

UHI | NORTH, WEST AND HEBRIDES A TUATH, AN IAR IS INNSE GALL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Chair – Chris Alliston

Wednesday 12th March 2025 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

Jim Hutton, Health and Safety Officer

Vicky Ferguson, Interim Director of people & culture

Ellen Campbell, Board Secretary

1. QUORUM & APOLOGIES

The meeting was quorate.

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made.

3. Minutes approved from previous meeting, 27.11.2024

Approved

Health & Safety – Jim Hutton

JH gave a brief overview of his paper, as viewed by this committee. The main changes were to the safety and fire policies, which had been amended. It was advised that near misses were being captured at an early stage. There had been two RIDDOR incidents which had been fully investigated, and mitigations had either been put in place or finalised.

Student behaviours showed an increase in vandalism and property damage. It was unclear if this was because of better reporting being undertaken or if there had been an actual increase in student behaviour incidents. There had been two incidents involving violence towards staff by students with behavioural issues.

IME commented that as a Board, there was a duty of care for our staff and students. The Chair asked if there had been communication with student reps / HISA, in relation to the incidents. JM advised that he would take this course of action in future. Staff training was currently being rolled out.

A HSE WRS stress survey was reported to be underway, looking at possible causes and/or environmental issues which in turn would feed into a stress risk assessment for the college.

There had been first aid training during the last six weeks across multiple sites. A further four to five fire safety risk assessments had been completed. A survey had been sent out to ensure awareness and competence of fire warden duties.

The Chair asked if staff were undertaking fire warden duties in ETC. JH advised that the main campus was covered though questioned if the cover was adequate. Risk culture and responsibilities were being looked into.

The Chair asked if the Riskex system was being replaced and was advised that a possible better solution was being explored. The H&S team were working with Inverness.

The Committee asked for a regular report referencing the extreme behaviour issues referenced in the report.

Action: Regular report to HR Committee on extreme behaviour issues - JH

Noted

1634 JH Left

Interim Director of People & Culture quarterly report – Vicky Ferguson

Staff turnover was coming down. Invigilators had been difficult to source. There were a few fixed term STEM coordinators (funded) and six permanent contracts. There had been thirteen resignations. Absence management was on its way down at 2.91%. There had been a slight increase in WRS absences. Pay mapping was complete.

The Chair asked if exit interviews had been conducted for staff who had left. This was confirmed.

The staff structure implementation was still on track to be completed by the end of March 2025.

The HR system had been rolled out to all NWH staff along with user guides.

Noted

SFC Update - Principal

The Principal reported that she had met with Keith Coyne and Liz Shevlin. The SFC were interested in viewing the NWH self-assessment of the merger at the two-year post-merger stage, evaluating how the aims of the merger had been achieved and to assess any lessons learned.

NWH would need to build on engagement with staff, students and stakeholders later this academic year for the Board to approve a first draft in September 2025, which will be taken back to SFC for their approval.

Noted

Long Service Awards – Vicky Ferguson

Referring to an award system from legacy West Highland college which would incur a cost of just under £10k if backdated to include those eligible from Aug 2023. Feedback from the committee was requested as to whether this could be considered.

The Chair and committee recognised the positive aspect of acknowledging the long service of staff and made suggestions including removing the five-year rung from the proposal while at the same time making the award more attractive to those who had given ten or more years' service.

The Chair asked that the proposal go back to ELT to discuss the HR Committee's suggestions and to investigate whether the awards practice may have become legally required as a customary practice.

Noted

Policies for approval – Vicky Ferguson

The EDI policy had small changes since December 2024, to align with UHI (hi-lighted in red) these changes required that the policy came back to HR Committee for onward to Board for approval.

Endorsed

A.O.B.

Meeting closed 1759