



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Chair – Chris Alliston

Wednesday 25th February 2026 at 4.15 pm via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members Present

Chris Alliston, Committee Chair & Independent Board Member

Derek Lewis, Chair of the Board of Management

Ian MacEachern, Independent Board Member

Lydia Rohmer, UHI NWH Principal & CEO

Neil Hope, Independent Board Member & Vice Chair Board of Management

Also Present

Doug Rattray on behalf of Jim Hutton, Health and Safety Officer (item 5 only)

Ellen Campbell, Board Secretary

Vicky Ferguson, Director of People & Culture

1. Quorum, welcome and apologies

The meeting was quorate.

2. Declarations of interest and connection

No declarations were made.

3. Minutes from HR Committee meeting dated 12.11.2025

Approved

4. Action tracker

Reviewed

5. *NWH Health and Safety Report – Doug Rattray (DR)

DR explained that the Health and Safety report had been split into two sections. One covered fire safety, with the second covering general Health and Safety.

Fire training had been ongoing, with risk assessments and drills being conducted throughout all sites. There were increased numbers of trained fire wardens. There had been two sets of fire drills, with more campus staff content with expectations and duties. There was a drive to keep up the momentum in this area and to continuously improve. Future reports to Committees would include visuals to evidence progress being made.

Training of the executive and senior management teams had been prioritised under the IOSH framework. There had been a decrease in the number of reported incidents, which may indicate a shift in reporting practices. Departmental meetings would therefore reinforce health and safety as a key message. Staff in the merged college were showing a much greater competency in health and safety than had been evident in the legacy colleges, with year-on-year improvements.

The Committee suggested that it may be good practice to schedule a fire drill while the Board were in session. DR agreed to liaise with the Board Secretary to arrange this exercise. It was unclear exactly what legislative documents were required for transporting students via college minibus now that MIDAS had become obsolete. DR would check on the current legalities.

There had been a proposal to procure a management training tool to oversee COSSH. Training would be rolled out to staff who handle dangerous substances, this would include how to complete risk assessments with a digital tool. There would be a future survey to compare effectiveness with other organisations.

Martyn's Law came into effect in April 2025. NWH would have until April 2027 before the legal compliance of the law would require to be fully implemented. There would be basic terrorism awareness training, however the team were awaiting further guidance from Scotpol and Protect UK to understand what exactly would be required. Key staff had already attended information engagement meetings on the

subject. A draft plan was being developed on each of the three main campuses looking at how to react, and whether to evacuate or lock down dependent on the presented situation. The forward look would involve a working group within the college to plan and review guidance from the Government and the college's specific needs. This would involve scenario planning to exercise how we would communicate, personal roles etc. There was no major capital expenditure envisaged for our size of organisation to achieve legal compliance.

Noted

Action: DR agreed to liaise with the Board Secretary to arrange a fire drill while the Board of Management were in session at one of the campus's

Action: DR would check on the current legalities and requirements for transporting students via minibus.

6. *NWH Director of People and Culture Report – Vicky Ferguson (VF) There had been a decrease in turnover and there was a downward trend in resignations. Sickness absence levels had increased. Four persons had been absent with WRS during the last quarter, two had returned to work, with one other person due to return to work by the end of the week.

The Committee requested year to date comparison figures on sickness absence.

There had been fourteen fixed term posts filled covering maternity or sickness

The priority action of the RRG was an urgent review of the curriculum structure, which was being led by Diana Macleod. A paper had been presented to the ELT suggesting a revised management structure within existing budget. The new structure, which may include VSS through the University Transformation Fund UTF, would require to be advised before the end of this academic year. If funds were not forthcoming through the UTF, NWH would go through the College Transformations Fund (CTF). A decision was expected by end of March 2026.

The Committee requested that the RRG document dates and times of their meetings. The Committee noted that the RRG were working well, running in parallel with the Staff Voice Council (SVC). The SVC requested the group be staff lead. This was an alternative route for staff members to voice their opinions/concerns, It is recognised as good practice in colleges in terms of fair work. By strengthening relationships between management and staff, through department meeting and presence on site, NWH had seen improvements in communication and morale. Committee requested a regular report on the progress/impact of the SVC.

VF suggested further to discussion with the RRG that the HSE review survey could be done in 18 months rather than 12 months, giving sufficient time to reflect true figures.

The Dignity at Work policy had been relaunched with training being provided for managers first and then all staff.

Job evaluation had been progressing well.

A module on recruitment and onboarding had been approved by the ELT.

There was a proposal being brought through Committees and Board to establish a NWH wholly owned trading subsidiary which would employ, following TUPE transfer, two persons currently employed by Nigg Skills Academy (NSA)

The proposal would see NWH continue to provide training provision at NSA, and the company structure would allow NWH to generate surplus funding for the college. Any new commercial work secured by

NWH would be taken through the Newco. Further details would come to this committee as the proposal progressed.

Noted

7. *Confidential item - withheld

8. NWH HR Policies

Probation

Endorsed. Noting that this would require review following changes to unfair dismissal rights which taken effect from 01 January 2027

Attendance Management

Change “regression phase” to “review period”

Change “clean slate” to “thereafter normal monitoring would resume”

Endorsed

Action: There was noted to be up to 13 weeks in a phased return which was understood to be comparable with other colleges. The Chair asked for clarification as to what percentage of time worked v contracted hours was paid to an employee during the phased return period.

Special Leave

Consider increasing death of a spouse leave period to two weeks

Emergency leave - define a cap of how many “1 day” periods may be taken in a year

Endorsed

National Disciplinary Policy

The National policy had superseded the local policy, however if the NWH policy was better in aspects of procedure, parts could be added back in through mapping.

Training for managers was being rolled out, and a progress report would come to a future meeting of this committee.

Noted

9. Employment rights bill update

Given the volume and pace of the substantial number of changes and updates that were envisaged to come into force under this Bill, it was agreed that any substantive shifts in policy would come through the Human Resources Committee. Any minor changes would be agreed through ELT. It was recognised that managers would be required to undertake intensive training.

VF would bring an updated training plan to the next meeting of this Committee.

Endorsed

Action: that any substantive shifts in policy in relation to the Employment rights bill are to come through the Human Resources Committee.

Action: an updated training plan for managers navigating changes within the bill is to be brought to the next meeting of this Committee.

10. A.O.B.

Meeting closed at 1745