



**People Committee meeting minutes
Monday, 14 June 2021, 11:00 – 13:00
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Present

Catherine Doran, Chair
Paul Grant, Board member
Mandy Jones, Board member
Rohan Sivanandan, Board member
Joanna Nicolas, Board member (Co-opted)

In attendance

Jacky Tiotto, Chief Executive Officer
Julie Brown, Director of Resources
Nikki Gibbons, Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development
Adam Bowles, Interim Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development
Katrina Igbinovia, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead
Nicola Blakebrough, Corporate Manager (Secretariat Services)
James Jackson-Ellis, Corporate Officer (Secretariat Services)

Guests

Sarah Parsons, Assistant Director and Principal Social Worker – item 4

Apologies

None received

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the People Committee (the Committee).

2. Declarations of interest

No new declarations of interest were received.

3. People Committee Terms of Reference and Forward Plan

The Chair presented to the Committee the draft Terms of Reference for discussion. The Chair explained that she, Sally Cheshire and Rohan Sivanandan along with the Director of Resources and Director of Strategy had discussed earlier the governance arrangements for the oversight and scrutiny of the equality, diversity and inclusion objectives.

A smaller steering group would be established to provide oversight of the development and delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The steering group would be chaired by the Director of Resources and attended by the Board sponsor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Rohan Sivanandan, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead. The steering group would report to the Corporate Management Team and an update report would be provided to each Board meeting.

It was noted that the outcomes of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy are owned by Directors and that the People Committee would have responsibility for scrutiny of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion where it related to the workforce. The Director of Resources noted that the Performance and Quality Committee Terms of Reference would need to be reviewed to ensure that they noted the responsibility for scrutiny of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion where it related to practice.

The Chief Executive Officer requested the Committee receive an Annual Workforce Summary and noted the Chief Social Workers for Children and Families annual report was a good example.

Action 1: The Terms of Reference would be updated to note that the People Committee have responsibility for scrutiny of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion where it related to the workforce.

Action 2: The Performance and Quality Committee Terms of Reference would be reviewed to note responsibility for scrutiny of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion where it related to practice.

Action 3: The Committee would receive an Annual Workforce Summary report.

4. People and Organisational Development Strategy

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented to the Committee the People and Organisational Development Strategy and explained that it was important for Cafcass to have a People and Organisational Development Strategy. It was also important to ensure that leaders created the right environment to encourage people to join and stay at Cafcass and continue to provide outstanding services to children and families.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development would be accountable and responsible for the delivery of the People and Organisational Strategy. A delivery plan would be developed and managed within the People Pillar Board and the Corporate Management Team and People Committee would have oversight and scrutiny of the Strategy.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development highlighted to the Committee the key Cafcass workforce metrics and the eight themes of Strategy. The Chair thanked the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development for her presentation and the Committee discussed the Strategy.

The Committee noted Cafcass' staff turnover was 9% and Board member Joanna Nicolas queried how Cafcass' staff turnover compared to the local authorities. The Chair confirmed that the percentage was better compared to many local authorities but not as good as some public bodies e.g. NHS. Board member Paul Grant commented it was important to understand the attrition rate for social workers and consider why individuals left the social work profession.

Board member Rohan Sivanandan queried the headcount at Cafcass and if there was a sense of the optimal workforce required both for full/part time both now and in long term. The Chief Executive Officer highlighted that one of Cafcass' transformation programmes was a substantial structural change in private law reform, specifically the Early Intervention Team and there would likely be a different social work offer.

Board member Joanna Nicolas recommend The Old Vic Guardians Programme, who are a group of trained staff who offer a confidential outlet for colleagues to share concerns about behaviour or the culture at work. The Guardians Programme is designed to help any organisation go further in its commitment to creating a safe and secure working environment for all.

The Committee discussed the definition of the 'employee life cycle' noting it related to the training impact and career progression. It was suggested that more could be done to ask new staff about their expectations of their employee life cycle.

The Committee agreed the communication of the Strategy was important to ensure it spoke clearly to staff. The Director of Resources commented that a member of staff had asked whether the Committee would hear directly from staff and if a staff representative would attend the People Committee. The Chair proposed that the Committee hold a Leadership Live Event or a 'think in' to discuss the Strategy and the purpose of People Committee, as a mechanism for engaging with staff over the next year.

Action 4: The Committee would receive a proposal regarding a development package for staff (life cycle from entry to Cafcass) and talent management – including the Social Work Academy and offer for Practice Supervisors to develop.

Action 5: The Chair and Director of Resources to consider holding a Leadership Live Event or 'think in' to communicate the Strategy and the People Committee with staff.

Action 6: The Corporate Management Team would research The Old Vic Guardians Programme and consider any appropriate next steps.

5. Learning and Development Report

The Assistant Director and Principal Social Worker presented to the Committee the Learning and Development Report and explained the report had previously been scrutinised by the Performance and Quality Committee in March 2021. In future the report would be presented to the People Committee annually.

The Assistant Director and Principal Social Worker highlighted to the Committee that since Cafcass had improved the mechanism whereby line managers would receive a notification if any of their direct reports had expired mandatory e-learning, acting as a prompt for individuals to complete any mandatory e-learning.

The Chair queried if Cafcass monitored the impact of learning/training on individuals' practice and career development. The Assistant Director and Principal Social Worker confirmed that information is gathered through the Performance Learning Review on what difference any completed training has made to the individual.

Board member Rohan Sivanandan commented it was important for new starters to say if they required specific training and queried if a mechanism was in place for this to happen. The Assistant Director and Principal Social Worker confirmed through the Performance Learning Review process individuals complete a self-assessment which included a question on any areas of learning they felt would be useful. The Chief Executive Officer confirmed that the annual staff survey would act as another mechanism to gather learning needs.

Board member Paul Grant queried whether it was realistic to hold the Practice Supervisor Development Programme this year due to high caseloads and management oversight of Family Court Advisors. The Assistant Director and Principal Social Worker highlighted that Practice Supervisor caseloads were unlikely to reduce in the next few months and the Interim Operational Service Director (North) was carrying out a review of management oversight and the ratio of caseloads.

Board member Rohan Sivanandan commented he was unclear on the 'not certified/expired diversity and inclusion of mandatory e-learning' for practice and non-practice staff. The Assistant Director and Principal Social Worker agreed to speak with Rohan directly about this.

The Chief Executive Officer highlighted it was unacceptable for almost half of the organisation to have 'not certified/expired diversity and inclusion e-learning' and requested that the issue was brought back to the next meeting, following a discussion with the Assistant Director and Principal Social Worker and Interim Operational Service Director (North). The Chief Executive Officer also highlighted that consideration was being given to making all training mandatory and what the impact of that would be.

Board members commented social workers were least likely to attend/complete non-mandatory training and it would be helpful to capture in future the training new starters had completed before joining Cafcass. Board members also commented that mandatory training protected the organisation to a degree and not having this could pose a reputational risk to Cafcass.

The Committee noted Cafcass had done well in transitioning to delivery of online training because of COVID-19 and there continued to be a good level of attendance.

Action 7: The Assistant Director and Principal Social Worker would speak with Rohan Sivanandan regarding the not certified/expired diversity and inclusion mandatory e-learning for practice and non-practice staff.

Action 8: The Assistant Director and Principal Social Worker and Interim Operational Service Director (North) to consider the next steps in regard to expired mandatory certificates and what training is mandatory.

Action 9: The Committee would receive a report on management oversight and supervision.

6. Any other Business

Board member Paul Grant queried if the delivery plan for the People and Organisational Development would be made available. The Director of Resources confirmed a delivery plan was in production and would be available at the Board meeting in July.

Board member Rohan Sivanandan queried if the Committee would receive a Workforce Data report. The Head of Human Resource and Organisational Development confirmed a quantitative report would be reported to the Committee at each meeting and was awaiting sign off by the Corporate Management Team.

The Chair noted that Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development would be leaving in June and thanked her for her contributions to Cafcass.

No other business was raised.

ACTION SUMMARY

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