

THE UNIVERSITY OF READING

STAFFING COMMITTEE

20/10 A meeting of the Staffing Committee held on a 10m7-0.004 Tc 0.004 Tw 0.53-2(t

Present:

Dr R J Messer (Chair)

Professor A Bell

Mr J J Brady

Miss M Cleaver

Professor C Harty

Dr K Henderson

The results would be considered by the UEB and would enable the University's Leadership Group to plan for the future with staff experience in mind. She confirmed that the results would also be shared with staff via the Staff portal.

20/13 Staff Wellbeing

At the last meeting it was agreed that the Committee would discuss staff wellbeing. Dawn Grout, Occupational Health Manager and Jude Brindley, Health & Safety Coordinator were in attendance for this item. A paper had been circulated to prompt discussion regarding staff wellbeing and Mrs Grout summarised the main thrust of the paper. This included:

- the wellbeing related activities / initiatives currently offered by the University;
- examples of good practice and themes emerging from the Schools / Functions 5 year plan submissions;
- the challenges we face in light of the current pandemic, including the University's response and the impact on staff;

The Committee was asked to consider what additional activities / support the University might need in the future.

Jude Brindley shared her experience as one of the University's Wellbeing Peer Support sharee CoienStteetet14enal (k)4 (te)6 <</MCID 19 >>B9.82Td [(sha)-4 (re)]TJ

as positive, there was recognition that this has led to some disparity in wellbeing provision across the University;

- Workload issues are identified by a number of Schools and Functions as impacting on staff wellbeing;
- There is evidence (from the contacts made with the WPS network, from the referrals received by Occupational Health, and from the feedback from the HR Advisory team) to suggest that mental health / wellbeing is an important area of concern for some staff and line managers and there was support for more activity in this area. It was recognised that managers have a fundamental role in wellbeing and training them in mental health awareness would be beneficial. It was noted that People Development currently delivers such sessions and that Dawn Grout is trained to deliver Mental Health awareness training sessions (*Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)*) for managers and staff at the University. The Committee understood that as this is not a core part of her role the number of sessions she can deliver would be limited;
- Agreement that developing a working environment and culture where staff feel supported and valued is more likely to improve staff wellbeing;

Given the wider challenges we face as a result of the pandemic, the Committee agreed that it is even more important to maintain a focus on wellbeing support. They also acknowledged the key role played by Heads of School and Function in ensuring regular contact is made with all their staff.

It was agreed that a note of the Committee's discussion should go to the UEB to include the following:

- The Committee recognised the importance of both institutional wide support and training, as well as local support and training;
- The Committee agreed the importance of training Heads of School and Function, and sharing what worked locally;
- The Committee would encourage more Mental Health awareness sessions (recognising that there would be a cost involved);
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Action: The Committee Secretary to send a note of the staff wellbeing discussion to the UEB

20/14 Visa Fees

Action: The Director of Human Resources to make a recommendation to the UEB to

20/16 Overseas Working

The Assistant Director of Human Resources (Advisory Services) made the

- Greater clarification regarding DBS checks, and specifically to note that HR will now be undertaking international DBS checks (or equivalents) on staff who have lived abroad who are in DBS-required roles;
- Greater clarification regarding the requirements for risk

in this context one option to achieve pay-related savings is to seek agreement to implement a pay freeze for up to three years.

In respect of the USS, the University has recently engaged in the first of two major consultations designed to frame the latest USS valuation (as at 31 March 2020).

The first consultation sought responses to five key questions covering methodology, covenant, investments strategies and risk appetite. The University's response, shared in advance with the President of Council and the Chair of the Remuneration Committee, re-iterated our previous support for a number of measures intended to address the governance of USS and strengthen the employer covenant, but sought better evidence before providing any definitive response to a number of further mooted developments (for example, additional contingent support such as escrow accounts and reservoir trusts).

The second and main consultation is expected later in the summer (July/August) and will seek views on the key technical assumptions and recovery plan.

20/19

Closure Day 3 – Thursday 28 December 2023

Closure Day 4 – Friday 29 December 2023

Public Holiday – Monday 2 January 2024

Closure Day 5 – Thursday 28 March 2024

Public Holiday – Friday 29 March 2024

Public Holiday – Monday 1 April 2024

Closure Day 6 – Tuesday 2 April 2024

20/21 Provisional dates o.004 T8l