

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 1 MARCH 2022 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.

PRESENT:

Mr Scott Alexander, Chair
Mr Brian Doran (CEO)
Miss Laura Milner
Dr Thomas Moore
Mr John Nugent
Mrs Carla Shields
Dr Eileen Stewart

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Andrew Saunders, Governing Body Chair
Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services
Mrs Ann Marie Hughes, Assistant Director Human Resources and Development
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.31.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

Mr Alexander welcomed new Members Miss Milner and Dr Moore to their first meeting of SRC's Staffing Committee.

A02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the start of the meeting any conflicts with regard to matters to be discussed.

No interests were declared.

Mrs Hughes left the meeting at 17.37.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 21 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting of 21 September 2021 for accuracy.

These were approved on proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Mrs Shields.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Members were advised that all matters arising from the previous meeting have been addressed or are contained within the action sheet for future consideration.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None.

ACTION
by whom

A06. TERMS OF REFERENCE

On proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Mrs Shields, Members approved the inclusion of an additional term of reference to monitor the provision of health and wellbeing activities for all staff.

Mrs Hughes returned to the meeting at 17.41.

A07. KPI IN YEAR REPORT

Mrs Hughes advised Members that as of December 2021 no staff grievances have been raised, and one disciplinary hearing and one formal counselling case have been considered.

She confirmed that one harassment case has been deliberated on and advised that the College is waiting to hear if the individual wishes to appeal.

Mrs Hughes provided Members with an update on staff currently on career breaks and advised that overall sickness absence is currently at 3.79%, slightly above the agreed target of 3.5%.

Mr Nugent left the meeting at 17.45 and returned at 17.48.

In response to a query from Mr Alexander, Mrs Hughes advised that sickness absence cases are due to a variety of reasons and very few are attributed to long Covid. She informed that some staff on long term absence are experiencing difficulty in getting treatment due to burden imposed on the NHS by the pandemic.

Mr Doran advised that staff Covid figures have been on a downward trajectory since January 2022.

Members noted the report. For the benefit of new Members, Mr Alexander advised that sickness absence benchmarking figures will be provided in the year-end report.

A08. STAFF LEVELS AND RECRUITMENT REPORT

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the annual update on staffing levels report and advised on fluctuations in salary bands. She informed on movement between band 1 and 2 and advised that this is attributed to a restructuring of the national pay scales which resulted in the removal of band 1.

Mr Doran informed that Director and Deputy Directors salaries are negotiated through a subcommittee of the College Employers Forum and aligned to the college size grouping.

In response to a query from Dr Stewart, Mrs Hughes confirmed that recruitment exercises have significantly increased as many posts have had to be re-advertised a number of times. She advised that in many instances applicant numbers have decreased.

A09. EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE AUGUST 21-JANUARY 22

Mrs Hughes presented the employee development infographic providing an in-year update on activities. She advised on a comprehensive range of training provided in relation to pedagogy, upskilling, health and safety, support staff and management training.

In response to a query from Miss Milner, Mrs Hughes advised that training requirements are informed by both staff requests and the appraisal process.

She advised on bi-monthly meetings of the Employee Development Committee, which included the senior curriculum management team and advised that the Governing Body have oversight of the Employee Development Plan twice yearly through the Staffing Committee.

In response to a query from Dr Moore, Mrs Hughes advised that the senior management team engage in a College Development Planning Process in which workforce planning is an important element.

She also advised on a focus on equality, disability and good relations and other priorities contained within the training plan update.

Members noted the report.

A10. CAREER BREAK REQUESTS

Mrs Hughes provided Members with detail on an application for an extension to a previously approved career break request. The extension was approved by Members on proposal from Mr Nugent and seconded by Mr Doran.

A11. IIP UPDATE

Mrs Hughes advised Members that the College currently holds the Investors in People silver award and reminded the Committee that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, reaccreditation was delayed for twelve months until May 2022. She informed that a staff survey is to be issued on 8 March and advised on the next steps to reaccreditation.

The Committee noted the report.

A12. GOOD FOR ME GOOD FOR FE UPDATE

Mrs Hughes informed that the FE Sector embarked on the #GoodforMEGoodforFE campaign in December 2021 aiming to generate £1 million of social value through a range of sustainable community actions including volunteering and fundraising.

She advised on the three primary strands of the campaign including foodbank donations, encouraging staff and student volunteering activity and promoting and developing corporate and charitable partnership.

Mrs Hughes confirmed that to date the College has captured 1061 volunteering hours which is equivalent to £17,072 social value generated.

Members encouraged participation in the scheme, remarking on the positive nature of reinforcing social responsibility.

Mr Doran advised on planned fundraising events including the golf competition, sector cycle and Mourne walk. Mrs Hughes called on Members to participate where they can in volunteering and fundraising activities.

Mrs Hughes advised that the College is in its last year supporting Air Ambulance NI and informed that the dedicated charity to be supported for the next two years will be chosen by the student body.

Mr Saunders requested that the promotional material be made available to Members of the Governing Body.

Miss Armstrong

A13. POLICY APPROVAL

- **Smoke Free policy**
- **Flexible Working – Right to Request all staff**

Mr Sloan referred Members to minimal recommended changes to the two policies.

The amendments were approved on proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Mr Nugent.

A14. CEF CIRCULARS

Mrs Hughes referred Members to CEF circular 2021/03 advising on the pay award agreed with Trade Unions through the Directors Negotiating Committee.

A15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

A16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee is scheduled for 17.30 on Tuesday 3 May 2022.

The meeting concluded at 18.46.

CHAIR

DATE