



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

HSE People and Culture Committee Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the HSE People and Culture Committee was held on Friday 8th October 2021, 12.00pm via videoconference facilities.

Committee Members Present: Dr Yvonne Traynor (Chairperson), Aogan Ó Fearghail, Brendan Whelan, Bernie O'Reilly, Dr Sarah McLoughlin, Deirdre Cullivan.

HSE Executive Attendance: Anne Marie Hoey (ND Human Resources); Theresa Heller, (AND HR); Mark Brennock, (ND Comms); Ben Cloney, (Head of Digital Communications), Niamh Drew (Secretary), Pat Galvin.

Joined the meeting: Phillipa Ryan Withero (ND Strategic Workforce Planning and Intelligence), Patricia Treacy, (NiSRP); Norah Mason, (AND National Employee Relations); Eithne Fox, (AND HR Shared Services)

1. Governance and Administration

The Chair commenced the meeting. The minutes of the People and Culture Committee meetings from the 3rd September 2021 were approved. No declarations of interest were declared.

No matters arising

2. Communications Update

The Head of Digital Communications spoke to a presentation on Accessibility. The presentation was an overview of how the HSE is looking at making digital health information more universal, safe and accessible. The Committee was advised that there were too many websites, with approx. 85 different websites available, but these have now been reduced to 3, one for staff, one for stakeholders and one for the public. It was explained that the vision for 2022 is to build a new stakeholder website. This website will provide training, standards, support and technology to enable health services to communicate clearly with health service stakeholders about who we are, what we do, how we do it and how well we are doing it, in an accessible, easy to understand, easy to use, open and transparent way. All content on the website needs to be accessible by all users to meet accessibility legislation and standards as approx. 13.5% of the Irish population is registered with some form of a disability. The

committee were advised of some assistive technologies such as Screen Readers, Real Time Captioning and Voice Recognition that can be used with the content supplied. During the Covid pandemic, all Covid and vaccination content was on one site which included sign language and subtitles for all videos. Print materials were also provided in multiple languages, with larger print, as well as Audio versions. A lot of progress has been made with the new site's templates being fully compliant, the new accessibility statement, and accessible video and PDF guidelines in place. The next steps are to establish an empathy lab with social inclusion, secure a permanent accessibility researcher, migrate content onto new content management system and to make available a new accessible video platform. The Committee was advised that a lot of progress has been made with the website being benchmarked and results show that it has improved between 2017 and 2020.

ND Communications advised the committee on the Communications elements of the National Service Plan 2022. The Committee were advised that the Covid vaccine registration was done online and has proved very successful. It is planned as part of the NSP that funding will be requested to keep any online projects and communications going online as this is proving to be a valuable resource. The committee were advised of the plans to expand the press and media section to address out of hours, and that another AND post for Comms is being requested. A question about attracting and recruiting people for remote areas was discussed, where the Head of Digital Communications advised that the staff website is the best resource for this as it provides accessibility, portrays the information in the most positive way and has potential for impact. The committee was additionally advised that as part of the NSP, that funding for an extra 60 people will be requested, in order to continue the rate of development and implementation.

3. HR Bi-Monthly Report

AND HR Shared Services gave a brief presentation on Safeguarding and the strengthening of process with regards to reference checks and garda vetting checking. The Safeguarding process has been improved so that the person providing the reference is a person that has either managed or knows the person's work and the managerial level of the referee is also taken in to account. It was explained that 80 positions were withdrawn in past year due to insufficient references, previous convictions or inadequate experience or language. The cornerstone of Safeguarding is Garda Vetting with this being underpinned by the Children and Vulnerable Persons Act 2016. Garda Vetting is carried out by the National Vetting Bureau which is the vetting department of An Garda Síochána and facilitated / processed via the HSE's Garda Vetting Liaison Office. The Committee questioned what is currently in place to prevent people with inadequate references being employed. It was explained that the old DIME system did not allow for upload whereas now details are loading directly to the SAP system, which feeds into the Garda Vetting Bureau for vetting purposes. Guidance has also gone to hospitals

to ensure the details are followed. The Garda Vetting Bureau are busy after Covid but work is being done with Gardai to prioritise applications for recruitment. A digital format for vetting is helping to speed things up. The committee asked about a close out report on the findings relating to Garda Vetting and they were advised that 31st December is the date for implementation of recommendations from Internal Audit findings in relation to breaches of NCHD recruitment procedures. Some of the findings were most likely to be related to documents not uploaded to the DIME system.

ND HR gave a brief overview on the Consultants contracts which is proving to be a time-consuming engagement. She noted that the contracts are for public work only and talks are continuing. Committee raised a query about the consultant contracts and who is accountable to deliver it to success. Noted that HSE and DOH are jointly leading these talks and while talks are still going on, it was explained that they are working to make the contract as attractive as possible.

Committee questioned recent notifications in national press with regards to Health and Wellbeing Programmes and the low uptake by staff in busy clinical roles who would prefer to see the money spent on basic requirements. The Committee was advised that Health and Wellbeing Programmes can have a positive impact on staff morale, motivation, staff retention and recruitment.

Recruitment is ahead of target for August and confident the target for year-end will be met. It was noted that recruitment of Home Care workers is area of difficulty. ND HR advised that availability of remote working is helping to recruit people for some of the remote areas of the country. ND HR to provide further information on this topic at a future meeting.

AND National Employee Relations spoke to a presentation relating to policies. The Committee was given a high-level overview of current policies and any updates that have been applied. The Committee had a discussion about staff who were not vaccinated but working in high risk areas. It was explained that risk assessments are carried out and staff may be redeployed to a lesser risk area, for patient and staff safety in certain cases. The Committee also discussed Mandatory training and were advised that certain training courses can be tracked via SAP and HSELand.

4. Risk Management

Risk Management was deferred until the next meeting

5. Deep Dive - NiSRP

A representative from the NiSRP team gave the committee an overview of the NiSRP programme. The presentation gave the reasoning why this system is being implemented country wide which is due to insufficient data capture, aging payroll and staff records system, lack of access to staff information and paper-based processes currently being used. The future vision is to provide comprehensive

records and service histories for staff; enhanced resource reporting to facilitate workforce planning for management; reduced manual transactional processing and self-service for staff and managers. The benefits of these changes were shown as well as a progression timeline. The Committee questioned could the timeline (completion by 2025) be sped up so that this resource could be in place sooner. ND HR advised on the programme governance and the plans in place adding that the projected timeline is important as this project needs to be implemented safely and properly. Linkages with other strategic programmes were noted.

6. A.O.B

Meeting concluded at 16:30.

Signed: 
Yvonne Traynor
Chairperson

8th October 2021
Date