

approved minutes
DRAFT – prepared by the committee secretary
UNAPPROVED – signed off by the Senior Officer/Chair of the committee
APPROVED – formally approved by the committee



PEOPLE COMMITTEE

26 JUNE 2024

Present: Ann Barnes (Chair), Gary Buxton, Jatin Patel, Robin Phillips

In attendance for all items: Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell (President and Vice - Chancellor), Patrick Hackett (Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer), Sinead Hesp (Executive Director of Legal Affairs and Board Secretariat) Andrew Mullen (Acting Executive Director of People and Organisational Development), Sally Ainsworth (minutes)

In attendance Helen Brewis (item 8)

Apologies: Professor Danielle George, Paul Marks-Jones (Interim Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)

1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair extended thanks to Gary Buxton and Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell for their service to the People Committee, and noted this would be their last meeting of People Committee.

2 Declaration of Interests

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

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2024

Agreed: to approve the minutes of the meeting on **1 May 2024**.

4 Matters arising and action log

Noted: the action log

5 *Forward plan

Received: draft forward plan for 24/25.

Noted:

- i. Members were advised that the forward plan for 2024/25 would be presented for approval at the next meeting.
- ii. The incoming President and Vice-Chancellor will be leading a Strategic Review next year, elements of which will be presented to People Committee.

Agreed:

Strategic Review to be added to the forward plan **Action: Governance Manager**

6 A report from the Director of People & OD

Received: an update to note, from the Interim Director of People & OD.

Noted:

- i. A paper to go to the Professional Services Sub-Group (PSSG) on 1 July 2024 proposes the engagement of external continuous improvement expertise to support the delivery of user focussed improvements to end to end recruitment and employee services over a 12-week period.
- ii. The Well-Being survey closed on 26 May 2024. As noted at May's meeting, this is an important means of benchmarking and baselining our performance in this area and forms an important strand of our People and OD Strategy.
- iii. Following discussion on monitoring training compliance at the last meeting, a small Task and Finish Group has been convened to consider and make recommendations regarding:
 - How we raise awareness of the ability of managers to check the completion of mandatory training in MyView.
 - The nature and frequency of mandatory health and safety training completion reports to go to Health and Safety Committees
 - The processes, measures and sanctions to apply in instances of non-completion.
- iv. National talks are ongoing at New JNCHES and UCEA has improved its offer to the trade unions. Although no agreement has yet been reached at JNCHES, there seems to very little risk of action before the autumn should there be a failure to reach agreement. There are also signs that a resolution may be achieved even if that isn't in the form of a formal agreement.
- v. *The Joint Academic Workload Task and Finish Group* is jointly chaired by Professor Allan Pacey and Dr Simeon Gill, UMUCU and has met six times since the end of November 2023. The beginnings of a report and draft recommendations have been debated within the group and were recently circulated to members of the Faculty Leadership Teams and TU colleagues for comment.
- vi. There have been six meetings of the Joint T&F Group meetings on Casualisation since Dec 2023 and they continue to be attended by Heads of People & OD and representatives from UCU, UNISON and Unite according to agreed terms of reference. The group is considering and discussing a wide range of measures and proposals aimed at reducing use of fixed term contracts. The group aims to submit joint recommendations to People and OD Sub-Committee in the autumn with measures designed to further reduce the use of fixed term contracts and associated job insecurity.

Agreed: Updates regarding the two Task and Finish groups to be presented at the next meeting of People Committee **Action: Acting Executive Director of People and Organisational Development**

7 Observations from Lay chairs of appeal panels and Grievance/Appeals review and update from Employee Relations team

Received: a report updating the Committee on observations from Lay chairs of appeal panels, and the work of the Employee Relations Team.

Noted:

- i. The Employee Relations team went 'live' on 15 January 2024, and to date, the team have supported a total of 77 cases, of which 29 have been concluded and 48 remain open.
- ii. Prior to the team going live, work had already been undertaken to provide better support and communications to the lay members of the Board who chaired panels. This included asking lay members to complete an evaluation form after each hearing

that incorporated their views of how the union representatives supported staff during hearings.

- iii. A more detailed analysis of the number of cases involving BAME staff members has been carried out. This covers the cases that the team have worked on since 15 January 2024. Members were shown a breakdown of cases recorded on Resource Link by Ethnicity (a total of 57 cases). It indicates a third of all cases involve a BAME member of staff either as a Claimant or Respondent. Further analysis has not been possible at this juncture as the reporting system is still being developed.
- iv. Having been operating for 6 months means that the number of appeals dealt with by the team are relatively small in number. However, of those that have been concluded (2 in total), outcomes upheld are one and appeals not upheld are one.
- v. Discussions were held regarding the feedback from members included in the report, and the fact that it was framed in a more negative way than the original feedback was given
- vi. Members noted that there have been huge improvements in the production of paperwork since the Employee Relations team was created, but further training for staff could be helpful.
- vii. Members passed their thanks to the Executive Director of DLABS and her team for the support they provide during cases.

Agreed:

- i. Liaise with the EDI team and conduct qualitative analysis of the BAME staff data, including a focus on the outcome of BAME staff cases
- ii. Data to be provided to the Committee regarding the time that appeals take to be heard, and analysis of the reasons for any delays
- iii. Production of paperwork for hearings to be reviewed, including more succinct reports, and consider appending non-essential paperwork.

8 Wellbeing Survey update

Received: a report updating the Committee on the results of the recent staff wellbeing survey

Noted:

- i. In summary, the wellbeing survey indicated that workload, work-life balance and excessive pressure are a challenge for many respondents, reflecting the themes identified in the 2022 staff survey. This is particularly evident amongst responses from the academic colleagues, however it should be noted that response rate in this community was 26%. The survey indicated that working while unwell happens more often than not, with the main reason being to stay on top of workload.
- ii. Further analysis will follow of the free text comments in the survey, but the initial analysis provided by People Experience Hub, provide themes that reflect the scores seen in the survey.
- iii. Across the University, the completion rate was 41%, with 52% completing it in professional services and 26% of academic colleagues completing the survey. In comparison, the more well-established Staff Survey had a completion rate of 49% in 2022, with 39% of academics completing the survey and 61% of PS colleagues. Discussions were held regarding alternative methods to engage with staff and raise wellbeing issues, such as focus groups, or discussions over a lunch event. It was noted that it was important to act on any feedback received from staff and provide 'you said, we did' updates.
- iv. Another suggested method of engagement was to use the already established School visits, by the President and Vice-Chancellor, and include wellbeing as a regular agenda item.

- v. It was noted that there was a need to provide training for managers, to enable them to have constructive, honest conversations.
- vi. Members were informed that new engagement methods with staff had launched, in the form of a survey for new staff, a subsequent survey after staff have been in post for 12 months, and an exit survey. It is hoped that these will provide much useful data, which can be built into the People plans and Chartermark activity.
- vii. Professor Nalin Thakkar is the senior sponsor for Wellbeing, and it is thought that this will link well with the Social Responsibility and EDI agendas and established networks. Members discussed the need for resources and investment in this area to enable real improvement.
- viii. It was noted that many elements of the survey linked to the EDI Strategy, such as inclusive working practices.
- ix. The wellbeing survey was undertaken to baseline where we currently are against our newly launched [wellbeing commitment](#).
- x. The wellbeing team will work with the EDI Directorate, Leaders and People & OD partners to better understand how results differ across areas and protected characteristics, to inform work relating to Equality Charter Marks and local people plans.
- xi. To support acting on the survey results and making progress against priority areas in the wellbeing commitment a 'playbook' will be developed to provide practical tools and approaches that managers can use within their teams and individuals can utilise to focus on their own wellbeing at work – this will be made available on StaffNet.
- xii. The need to collaborate with other institutions was discussed. The Head of Colleague Wellbeing informed members that bi-monthly meetings with other HEIs took place, and the upcoming UCEA conference will provide another platform for collaboration.
- xiii. Members also suggested looking the private sector for suggestions of ways of working, and sharing best practice, such as having mental health first aiders in the workplace.

Agreed:

- i. Regular updates to be presented to the Committee on progress against KPIs for Wellbeing, once they have been established
- ii. Meeting with colleagues at Siemens to discuss sharing best practice to be established.
- iii. Investigate the positive survey results from GEIC and consider if any elements are transferable and can be used across the University.

Action: The Head of Colleague Wellbeing

9 Report from the President and Vice-Chancellor proposing changes to the Professional Development team within AHEP

Received: a report requesting that the Committee make a recommendation to the Board of Governors regarding the proposed changes in AHEP.

Noted:

- i. On 1st May 2024 People Committee received a proposal concerning changes to the Professional Development team within the Association of Higher Education Professionals (AHEP [formerly the Association of University Administrators, AUA]).
- ii. A targeted voluntary severance scheme was opened on 11 June and is due to close on 2 July. In the event that voluntary severance is unsuccessful and it has not been possible to secure alternative employment for the post holder by that date, it will be necessary to commence the compulsory redundancy process in August 2024.

- iii. The University will continue to follow the Security of Employment Policy and Redeployment Policy in order to seek redeployment opportunities for the employee who is “in scope and at risk”.
- iv. The post holder has the right to appeal against their selection for compulsory redundancy.

Agreed:

- i. People Committee gave full and proper consideration to the progress made as presented in this paper and the proposals following closure of the Voluntary Severance Scheme;
- ii. People Committee recommend to the Board of Governors that Part III of Ordinance XXIII should be instituted to effect the proposed compulsory redundancy of the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] **Redacted – restricted information** in AHEP in the event that it is not possible to redeploy the post holder.
- iii. An update to be provided to the Committee when the outcome is finalised.

Action: Director of People & OD

10 EDI Strategy Update

Received: a report updating the Committee on progress in relation to implementation of the EDI Strategy.

Noted:

- i. The revision of the Dignity at Work and Study Policy continues with consultation and further development in response to feedback received through April/May. The revised policy has been delayed following feedback on the student/student procedure from Teaching & Learning/Advice & Response
- ii. A new development programme for Disabled staff run by Results CiC will launch Monday 24 June
- iii. The third running of the Diversity Champions programme will also run from October 2024
- iv. Staff groups are being consulted on the upcoming Sustainable Travel Strategy. This involves consultation with staff networks and discourse with other groups to feed into an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). An external body will also be appointed to conduct a further independent EIA with the findings and recommendations feeding into the final decisions on the strategy with respect to car parking charges and proposed increases.
- v. The EDI and P&OD teams are jointly working on a review of inclusive recruitment, and updates will be provided to this group.
- vi. Members also received a summary of staff network group activity, which supports the achievement of our EDI strategic objective of building and sustaining an inclusive environment and culture.
- vii. Members discussed the recruitment to the Director of EDI post and were informed that the University had engaged a search agency and were awaiting a longlist of candidates for consideration. Recruitment for the Executive Director of P&OD is continuing, and candidates will meet a variety of stakeholder groups, prior to interviews taking place.

Agreed:

Updates on the Inclusive Recruitment project to be provided to the Committee

11 Any other business

None reported

Date of next meeting – 4 November 2024