevant to researchers on fixed-term contracts.

- ii. The final sentence of minute 11 iv. would be updated to read 'With regards to Job Train, user acceptance testing is currently being delivered with good feedback from users and early adopters engaged at different levels'.

Agreed:

- i. To update the minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2023 with the agreed amendments.

Action: Governance Manager

5 Matters arising

Noted: the action log.

6 *Forward plan

Received: the People Committee forward agenda for 2023-24, which included statutory reporting items. Members were invited to suggest additional items for inclusion on the forward agenda.

Noted: that the Pay Gap report would be presented to the EDI Committee initially, and was scheduled for the 1 May 2024 People Committee meeting along with the EDI Strategy and delivery plan update.

Agreed:

- i. To approve the forward plan for 2023-24.
- ii. To consider providing an update on the forward plan items, including an update on the pay gap, to the 1 November 2023 People Committee meeting.

Action: Director of People & OD and Director of EDI

7 A report from the Director of People & OD

Received: a verbal update from the Director of People & OD on items including management of the cyber incident, political factors from a people perspective, an update on the staff survey and an update on fixed-term contracts.

Noted:

- i. The new Chief Information Security Officer had been appointed shortly before the cyber incident occurred in June 2023. The post holder and the wider ITS team had undertaken significant work to resolve the issues arising from the incident. VPN was now available for University managed devices, and progress was being made to provide VPN access for colleagues working overseas. The VPN-related issues had impacted negatively on hybrid working in the short-term.
- ii. It would take time to recover from the effects of the cyber incident. In the meantime, teams were continuing to work to achieve an improved 'build back better' position. A recognition package had been developed by People &OD for colleagues, focussing on wellbeing, [REDACTED]
Redacted – restricted information
- iii. The marking and assessment boycott was under an industrial action ballot mandate with UCU until 30 September 2023. Work was being undertaken to mitigate the impact on students and to manage a local agreement with UMUCU. The latest offer to members was a 45% return on deductions on completion of marking and assessment, with an extended deadline of 13 October 2023.

- iv. A national ballot for further strike action was due to close on 3 November 2023. The current action was having a negative impact on academic and Professional Services colleagues.
- v. A graph had been circulated to Board members by UCU, detailing that some universities had agreed to return 100% of pay to colleagues participating in the boycott. However, many universities had not agreed to return pay and this approach differed widely across the UK. The University's current offer of 45% return was an average position across the sector. There was an uneven spread of colleagues participating in the boycott across the University's faculties and schools, and this was reflected sector-wide.
- vi. An update on the staff survey was scheduled for November 2023 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. *Redacted – restricted information*
[REDACTED] A report on EDI would be presented to the 1 November 2023 People Committee meeting, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. *Redacted – restricted information*
- viii. The database for colleagues on fixed term contracts was being improved, following which the contracts working group would be re-established.

Agreed:

- i. To provide an update to the next meeting detailing the scale of colleagues that continued to be affected by limited VPN access.
Action: Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer

8 Staff Survey Update - Wellbeing

Received: a report on Wellbeing as one of the key themes from the 2022 staff survey, in addition to being one of the five workstreams in the People & OD Strategy. To note the running of a wellbeing survey in Autumn 2023 and support the implementation of an employee wellbeing commitment.

Noted:

- i. It was recognised that the University had many areas of good practice in respect of wellbeing. Work was being undertaken to create a consistent approach to address negative impacts on wellbeing and to understanding the fundamentals of colleague wellbeing.
- ii. The Wellbeing team were working with colleagues in policy development to consider colleague wellbeing, particularly during periods of change and its effect on teams and individuals.
- iii. A wellbeing survey was being developed, the results from which would help to inform leading indicators. Wellbeing colleagues had been able to access HEI benchmarking for some, although not all, of the wellbeing questions in the staff survey (using the People Insight benchmark). However, there was no published set of standard metrics used across HEI to measure and benchmark wellbeing.
- iv. Improvements to wellbeing processes, particularly where line managers had a large number of direct reports, would provide opportunities to utilise new strategies to support and create thriving work environments.
- v. There would be a focus on the wellbeing of staff on different grades and areas, including junior management level which may need a defined process to better equip them to respond to and support different wellbeing needs. It was proposed that a community of practice and sharing would be developed. Work would be undertaken

with social responsibility and EDI colleagues in respect of groups who may experience a higher level of impact than others.

- vi. Consideration was being given to the wellbeing of staff on temporary contracts.

Agreed:

- i. To present the outcome of the wellbeing survey to the 26 June 2024 meeting of the People Committee, including KPIs.

Action: Director of People & OD

9 Update on the People & Strategy (Transformation) Implementation plan and objectives

Received: a report from the Director of People & OD updating the Committee on the People & OD Strategy, providing a high-level view of the Strategic Capabilities workflow.

Noted:

- i. The metrics relating to the strategic capabilities workflow would be presented to the 1 November 2023 People Committee meeting. The data would focus on the five elements of the People & OD Strategy and would demonstrate the future direction of travel to the Board to support the delivery of the University's Our Future Strategy.
- ii. Improvements were being made to service delivery, which included a shift in systems and processes to a service first approach. There had been a development in the process for approving employee recruitment, which had been automated.
- iii. A number of 90-day pilots were being established across the University for shifting the approach to leadership and culture.
- iv. Work was being undertaken by Organisational Development to create a coaching culture. This work would include a shift in organisational change across the University, and would involve a piloted approach, working with the planning and strategic change office. Substantive metrics and KPIs would be presented to the 1 November 2023 People Committee meeting.

Agreed:

- i. To present the Strategic Capabilities workflow metrics to the 1 November 2023 People Committee meeting.

Action: Director of People & OD

10 Lay Members Employee Relations Panel Guidance

Received: a report providing guidance for Lay Members of the Board of Governors when chairing formal panels that had been developed to determine action under the University's Employee Relations Procedures in line with University statutes and ordinances.

Noted:

- i. Cohesive guidance had been developed to support lay members through the employee relations formal panel process, including templates and reference to the statutes and ordinances. Training and webinar resources were being developed to familiarise new governors with the process. A new team had been established to support lay governors, which would streamline the internal processes, creating a centre of expertise.
- ii. It was confirmed that the panels were convened to ensure due process was followed, rather than to consider the detail of cases.

- iii. It was acknowledged that the number of cases being presented to a formal panel would likely reduce, due to cases being resolved earlier in the process, and through an increased focus on mediation.
- iv. Union representatives had been approached to consider receiving similar training and support, which could help to develop a good working relationship with the new team.
- v. It was proposed that the guidance would be trialled at the next formal panel, which was scheduled for 18 October 2023.

Agreed:

- i. To endorse the Lay Members Employee Relations Panel Guidance.

11 Update from the BAME Staff Network Group

Received: a verbal update on the activities of the BAME Staff network group, from Sameena Rashid, Co-chair of the Network.

Noted:

- i. The BAME Staff network group had two new co-chairs; Sameena Rashid and Barinur Rashid. Sameena had not previously been a member of the network. ToRs were under development and it was proposed that network meetings would be held twice per year, during working hours.
- ii. The network's goals over the next two years included a focus on equity in recruitment, progression and promotions processes. It was suggested that there had been issues at an institutional-level with structures, processes and policies, and that culture change would be welcomed with support from the People Committee.
- iii. The network co-chairs had held discussions with the Director of People & OD and the Director of EDI, with a view to supporting their goals, which included funding for mobilising the network which currently had over 200 members. The difficulty in developing networks in a large institution was acknowledged.
- iv. It was recognised that the network's focus aligned well with inclusive recruitment and collaborative working, and challenge provided by the race equality charter self-assessment.
- v. It was proposed that an intersectional approach would be taken which would include student members being invited onto the network. This would provide a useful link to differential awarding gap work and would enable a platform for the student voice.
- vi. People Committee agreed to support the network goals.

Agreed:

- i. That thanks were noted to the previous co-chairs of the BAME Staff network group.
- ii. To provide details of the student network link in FBMH to the network co-chairs.
Action: Director of EDI

12 Date of next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 1 November 2023.