



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 3rd September 2021, 10.00am 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; Geraldine Smith (ND Internal Audit), Emma Finn (Head of Internal Communications), Patrick Lynch (ND Gov and Risk) [Item 4], Niamh Drew (Secretary), Pat Galvin.

Joined the meeting: Prof Deirdre Madden (Board Member) [ref item 6], Phillipa Ryan Withero (ND Strategic Workforce Planning and Intelligence), Enda Saul (Internal Communications Client Services) [Item 5]

1. Governance and Administration

The Chair commenced the meeting. The minutes of the People and Culture Committee meetings from the 11th June 2021 were approved. No declarations of interest were declared.

No matters arising

1.6 Committee Performance Review

A Committee Self-Assessment questionnaire had been distributed prior to the meeting and Committee members were asked to revert with feedback and comments. The results of the questionnaire were presented back to the Committee. An in-depth discussion was held by the committee. It was agreed that these included further training on the wider organisational understanding of the HSE and in particular the area of HR, the link to the DoH and HR areas of responsibility for Section 38's and 39's. It was agreed that this would be further explored by the Secretariat who would revert back to the Chair. The Chair also agreed to review the Committees terms of reference and that this would be discussed at the next Committee meeting

2. National Director Bi-Monthly Report

2.1 Bi-Monthly Report

The National Director HR provided an overview of the Bi-monthly report on various HR related topics.

She advised that preparation work is underway on the New Consultant Contract and that the DoH is leading from the employer side with the HSE. It is envisaged that discussions will be concluded in Oct/Nov. The contracts will be public only, focusing on consultant's time to public, acute and community groups. It was also noted that there will be a transition period to the new contract.

The Health Service Excellence Awards are taking place virtually on 15th September and the Taoiseach, Minister for Health and the HSE Chairman have all agreed to participate virtually. The Committee welcomed the initiatives and noted the success of the program and the number of individuals being considered for awards.

The ND briefed the Committee on the ongoing work regarding the process for return to work for staff that were redeployed during the Covid pandemic. The ND explained that the majority of staff redeployed were from Community, Acute areas and national services. Members asked if audit personnel had returned to their core roles and their redeployment had an effect on the departmental performance. It was noted that while school Immunisation team were also redeployed during the summer months, there was no other effect on department. An update will be provided at the next meeting and confirmation on when all will return to their normal roles.

The Committee welcomed the Staff Survey which will be launching early September and will be made accessible to all staff on any device. A comprehensive communication strategy will be in place to maximise awareness and staff participation. Results are to be available to the Committee in December.

ND HR explained that the E-Learning programmes are core learning programmes that were converted to digital format and made available via HSE Land. Due to the recent Cyber Attack, the HSE Land site was unavailable. A temporary platform was used for E Learning but HSE Land is now working again. Approx. 600,000 courses completed pre cyber and 120,000 post cyber so HSE Land is a valuable resource.

In the Network and partnering update the Committee were advised that Dr Colm Henry is leading the Public Health Doctors division and they are currently recruiting for a National Director Public Health and 34 Area Directors. It is hoped to have those positions filled by year end.

ND HR gave an update on the HSE Masters in Digital Health where 44 HSE students are graduating from University of Limerick. It was commented by various Committee members that this is a very innovative course and is needed for the future.

ND HR briefed the Committee on the union's proposal for a compensatory measure for staff for work undertaken during Covid. This matter has been referred to the WRC and the Labour Court. Government have said they will make an announcement in this regard in the Autumn.

The ND HR provided an overview to the Committee on the number of suspended employees in receipt of full salary noting that due process is being carried out in relation to these matters and that they are at various stages of investigation. ND HR agreed to revert back to the Committee with further information in relation to this.

ND HR gave an overview on Strategic Workforce Planning advising that the recruitment figure for this year is 16,000. Figure has been revised to 7371 following the Q1 review. The balance between June and year end is 4000, balance between January and May is 3371. These figures are development posts and the figure for back filling of posts is 8000. ND HR felt that the figures are achievable but felt that next year will be challenging due to foreign travel being available again impacting on workforce availability. Envisaged that it may be more difficult to attract and retain people even though there has been an 11,000 increase in nett people employed in HSE. Committee felt this issue is adding to the waiting lists and patients not getting treatment. The committee raised concerns that we will have adequate staff for the winter and will have sufficient people in some niche roles and in some remote regions.

ND HR briefed the Committee on the proposal with regards to a Remote Working Policy is a policy that the Government intend to introduce giving employees the right to request remote working before the end of 2021. The most recent guidance for public health sector employers on working arrangements is set out in HR Circular 25/2021.

3. Risk Management

The ND Governance & Risk provided an update on the Corporate Risk Register. The ND HR provided an update on risk 20, Individual Performance Management and Accountability. The Committee was advised that there is a risk to the effectiveness of the HSE accountability structures as a result of potential gaps in the alignment of the provisions of the 4 pillars of a functioning accountability structure [Performance Management; Open Disclosure; Professional Regulation and Internal Disciplinary Procedures]. The committee raised concerns that only 2% of employees had taken part in performance appraisals. The Committee was advised of the current control measures in place.

4. Deep Dive

The ND of Strategic Workforce Planning and Intelligence provided the Committee with an update of the Strategic Workforce Planning paper.

The ND SWP advised that there is a worldwide shortage of Health and Social Care workers and the situation is becoming more challenging globally and regionally. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has forecast a worldwide 18 million shortfall by 2030, over twice the 7 million shortfall estimated in 2013. An evidenced approach to Strategic Workforce Planning will be used under the following four domains;

1. Education and Performance
2. Planning and Investment
3. Capacity Building
4. Analysis and Monitoring

There will also be a number of governance structures, roles and functions in place to support this strategy and relevant data will be gathered, analysed, identified and monitored to help forecast future workforce supply, any education and training needs or any other projects that will help support the attraction and retention of suitable staff. Numerous projects have been completed to project demand with the first phase focusing on the acute workforce. Further data is currently being analysed and Workforce demand projections are at an advanced stage. The Department of Health (DoH) has been engaged to influence the annual undergraduate health student intakes with key increases in Nursing, Medicine, and HSCPs – e.g. over 200 additional nursing and midwifery places.

5. Internal Audit

The National Director of Internal Audit advised the Committee that the ARC, at its meeting on 11th June 2021, considered the Report of the National Director of Internal Audit for Q1 2021 which included findings on 37 Internal Audit Reports issued in Q1. The NDIA report contained findings on 9 Internal Audits of Recruitment controls. Due to the significance of the issues identified in these reports, the ARC requested that the Internal Audit findings be forwarded to the People & Culture Committee for its information. The National HRD confirmed that the audit findings and recommendations were communicated to the network of HR managers and medical manpower managers. It was suggested by the Committee that a process should be implemented to prevent payroll/onboarding being activated

in the absence of all requirements being in place. ND HR confirmed that actions have been taken to address the issues identified by the audit. A learning note has also been sent to the all CEOs.

The ND IA advised that the ARC had also considered the IA report on Payroll Irregularities at St Colmcille's Hospital and requested this report be provided to the P&C Committee for its information. The Committee discussed the report. ND IA explained that deficiencies in segregation of duties amongst other issues was part of the cause. The CFO has issued a learning note to the CEOs to restate controls and requesting senior management to assess the adequacy of the control environment within their payroll process and to advise the CFO of their assessment, and any mitigation or remedial actions taken or planned.

6. Communications

The Head of Internal Communications provided an update on the internal communications report relating to the Cyber Attack, the Staff Website Project Update and other key Internal Communications updates.

The Head of Client Services in Internal Communications gave a presentation on the research Healthcare Panel and explained how the panel was formed, the projects they have been involved in to date, and the tasks they have carried out as part of the panel.

An overview of the Trust and Confidence programme was given which included the programme approach, the drivers of public trust, the Action Plan and the programme future.

7. A.O.B

Meeting concluded at 16:30.



Signed: _____

Yvonne Traynor
Chairperson

8th October 2021

Date