



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 3 April 2019, 2:30 pm via videoconference facilities.

Members Present: Yvonne Traynor (Chairperson), Aogan Ó Fearghail, Bernie O'Reilly, Sarah McLoughlin, Fiona Tierney

In attendance:

- HSE Board members: Deirdre Madden
- HSE Executive Members: Anne Marie Hoey, Niamh Drew, Hannah Barnes

No conflicts of interest were declared.

1. Covid-19 – Recruitment Briefing

The Chair commenced the meeting by thanking the National Director of HR and her team on behalf of the Committee for the work they have undertaken over the last number of weeks in preparation for the Covid-19 pandemic and their continued commitment.

National Director of HR began her briefing to the Committee by highlighting that a critical part of the Covid 19 planning process was ensuring that the workforce that is required is maximised and upskilled where necessary to take on the front line roles that are essential to the response and that the HSE was expanding its workforce rapidly in preparation for the surge of patients to be cared for.

The National Director proceeded to outline the planning process to maximise the workforce noting that the key workstream of recruitment had been the primary focus over the last number of weeks. This has resulted in an extremely positive response from staff working within the HSE as well as clear evidence of excellent working across all parties within the health sector. The Committee were advised that the following processes along with a recruitment derogation were put in place to maximise the workforce:

- Expedite recruitment from existing panels
- Increase hours from those working part time where possible.
- Explore rehires from those on career breaks, secondments etc.
- Identify and rehire retired persons from recent years who could be rehired. In order to remove a disincentive for retirees, a waiver on abatement of pension was provided for
- Postponement of leave where possible

While the Committee welcomed the significant amount of work that had been carried out to date, they sought further clarifications with regards to areas such as Patient safety.

The National Director confirmed that colleges and education bodies had been working closely with the HSE to support training and upskilling of medical and nursing workforce including upskilling with ventilation and critical care of those who required in ICU.

It was also confirmed that the Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services (ONMSD) have worked collaboratively with Heads of Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) and the higher institutions of education to deliver education programmes and they also lead and support on the delivery of safe, high quality, person centred care training

The Committee noted and commended the support and assistance provided to the HSE by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, the Medical Council and CORU, who have all worked in conjunction with the HSE over the last number of weeks.

The Committee discussed the importance of protection for staff and the National Director confirmed that the wellbeing of staff remains of paramount importance. She confirmed that over the past number of weeks health care workers had been directly affected by Covid 19 resulting in absenteeism and that the HSE is very aware that staff are working a significantly increased number of hours as plans, activates and new services are developed and implemented within very tight timeframes.

The Committee confirmed that it was essential to support staff during this challenging time and the National Director confirmed that staff supports are also available from the Workforce Wellbeing Unit and Employee Assistance Staff programs

The Committee discussed the redeployment of staff throughout the HSE and noted that as a result staff have been redeployed to areas such as;

- The National Ambulance Service
- Public Helpline – HSELIVE
- Contact Tracing
- New Clinical services including community testing
- Front line clinical services where absenteeism as a result of Covid 19 has occurred

An update was also provided with regards to the work carried out in relation to supporting a staff skills search within the HSE and as a result over 500 staff members from within the corporate services area have also been re-deployed throughout the system.

A number of clinical based staff that were originally allocated to HSELive will now be further deployed to frontline positions. Additionally, the Committee were given further details of the “Be on Call for Ireland” campaign which has received a huge response with approximately 67,000 applications submitted.

Clarification was sought with regards to concerns from the Committee on reports of the HSE “poaching” staff from the LTRC sector and wider Irish Health sector, the National Director confirmed that this was not the case.

The National Director went on to further confirm that applications coming from individuals already working in the wider health care sector were not progressed further as this cohort of workers were vital within the sector, they were currently working in. HSE services had been asked not to deplete the


wider health care sector during the acute COVID phase and in the event that a new recruit was successful from this sector that their start date would be delayed. The Committee acknowledged and agreed with the approach.

The Committee were further briefed on a number of steps that had been taken proactively with the medical workforce to augment the workforce and minimise disruption over the coming months, these included the rotation for NCHD's which was scheduled to take place on April 13 and which has now been suspended and the introduction of interns and also of the ongoing engagement with a number of student cohorts who can provide valuable skills at this time.

A detailed discussion followed on the scope of practice for intern doctors and students entering the workforce and the Committee sought clarifications on areas such as indemnification for staff working in a different area. In response to concerns and queries raised the National Director confirmed that all intern doctors would be provided with the appropriate training before entering the workforce and would continue to have the mentorship that is provided to intern doctors under normal circumstances.

A query regarding the redeployment of SNAs and Teachers was raised and the use of university lab facilities, the National Director confirmed that she would investigate both issues and report back to the Committee in due course.

Meeting concluded at 03:20pm.

Signed: 

Yvonne Traynor
Chairperson

12/06/2020

Date