



Minutes

Human Resources Committee

Date: 19 January 2024

Time: 10:30

Venue: FSHQ

Present: Cllr F Shaheen (in the chair), Cllrs C Anderson, J Garvani, C Keith, N Mohammed, M Pollard, K Renshaw (as substitute for R Wood), U Sutcliffe, and H Zaman.

In Attendance:

Apologies: Z Hussain, D Kirton and R Wood

24 Minutes of meeting held on 6 October 2023

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 6 October 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

25 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

26 Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

27 Admission of the public

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the press or public.

28 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

Wellbeing Update

The Assistant Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager provided a presentation detailing the current wellbeing support available to staff, explaining the recent wellbeing and trauma review that has taken place and the key findings from this. The presentation included details of the work already completed and the plans for future improvements to the wellbeing and trauma support service, including continuing with the launch of the Trauma Risk Management programme, (TRiM), employing a new member of staff on the team and exploring options for enhanced retirement planning and financial options.

Members welcomed the presentation and were pleased to hear about the excellent work being done in the area.

29 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Update

Members were presented a report by the Director of Human Resources which contained details of the work undertaken to ensure compliance with the recent amendment to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions). The report included the current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) status for all roles within the Service and went on to detail the revised checks now required under the Act. The report explained the requirement to employ an additional full-time HR Administrator who will be primarily responsible for undertaking the re-checking process for current employees.

Members noted that current staff may have concerns what a higher-level check will disclose but were reassured that employees have been informed that WYFRS will make risk based proportionate and pragmatic decisions around any positive disclosures which will be based on the relevance of the crime in relation to the job that the individual undertakes. It has also been agreed that the Service will expedite the DBS check for any concerned individuals.

Members challenged the level of discretion that can be used in these cases and were informed that Human Resources would be using the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Risk Assessment model.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

30 Human Resources Activity Report

The Director of Human Resources submitted a report which advised Members of the key HR metrics for the reporting period ending 30 September 2023, including establishment strength, sickness absence data and high-level discipline and grievance figures. The report also requested members to approve an increase in establishment for the role of HR Administrator - to support the re-checking of disclosure and barring required due to the changes in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) as detailed in agenda item 6.

Members challenged the number of ongoing discipline and grievance cases and discussed if this could be attributed to the recent report on the culture of London Fire Brigade (LFB) and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Culture Action Plan, meaning higher standards of behaviour were expected from all staff. Members were also asked to note that cases involving police investigations were often prolonged due to circumstances outside the

control of the Service and that collaboration with the police was important to facilitate to maintain the successful collaborative relationships already established.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted.
- b) That the increase in establishment be approved

31 Sickness Absence Review

The Director of Human Resources presented a report detailing the sickness absence levels across the organisation from April 2018 to present and examining the reasons for absence and its significant increase.

Members commented on the current long NHS waiting times which could impact sickness levels and therefore operational issues and discussed the option of providing private health insurance for staff. Members were asked to note that the statistics recorded the highest level of absences for Musculoskeletal (MSK) and Mental Health conditions and that WYFRS offers private physio and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) as assistance for these causes. Members further discussed the methodologies that could be used to quantify the costs attributed to sickness absence.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

32 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028 – Annual Update

The Director of Human Resources submitted a report giving an update on the progress made on the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy action plan.

The report confirmed that the following actions have been successfully delivered:

- Evaluation of the Quality Assurance Self-Assessment for D&I questions has been analysed and cross referenced with the strategy actions.
- Departments have been asked to identify gaps and scope areas where support and training is required and have met with the Diversity Project Officer to identify actions and training needs.

Members requested and were provided with further information regarding the screening tool which will be used with all comms campaigns and messaging.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

33 Asian Fire Services Association (AFSA) 2023 Conference

The Director of Human Resources presented a report giving members an overview of the Asian Fire Services Association (AFSA) 2023 Winter Conference which was hosted by West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue at the Royal Armouries in Leeds in November 2023.

Members received the report positively and requested that in preparing programmes for conferences such as this, consideration be given where practicable to how they might contribute.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

34 Minutes of the Yorkshire and Humberside Employers' Association meeting held on 14 September 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the YHEA meeting held on 14 September 2023 be noted.

Chair