

## HR Sub-Group – Note/Actions

**14 June 2021, 10:00 – 11:30**

**Attendees:** Alistair Bell (EIS), Debbie Sutton (C&P), Evelyn Johnston (P&G), John Gibson (UNISON), Louise McGunnigle (HR), Margaret MacRae (RCN), Marina MacDonald (HR), Paul MacPherson (GMB), Rikki Selkirk (GMB), Sharon Barrie (P&H)

**Apologies:** Ailsa MacKay (I&E), Anne MacPherson (E&L), Brian Porter (H&SC), Caroline Campbell (C&P), Colin Sharp (P&H), Iain Swayne (R&F), Samantha Purdie (RCN), Siobhan McCready (UNITE)

**Guest speakers:**

Koreen MacDougall – Disability Confident Accreditation & Disability Passport/Recruitment & Selection Guidance

Jannet Sikkema – Shared Parental Leave Guidance/PIN Policies

Marie MacKenzie – Grievance Policy & Guidance/Disciplinary Policy & Guidance

**Observing:** Vanessa Gunn (HR)

		<b>Owner</b>
1	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b> – as above	
2	<p><b>Review Actions from Last Meeting (8 March 2021):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apologies</li> <li>2. Items from HRSG 29 October 2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Shared Parental Leave Guidance – agenda item today</li> <li>○ SJC 20-60 Coronavirus &amp; SJC Leave Provisions Staff Guidance (Coronavirus) - actioned</li> <li>○ Standby Scheme – actioned</li> <li>○ Bereavement Leave Guidance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ amendments discussed/agreed at last meeting, with revised guidance circulated to HRSG Members and uploaded to HR Microsite</li> <li>○ <b>Anne/Alistair taking to LNCT meeting on 16 June 2021 to reflect in LNCT agreement</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Bullying &amp; Harassment Guidance – actioned</li> <li>○ PIN Policies/HC Policies – agenda item today</li> <li>○ Transport &amp; Logistics Policy – actioned</li> <li>○ <b>Abatement of Annual Leave following sick leave period in excess of 3 months – c/f</b></li> <li>○ Return to Work Agility Lockdown Project update – no action required from HRSG</li> <li>○ HR Legislative Update Timetable 2020/2021 – no action required</li> <li>○ Trade Union Items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review of Recruitment and Selection Policy and Guidance – agenda item today</li> <li>○ Living Wage Consolidation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to future proof for new Living Wage – new models have been drafted which detail options for new versions of pay and grade system</li> <li>▪ models are currently being costed and will be discussed with Trade Unions once costed models are approved for discussion</li> <li>▪ Member approval will also be required</li> <li>▪ <b>further update to be provided at future HRSG</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Engagement &amp; Partnership Framework – agenda item today</li> <li>4. Armed Forces Reservist Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ comments considered and policy now operational/uploaded to HR Microsite</li> <li>○ noted that LNCT Special Leave Policy applies</li> <li>○ application made to upgrade from Silver to Gold – waiting to hear if Gold status will be awarded</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Engagement Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ combined survey went out few weeks ago which followed on from survey 12 months ago – new section regarding New Ways of Working was included to help NWoW Project move forward. This impacted on the full satisfaction survey planned for May 2021, with it being postponed until September/October 2021 – survey still at early stages and would look for Trade Union input regarding content. This all-staff satisfaction survey will provide HC with engagement index with key</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Anne/Alistair</b></p> <p><b>Louise</b></p> <p><b>Louise</b></p>

	<p>themes that will be monitored and managed throughout Services to improve staff engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ content can be discussed with Trade Unions and VMG (survey provider) and can consider specific section for Teaching staff, if required</li> <li>○ there has been an increased focus on staff engagement – largely driven by pandemic and keeping staff engaged - there are CE and ECO/Area engagement sessions scheduled for June</li> <li>○ working with the CE on the engagement strategy</li> <li>○ <b>further update can be provided at future HRSG</b></li> </ul> <p>6. Recruitment &amp; Selection Guidance – agenda item today</p> <p>7. Disability Confident Accreditation &amp; Disability Passport – agenda item today</p> <p>8. Whistleblowing Policy – actioned</p>	Louise
3	<p><b>Engagement &amp; Partnership Framework</b></p> <p>Revised document previously circulated to HRSG for comment and Trade Unions to take to their respective groups. Comments taken on board as appropriate. Submitted and approved at Staff Partnership Forum 3 June 2021. Very well received, with the Leader in particular referring to how important this is and it being such a good foundation document going forward. Looking to promote awareness with Managers/include in Management Induction and promote ethos with staff.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● promote awareness of Engagement &amp; Partnership Framework with Managers</li> <li>● include in Management Induction</li> <li>● promote ethos with staff</li> </ul>	Louise
4	<p><b>Shared Parental Leave Guidance</b></p> <p>Updated Guidance circulated for comment ahead of the meeting. Guidance revised to reference increase of minimum earnings to reflect legislative changes, inclusion of links to template letters and inclusion of signposting to Workforce Planning &amp; Staff team for any teaching staff enquiries.</p> <p>Revised Guidance welcomed by Trade Unions and approved.</p>	
5	<p><b>Disability Confident Accreditation &amp; Reasonable Adjustments Disability Passport</b></p> <p>On 12 May 2021 Paul MacPherson presented to the Disability Confident Working Group regarding the ‘Reasonable Adjustments Disability Passport’. HC are exploring this further with another council who have recently been awarded Disability Confident Leader status (level 3) and have implemented Reasonable Adjustment Passports with staff. Once further information gathered a paper will be drafted – looking to use positive and inclusive language, for promotion with managers to embrace employing staff with disabilities and also provide candidates with disabilities with the confidence to apply for jobs. Work is ongoing with regard to HC achieving Disability Confident Leader status (level 3) and it is hoped to have this in place by early 2022.</p> <p>The Passport would be offered to all staff but would be entirely an individuals’ choice. It was noted that some staff may chose not to hold the Passport, whilst some may not be classed as disabled but have had reasonable adjustments made at work.</p> <p>Noted that staff disability statistics (any disability – not just physical) are not reflective of community statistics. Also noted that Durham City Council saw their staff disability statistics increase 3-fold following their adoption of the Passport.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reasonable Adjustments Disability Passport paper to be drafted</li> <li>○ continue to raise awareness of Disability Confident status with managers and staff (staff may be more inclined to highlight disability in staff survey)</li> <li>○ Disability Confident Leader status (level 3) - update to be provided at future HRSG</li> </ul>	Koreen
6	<p><b>HR Policy Improvements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Recruitment &amp; Selection Guidance</b></li> </ul> <p>Guidance has been drafted regarding <b>Recruiting Senior Officers where there is Member Involvement</b> and also <b>Guidance for Engagement of Interim Senior Officer</b>. Trade Union comments have been received and these are currently with Head of HR for review.</p>	

<p>The review of the <b>Recruitment and Selection for mainstream employment</b> is at the very initial stages, with research on good practice being carried out with other Councils and large corporations. Initial discussions have taken place with Trade Unions. Looking to produce a comprehensive guidance document, covering: initial reasons to recruit (and alternatives); EATR procedure; process managers should follow to employ a new staff member (including induction, requesting IT etc.); advice if/when staff do not have to obtain further Disclosure Scotland clearance if they move to another job/Service with the Council. Also working with the Systems and Change Team Leader to help break down the processes within Resource Link. Will also link with Workforce Planning &amp; Staffing Manager and Trade Unions over next few months.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recruiting Senior Officers Guidance (Member Involvement) to be finalised and submitted to future HRSG</li> <li>○ Engagement of Interim Senior Officer Guidance to be finalised and submitted to future HRSG</li> <li>○ Recruitment &amp; Selection Guidance (mainstream employment) to be reviewed and submitted to future HRSG</li> <li>○ consideration to be given to include acting-up guidance, fixed-term contract guidance, change/leaver form guidance, exit data, establishing a One Stop Shop/end to end guide for managers</li> <li>○ Teachers Recruitment Guidance – Alistair to share with Koreen (may be helpful wording to include)</li> </ul> <p>○ <b>Grievance Policy &amp; Guidance</b></p> <p>A working group was set up to review the Grievance Policy &amp; Guidance and with input from Trade Unions the following key changes are proposed: introduction of a mandatory conciliation meeting to discuss and attempt to resolve the grievance; consideration be given to how the aggrieved employee is supported, as well as the employee who the grievance is against through the introduction of a Welfare Support Officer; removal of the 3rd stage Member appeal and introduction of a pool of ECOs and Depute Chief Executive to hear stage 3 appeals. Changes to be approved by ELT (as one of the proposed changes suggests a role for ELT), following which the documents will be submitted to HRSG. It was noted there have been significant changes to the Agenda for Change policies/guidance – need to ensure HC guidance references PIN policies/guidance where appropriate and include Links. HR looking to resource and train staff to facilitate conciliation/mediation sessions.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ revised Policy &amp; Guidance to be approved at ELT initially</li> <li>○ incorporate reference and Links to PIN policies as appropriate</li> <li>○ Guidance to reference mandatory conciliation having some flexibility in exceptional circumstances</li> <li>○ revised Policy &amp; Guidance to be submitted to future HRSG</li> <li>○ Manager Training programme to be prepared/implemented</li> </ul> <p>○ <b>Disciplinary Policy &amp; Guidance</b></p> <p>HR have held an improvement workshop with Trade Unions in relation to the Disciplinary Policy and Guidance. Revised documents were shared with Trade Unions with comments received and the following changes are proposed: Policy/Guidance/template letters updated to reflect Executive Chief Officer post titles; introduction of a Welfare Support Officer for when the relationship between an employee and manager encounters difficulties; the creation of a comprehensive disciplinary process FAQ document. Revised Policy, Guidance and FAQ document approved in principle. <i>(NB: does not need to be resubmitted to HRSG)</i></p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Authority to Dismiss List being revised and will be circulated to HRSG Members</li> </ul>	<p><b>Koreen</b></p> <p><b>Alistair</b></p> <p><b>Jannet</b></p> <p><b>Marie</b></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Guidance to reference LNCT 39 (Code of Competency) if appropriate – to be discussed with Alistair</li> <li>○ appointment of an appropriate officer to deal with a case (and any appeal) needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis – wording in guidance to be reviewed</li> <li>○ Guidance to outline exactly what counselling is (various perceptions of this)</li> <li>○ Policy/Guidance to incorporate which staff groups these documents apply to</li> <li>○ Guidance to include entitlement of who can have sight of documentation – i.e. clarity on who can see what and when</li> <li>○ revised documents to be circulated for final comments and approval</li> </ul> <p>○ <b>PIN Policies</b>  Jannet and Margaret have met regarding PIN (Partnership Information Network) policies and HC policies. A full comparison between them is being carried out, with a working group having been set up to take this forward. A comparison document is being drafted and looking to hold meetings with Trade Unions before the next HRSG.  It was noted that PIN policies are not always referenced as required in HC policies/guidance. Some PIN policies have recently been revised and are at the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of consultation. Important there is an understanding of the PIN policies and which apply, as some policies can potentially no longer be applied. It was also noted that some Trade Unions have separate teams that deal with NHS policies/groups.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Overview of draft prepared to be circulated to HRSG Members</li> <li>○ Update to be provided at next HRSG</li> </ul> <p>○ <b>Fixed-term Contracts</b>  There is a commitment to review temporary Contracts of Employment and how the organisation is using them. Over last 12 months it has been a more frequent issue, with employees receiving notice – some with accrued service. Trade Unions highlighted that this causes significant difficulty in Education/supply staff and that the CE has previously cited she does not like temporary contracts and looking to permanent contracts to enable staff to make life plans.  A short-life working group has been initiated to discuss and take forward – looking for guidance to be put in place and managers to understand using appropriately the different contract types depending on the circumstances.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Working group to be established</li> <li>○ Guidance to be drafted</li> <li>○ Update to be provided at next HRSG</li> </ul>	<p><b>Jannet/Margaret</b></p> <p><b>Jannet/Louise</b></p>
7	<b>HR Legislative Update Timetable 2021</b> Circulated	
8	<b>Trade Union Items:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>TUC Dying to Work Charter</b>  A copy of a statement which was circulated within NHS was shared with HRSG. HC are probably already doing most of the points covered in this Charter, which relates to staff who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness and how we are treating them – offering a choice if wanting to continue to work or leave work – ties in with the disability work already being undertaken. Support from Trade Unions to look at this, being mindful that if HC signs up to the Charters there needs to be a commitment to maintaining it - review therefore to be incorporated.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Incorporate into the Disability Confidential work – Koreen to link in with Margaret</li> <li>○ Update OHS&amp;W Manager</li> </ul>	<p><b>Koreen Marina</b></p>
9	<b>AOB – No items</b>	
10	<b>Date for next meeting: 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (9.30am – 11.30am)</b>	