



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Chair – Chris Alliston

Wednesday 12th November 2025 at 5:00 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

Ellen Campbell, Board Secretary

Vicky Ferguson, Director of People & Culture

Quorum, welcome and apologies

The meeting was quorate.

Declarations of interest and connection

No declarations were made.

Minutes from HR Committee meeting dated 01.09.2025

Approved

Action tracker

Reviewed

NWH Health and Safety Report – Doug Rattray (DR)

Noted

College comparison report on H&S incidents

The committee viewed the paper, based on a small data set from three legacy colleges which had slightly different reporting types and included the COVID years. There were too many uncertain variables to identify trends. Staff health and safety training had been put in place and the culture had been improving in this area.

The committee noted the report and asked for ongoing monitoring of the statistics and any trends identified be reported back the Human Resources, there was a request for near misses to be included.

Action: Near misses to be included in the report. Any emerging trends to be reported back to committee.

Noted

DR left at 1710

NWH People and culture report – Vicky Ferguson (VF)

VF identified the highlights from her report; turnover was down, resignations were down, there had been two terminations of staff, new starts were up, attendance management down, and there had been two absences attributed to Work related stress (WRS).

The Rapid Response Group (RRG) group had met several times, focusing on actions from the independent review. An action list was provided as guidance. The SMT had asked for support from the Committee and the Board to deliver these actions.

1720 IME left

Feedback had included, there was a perception of an overlap or uncertainty in roles, that the structure was complex and management top heavy with the roles of SMT and ELT being unclear. Emerging tensions were attributed mainly to some legacy issues.

The Chair commented that there appeared to be some concerning issues being highlighted. The results of the survey had been shared with the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the RRG in an effort to be open and honest.

1724 IME back

The committee agreed that the HSE survey results had been hard hitting, and the IIP survey of 50 staff seemed to align with those results. The Principal advised that during a rapid transformation within NWH, and with any merger, these had not been unexpected. The action plan was with the RRG for consideration. NWH required the resources to support the plan.

The committee recognised that NWH did not get the resources for a change manager through the merger. Such a role may have supported our change programme and resulted in more positive results. The Committee agreed that the report be put to the Board in November.

1735 DL joined

Whatever NWH can glean from these surveys and reports must be used for improvement. Enormous culture changes were experienced through mergers. Many of the findings were not unexpected through change, coupled with a large geographical footprint. NWH would need to give people their support and improved funding would be paramount.

It was suggested that a safe space be created for protected discussion for the SMT and ELT to raise any work-related issues they may be experiencing. There had been no budget to invest in a leadership programme. There had been no resource to invest in culture, there was minimum post-merger funding to support the soft skills element of the structure.

The Chair requested that the IIP report be brought to the November Board.

Action: IIP and action plan be taken to November Board meeting.

The structure review would start on 25th November 2025. Curriculum staff expressed an interest to being involved. There had been an ELT discussion in July 2025 to discuss the membership of the review group.

Staff changes updates included that while the Head of Marketing vacancy was being recruited for, Cheryl Macrae was interim Head – there had been 24 applications for the post. Alison Lochhead had also been

contracted to NWH for one day per week to cover strategic comms. These positions were cost neutral. The new Performance and planning quality manager would start with the Organisation in January. Diana Macleod had been appointed director of curriculum, leaving a vacancy for head of faculty.

The NJE update advised that the support staff pay award funding had been approved by the Scottish Government, and the offer was currently with the unions. The pay award had not been fully funded. NWH were required to find 3% of the uplift, which was incorporated into the CFO's budget. A back payment was expected to be made in January 2026 to support staff.

There would be an NWH Job Evaluation over the next couple of months of all support roles via FEDRA.

Merger Evaluation – Year 2

Steven Gregg was undertaking the evaluation as requested by the SFC. This would normally be done at year three, however, the SFC would like to see potential lessons learned for UHI transformation.

There would be focus groups held with staff/ stakeholders for feedback and there had been a survey launched. Findings would be shared with the SFC, this committee and the Board.

Noted

NWH HR Policies

Policy tracker

Noted

Dignity at Work policy

Points raised by committee for amendment “Investigating the complaint – possible outcomes – no reference to an appeal. Suggested that reference be included to link any formal complaints to the grievance procedure.

Endorsed

Grievance policy

Committee noted and commented.

Endorsed

Confidential item – withheld

HR Forward planning planner

Update given. Chair and Board Secretary to liaise on planner

Noted.

Meeting closed 1844