

Attendance: S Deery / M Sands / E Denham / E Taylor
F Dougall / A McCormick - UNISON

1. Apologies

Jim McClafferty
Diane Harvey

2. Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The group agreed the minutes to be accurate.

Matters Arising – IT Job Descriptions are in draft and the groups' initial thoughts were that the job descriptions read well and are easy to follow. Adele mentioned that support is available to members involved in this restructuring, should they need it.

Matters Arising – Christmas Additional Flexi Credit. Susan reluctant to go back to the policy of reinstating the Christmas shopping flexi credit. However, we will provide the 1.5 hour additional flexi credit for the early office closure for Christmas and New Year. With regards to Christmas Team Lunches, Susan suggests a 2 hour flexi credit over a lunch time period to attend a Christmas or festive activity with your team and for this to be taken up before end of December.

Susan has suggested communicating the following wording to all staff for this Christmas period.

“Offices are expected to provide cover during office hours, in particular on Friday, 22nd and Friday, 29th December, 2017 to provide a service for children, families and key partners. This means that the office should stay open until 4 p.m. and such cover as is required for this to happen should be arranged. Cover can be kept to a minimum but should be sufficient to deal with any business that is notified to the office or needs to happen that day.

Staff not required to provide the requisite cover until close of business can leave at 2.30 p.m. using 1.5 hours additional flexi credit. Where possible, a manager should provide cover, however, anyone staying to 4 p.m. will also be given 1.5 hours additional flexi credit.

For 2017, all staff will receive a flexi credit of up to 2 hours to attend a team or office Christmas lunch or other festive activities. If, for whatever reason, staff cannot attend the team or office Christmas lunch, then the 2 hours flexi credit can only be used over a lunch time period in agreement with your line manager. This credit must be used during the month of December and not carried forward into January.”

Matters Arising – Tech Refresh. Spend has been approved for the laptops which are expected to be rolled out at the end of November 2017. We need to ensure that there is technical support available for staff during the transition from PC to laptops.

With the issue of laptops and the idea of flexible working Eileen queried if the large desks are still required. Susan clarified that there is no funding to refresh desks at this time. Eileen also proposed that we explore the advantages and benefits of holding standing meetings in the future.

Matters Arising – Succession Planning. Diane had reviewed the paper and queried if the plan could encompass all staff, not just managers.

Matters Arising – Women into Leadership. Work to continue.

3. Maximising Attendance Strategy

- Susan shared that the current absence rate for SCRA which is sitting at 6.8% - the highest it's ever been.
- **Objective 1: Promote Healthy Lifestyle** – added “Health and Wellbeing Group, a sub group of the National Partnership Forum, will promote and encourage healthy activity and policy and support initiatives.”
- **Objective 2: Maximising Attendance** – added “Managers and employees have a responsibility to maintain dialogue during any periods of sickness absence to support a sustainable return to work.” Important to point out to employee that they need to be ready and fit for work to avoid further absence.
- **Objective 3: Reduce and prevent the causes of workplace ill health** – added “Try to minimise the impact of absent employees on those who remain at work”. Fergus suggested encouraging vulnerable groups to get the flu vaccine.
- Section 2 on Implementation has been removed.
- Section on Review, added that absence rates will be reported regularly to the Board and that maximising attendance will be a regular item on the Health and Wellbeing Group agenda. Sentence on updates being reported to the National Partnership Forum has been deleted.

4. Maximising Attendance Framework/Guidance

- Framework places particular emphasis on early intervention, exploring causes of absence at the earliest stage possible.
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has been replaced with the Equality Act 2010.
- No changes to Occupational Sickness Allowance except further clarity on Statutory Sick Pay.
- Section 2.3 Occupational Sickness Allowance – change fourth paragraph “Full allowance is a sum equal to full normal pay including any entitlement to statutory sick pay. Half allowance is the sum equal to half normal pay plus any entitlement to statutory sick pay where this doesn't exceed normal full pay.”
- Change reporting time for employees to contact their line manager ‘prior to 9:30 am’ to notify line manager of their absence.

- Morna suggested that some employees and manager may operate a system where the employee text their line manager before office opening hours to notify them of their likely absence to allow appropriate cover arrangements to be made, e.g. if attending a hearing or court. However, a follow up call would be expected before 9.30am.
ACTION: Morna to produce wording.
- Managers to be made aware that original fit notes must be returned to employees.
- **ACTION:** Paragraph title changed to Section 3.3 – Policy Action Point. The word ‘Triggers’ can be seen as punitive rather than supportive. Also within the first paragraph “.....the following management interventions should be used as a guide”. Fergus had suggested removing the word ‘guide’ when the intention for this section is to give managers direction/instruction, not guidance.
- Section 4 – The Return to Work Discussion. The group agreed that this discussion with the employee needs to be documented and perhaps recorded on iTrent.
- **ACTION:** Appendix 2 – Amend third paragraph, second sentence “Where the diagnosis is unknown and/or the period of long-term illness is uncertain, advice can be sought from Occupational Health Services and other specialists to enable Managers to manage the situation.”
- **ACTION:** Appendix 3 – Remove third paragraph “Frequent, short-term absences.....”. Fourth paragraph, amend first line “To help manage frequent short term absence, it is important that managers monitor....”
Sixth paragraph, amend first sentence “Where there is a persistent problem you should further discuss the matter informally with the employee...”
Remove attached template letter and create a hyperlink.
- Fergus wants to reaffirm to staff that they can be accompanied by a Unison representative during discussions with their manager. Susan clarified that the template letter will have a clause in it to encourage staff to be accompanied by someone.
- The group suggested simplifying the Return to Work Interview Form so it can be recorded on iTrent.
- **ACTION:** Susan to revise this Framework and to encourage feedback before the next HR Sub Group Meeting.

5. Job Descriptions – IT Team and OD Business Partner

- The group agreed to the job descriptions being submitted to the next Job Evaluation Committee however should anyone have further comments please forward them to HR before 1st of November, 2017.

6. iTrent Update

- Morna gave a brief update on Web Recruitment and it’s progress. HR are hoping to launch this for the end of December 2017.

7. Update on Locality Engagement Sessions

- Susan informed the group that she only had Greenock and Dumbarton office left to do. Some common threads so far are:
 - Lack of time to read communications on Connect
 - Tiredness
 - Frustration
 - Stress
 - Team Support
 - Great terms and conditions
 - People pulling together

8. AOB

Short term absence for Glasgow Support staff – Patricia Stevenson was tasked to look at the short term absence for Glasgow Support staff by comparing the new and the old model. The stats show that there is quite a significant drop in absence in 2017/18 but to get a better understanding of the figures this would require further examination.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 13 December 2017