

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

STAFFING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 8 October 2012 at the Farm Lodge Ballymena Campus, Northern Regional College.

Present Mr R Jay (Chairperson), Mr G Gilpin and Mr T Neilands (Director).

In Attendance Mrs B Lavery, Mrs C Moore and Mr J Hunter.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

25.1 Apologies, Membership and Terms of Reference

a) The Committee received an apology from Mr S Davidson (Chairperson) and Mr I Goldsworthy. In the absence of the Chairperson Mr R Jay took the Chair

b) The Committee noted its membership: Mr Sam Davidson (Chairperson), Mr T Neilands, Mr Ivan Goldsworthy and Mr Richard Jay. Ms Isobel Allison, a recently appointed member of the Governing Body, has expressed an interest in serving on the Staffing Committee;

c) The Committee noted that it is necessary for all the Committees of the Governing Body to undertake an annual review of Terms of Reference. Members reviewed the Terms of Reference and **agreed that a number of changes should be made and submitted to the Governing Body for approval.**

25.2 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

25.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The unreserved minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 29 May 2012 were approved.

25.4 Matters Arising

25.4.1 Investors In People Award (minute 24.4.1)

The Principal informed the Committee that the IIP Recognition Panel had accepted the IIP Assessor's recommendation that NRC be recognised as an IIP organisation. He said that he and the Director of Curriculum had been present at a ceremony at Hillsborough Castle to receive the College's IIP award.

25.4.2 Review of Management Structure (minute 24.16)

The Principal stated that a detailed paper regarding the second and final phase of the Review of the Management Structure had been considered by the Education Committee (2 October 2012), as it dealt essentially with the transfer of Senior Lecturers to posts awarded Responsibility Points.

25.5 Chairperson's Communications

There were no Chairperson's communications.

25.6 Sickness Absence Statistics 2011/2012

Mrs Laverty presented the Sickness Absence Report for 2011/2012, which indicates that the percentage days lost for the College is 3.85% (3.21% in 2010/2011) and the average days lost per employee is 10.06 (8.38 in 2010/2011). Support Staff absence rates have increased slightly from 3.37% working days lost and 8.8 average days lost per employee in 2010/2011 to 3.54% and 9.23 average days lost in 2011/2012. Academic Staff absence rates have increased from 2.96% working days lost and 7.72 average days lost per employee in 2010/2011 to 4.29% working days lost and 11.19 average days lost in 2011/2012. The average cost of working time lost as a direct result of sickness absence for 2011/2012 was £986,223. It was noted that stress, anxiety and hospitalisation are the most common reasons for absence.

Long-term absences have increased across all staff groups. A total of 6,143 days were lost due to long term absences in 2011/2012 compared to 4,403 in 2010/2011. Short and Medium Term sickness rates have decreased across all staff groups by 1,039 days. In response to a query Mrs Laverty stated that the College had several strategies for dealing with long-term absenteeism. She said that each absence is managed individually and use is made of Carecall and Occupational Health facilities. Mr Gilpin said that it would be helpful if the Committee could be provided with details of the number of staff moving to and from the long-term absence list. Mrs Laverty undertook to provide this information for future meetings.

The Sickness Absence Target for 2012/2013 is set at a maximum of 3.5% working days lost or 9.1 days lost per employee. This is the UK average for the public sector for 2010/2011 and represents a reduction of nearly 0.4% on the College's 2011/2012 rates.

Mrs Laverty concluded by indicating that there will be a number of Health and Wellbeing events and training throughout 2012/2013 aimed at improving employees' health, promoting a healthier lifestyle and raising awareness of mental health problems and stress.

25.7 Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission

The Committee received an Executive Summary of the Annual Progress Report, which has been submitted to the Equality Commission. The full Report can be viewed on the College website. The summary highlights a number of issues:

- a) New Equality Scheme. The College's new Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission in January 2012;
- b) Harassment and Bullying. The Equality Training Programme 2011/2012 had a particular focus on Harassment and Bullying;
- c) Wear It Pink. The College participated in the 'Wear It Pink Day' to raise awareness and to raise funds for cancer;
- d) Domestic Violence. The College launched its Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy in December 2011. The Committee congratulated the College on the award of the Onus Gold Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence;
- e) HR Advice Sessions. HR Advice Sessions have been piloted across all campuses. This initiative has been a great success and will continue during 2012/2013. Line managers have been given training on stress management to enable them to spot stress at an early stage;

- f) Stress Management. Stress remains the main reason for long-term sickness absence. Carecall delivered 3 sessions on Stress Awareness, attended by 58 members of staff;
- g) Health and Well-Being. Human Resources conducted an employee survey regarding Health and Well-Being;
- h) Accessible Information Policy. The policy was approved and disseminated to all staff in March 2012;
- i) Anti-Bullying Films. Media students have produced three anti-bullying films. **The Committee agreed that one of the films should be shown to the Governing Body (21 November 2012) and that the student production team should be invited to attend;**
- j) Hands Off My Friend. The College has become a reporting agent for the Hands Off My Friend campaign;
- k) Social Media Policy. The College has approved a policy for staff and students;
- l) Design Company. The Equality Officer has met with the College's Design Company to ensure that College publications and materials are accessible to all;
- m) Dress Code Policy. The College has reviewed its Dress Code Policy for Students. The new Code has helped to create a more harmonious educational and working environment;
- n) Diversity Calendar. The College has developed a Diversity Calendar in conjunction with other Colleges in the Sector;
- o) Consultation. The College has carried out extensive consultation on its new Equality Scheme and Action Plan with a wide range of stakeholders; and
- p) Awareness Training. The College has continued to raise awareness of Equality through Refreshers' Week, Staff Training, Class Talks and the Intranet.

The Committee congratulated the HR Team working on this impressive Report.

25.8 Any Other Notified Business

There was no other notified business.

25.9 Next Meeting

The Chairman reminded Members that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 5 November 2012 at the Ballymena Campus commencing at 5.30 pm.