

**HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR WALES
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF TWENTY FIRST MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEES
HELD ON 11 OCTOBER AT HEFCW OFFICES, LLANISHEN**

PRESENT:

Members: Mrs Tina Stephens (Chair)
Mr Timothy Rees
Prof Garel Rhys

Co-opted Advisers Ms Sue Adams
Ms Pauline Brown

Officers: Mr Richard Hirst, Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Mrs Shirley McKay, Head of HR & OD
Mrs Jackie Hatton-Bell, HR & Training Manager (Secretariat)
Miss Sarah Pritchard, HR & Training Co-ordinator

21/1 **APOLOGIES**

21 /1.1 None

21 / 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

21 /2.1 Prof Garel Rhys declared an interest with the Wales Quality Centre, no other interests were declared.

21 /3 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JUNE 2007**

21 /3.1 The minutes were discussed and agreed at the meeting. Action to be carried forward:

ACTION Mrs Tina Stephens to discuss with Dale Hall as to how the Council fits in with the EFQM process.

21 / 4 **MATTERS ARISING**

20 / 4.1 **HR Committee Remit**

It was formally noted by the HR Committee that in 2008 there will be a succession planning issue as both the Chair and a Member of HR Committee will be at the end of their second terms. It is therefore anticipated that there will be a loss of two members of the HR Committee. The Chair of the HR Committee, a member of the Remuneration Committee and the Chair of that Committee is also standing down leaving a similar situation.

It was confirmed that the Assembly are aware of the situation which is being monitored by the Head of Planning and Corporate Governance.

It was confirmed that Pauline Brown, Independent Adviser, would be the main Adviser to the HR Committee and Sue Adams would act as alternate.

It was confirmed that Sue Adams, Independent Adviser, would be the main Adviser to the Appointments Committee and Pauline Brown would act as alternate.

If this were to be the case and in order especially to spread the attendance load then both advisers need not attend HR Committee, but both should receive the papers.

It is yet to be agreed as to which Adviser would also sit as an Independent Adviser on the Remuneration Committee, although a proposal was made that the Appointments and Remuneration Committees be linked in terms of Independent Adviser support.

ACTION Mrs Tina Stephens to discuss further with both Independent Advisers as to whether either Adviser would be interested in undertaking the role on the Remuneration Committee. Discussions to be finalised by next HR Committee meeting.

21 / 5.0 **Policy Development**

21 / 5.1 **Evaluation of Learning Activities**

The background and current process of the Evaluation of Learning was explained. It was also noted that when HEFCW underwent its liP Assessment in October 2006, one of the areas for improvement identified was the evaluation of learning. The new procedures are taken from best practice guidelines and have been adapted to include pre course briefing and objective setting as well as post course evaluation. The post course evaluation has been further developed within the MoPD Scheme for this purpose.

The Evaluation of Learning Activities Policy was approved by HR Committee and it was noted that it was a very comprehensive scheme.

21 / 5.2 **Corporate Health Standard**

It was explained that the Welsh Assembly Government, as part of their Health Challenge Wales Initiative, encourage organisations to work towards the Corporate Health Standard, at Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum level, as appropriate. The Standard encourages organisations to ensure they have health and well-being initiatives, such as Health & Safety policies, health information, employee assistance programmes etc in place for their staff. As part of the Corporate Health Standard, HEFCW would also want to include within their Health strategy, the HSE Management Standards, which focus on tackling stress. As part of the Health strategy, key performance indicators, ie, sickness rates, etc, would be included to enable an effective evaluation. It was queried by the HR Committee that once the bronze level was achieved, whether any external publicity may be possible.

The achievement of the Corporate Health Standard was approved by HR Committee.

21 / 6 **Flexible Working Hours Policy (Update)**

The HR Committee were reminded that the Flexible Working Hours Policy has concluded its pilot phase and feedback has been obtained from Heads of Team as to whether the pilot has been successful and to also identify any improvements. A summary of the main points raised was discussed at Management Board and agreement obtained to fully implement the Scheme with the improvements identified.

Management Board commented that more issues had been expected, however, it was pleasing to note this was not so. The one concern raised was from staff perceptions of what actual hours others may be working, however it was noted that there had been no detrimental effect on productivity. It was suggested that this should be further evaluated through the results of the HEFCW Stakeholder Survey, the results of which could then be correlated to the Staff Attitude Survey.

It was also explained that staff are expected to take annual leave during the break between Christmas and New Year. This is an issue previously raised by staff who requested that flexi leave might be taken in place of annual leave. This issue will be reviewed during future Equality Impact Assessment. HR Committee have requested that the outcome of the EIA be reported back.

The Flexible Working Hours Policy was approved by HR Committee.

ACTION JHB to remove 'Pilot' from the Policy and Record of Attendance and update documents in accordance with amendments identified.

ACTION SM to confirm to staff the implementation of the Policy

ACTION JHB to report outcome of EIA to HRC in due course

21 / 7 **Summary of Findings from Review of MoPDs 2006-2007 & 2007-2008**

The findings from the review of MoPD Scheme were explained to HRC. The findings had also been discussed at Management Board, who had welcomed the feedback and highlighted areas where improvement was needed. As the feedback was general, it was agreed at Management Board, that HR would meet individually with each Head of Team to provide specific feedback and coaching to improve the standard of their MoPD completion. It was suggested that the MoPD for line managers should include a specific comment / objective to support the effective completion of MoPDs.

HRC supported the actions identified.

ACTION JHB to progress actions as per MB minutes 5 September 2007

21 / 8 **Health & Safety Annual Report**

It was explained that there was a statutory responsibility on HEFCW to raise any related issues with Council. Risk Assessments were confirmed as being in place and a programme has been identified to take any issues identified forward.

The Chair formally complimented the officers on the improvement in the standard of the reports over the last few years.

21 / 9 **Organisational Design**

The Committee were updated on progress so far:

WAG had approved the new post of Director of Strategic Development. Recruitment had commenced and the interview date has been set for 24 October 2007.

WAG also approved the implementation of the Redundancy Policy

Voluntary Redundancy letters would be issued once the successful applicant for the post of Director of Strategic Development had formally accepted the offer. The VR process would be open for 21 day period, five working days for Management to select for VR, five working days to allow for any appeals. Should there be any appeals there is a further timeframe included within the Redundancy Policy.

It was confirmed that as this stage there are no redundancies expected below Head of Team level. This Organisational Design was in place to reshape HEFCW to effectively deliver its strategic objectives and was not a cost driven exercise.

A process framework has been developed and shared with Works Council, who approved the process. Management Board received this information also.

It is expected that the new Heads of Team would be in place by the end of the calendar year.

It was also noted that the new Heads of Team may not necessarily have all the required skills to undertake their new role and identification of these needs would need to be addressed in order to ensure the role is being performed effectively.

It was noted that there had been a significant amount of work undertaken by Shirley McKay and that she had worked hard to develop this plan which was quite an achievement.

21 / 10 **Pay & Grading Proposals 2007**

The HEFCW Pay Remit proposal had been shared with Works Council. The purpose of this was to consult with Works Council and to keep them informed as per WAG guidance. The purpose of sharing the Remit with Works Council was not to negotiate at this stage of the process..

It was noted that nationally, PCS are not endorsing pay awards of less than the rate of inflation and are recommending their members to reject any offers below RPI.

WAG have been progressed chased for their response to the Pay Remit Proposal and a deadline for a response has been communicated as being week commencing 15 October 2007. At present WAG are still to finalise their own pay structure and it is understood that only once this has been done will approval be given to AGSBs Pay Remit Proposals.

At present, there are no implications for HR Committee. Should any implications be identified, an emergency HR Committee meeting would be requested.

21 / 11 **Information Only Items**

- 21 / 11.1 Qualifications Training Policy
- 21 / 11.2 Core Training Plan
- 21 / 11.3 Staff Attitude Survey
- 21 / 11.4 National Ban Bullying Day – 7 November 2007
- 21 / 11.5 Final MoPD Assessment 2006 – 2007

No queries were raised.

21 / 12 **Policy Review List**

It was noted that the Policy Review List had been further amended to identify priority timescales for Equality Impact Assessments. It was also explained that all policies would be reviewed and amendments such as; the new Director post, job titles, style guide impacts, all being made at the same time.

21 / 13 **Details of Meetings for 2008:**

ACTION JHB to email potential meeting dates to HR Committee

20 / 12 **Forward Look:**

Policy Development:

- Emergency Working Policy
- Work Placements Policy
- Approvals Process

- Staff Attitude Survey Results
- Pay and Grading 2008
- HR Committee Remit – Review of Membership