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| **The Board is asked to resolve that the following item be restricted to Directors and representatives from HLH and the Company Secretary’s office.** | |
| **HIGH LIFE HIGHLAND**  **REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  **31 August 2023** | AGENDA ITEM  REPORT No HLH/ /23 |

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| **HR UPDATE – Report by Chief Executive** |

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| **Recommendation**  The purpose of this report is to update Board Members on the charity’s HR related matters.  It is recommended Directors:   1. note and comment on the standing HR matters for Q1 (April - June 2023); and 2. note and comment on the:  * attendance management review; * redesign staffing impact; * employment of under 16s update; and * corporate training update |

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| **1.** | **Business Plan Contribution** |
| 1.1 | This report supports the highlighted Business Outcomes from the High Life Highland (HLH) Business Plan:   1. Seek to continuously improve standards of health and safety. 2. Commit to the Scottish Government’s zero carbon targets and maintain the highest standards in environmental compliance. 3. Use research and market analysis to develop and improve services to meet customer needs. 4. **Increase employee satisfaction,** **engagement and development to improve staff recruitment and retention.** 5. Improve the financial sustainability of the company. 6. **Value and strengthen the relationship with THC.** 7. Develop and deliver the HLH Corporate Programme and seek to attract capital investment. 8. Use research and market analysis to develop and deliver proactive marketing and promotion of HLH and its services. 9. Initiate and implement an ICT digital transformation strategy across the charity. 10. **Develop and strengthen relationships with customers, key** **stakeholders and partners.** 11. Deliver targeted programmes which support and enhance the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the population and which contribute to the prevention agenda. |

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| **2.** | **Background** | |
| 2.1 | This report will summarise and update on the following standing HR matters, relating to 2023/24 Q1.   * Staffing matters:   + establishment;   + turnover;   + attendance management; * Implementation of HR policies/procedures; * Industrial relationships | |
| 2.2 | The report will also cover the following non-standard HR matters:   * Attendance Management * Redesign Staffing Impact * Employment of Under 16s Update * Corporate training update | |
| **3.** | **Update on standing HR matters Q1 (April – June 2023)** | |
| 3.1 | Staffing matters – establishment | |
| 3.1.1 | Changes to the charity’s staffing establishment = 8.88 (**Appendix A**) | |
| 3.1.2 | Quarter 1(2023/24) establishment = 846.53 FTE  Quarter 4(2022/23) establishment = 837.65 FTE | |
| 3.1.3  3.1.4 | Whilst there has been an increase to the overall staffing establishment there have been several newly created fixed term posts, which are fully funded within Adult, Sport and Youth Services in particular but also the deletion of several posts within Leisure services as a result of staffing restructures within a number of facilities.  The Board should note that a review exercise is currently being undertaken jointly between HR and Finance to cleanse the staff establishment database, to create a new and updated version of data. | |
| 3.2 | Staffing matters – turnover | |
| 3.2.1 | The number of resignations as a percentage of posts (number in brackets denotes the number of individual resignations) during the quarter was:   * January = 1.5% (15) * February = 0.9% (9) * March = 1.1% (11) | |
| 3.3 | Staffing matters – attendance management | |
| 3.3.1 | Attendance management **(Appendix B)** can be summarised thus:   * Short-term absence (<10 consecutive working days) = -0.03 * Long-term absence (>10 consecutive working days) = -0.33 * Long-term absences carried into Q1 = 14 individuals * Average days sick per FTE employee = -0.22 days | |
| 3.3.2 | There has been a slight decrease in both short-term and long-term absences during Q1. | |
| 3.3.3 | Overall absence rates have consistently reduced over the past 12 months, with recorded figures now back to very similar levels of those recorded for the same period in 2019, prior to the pandemic. | |
| 3.4 | Implementation of HR policies or processes | | |
| 3.4.1 | The following list details the application of HR policies or processes at the time of writing this report:   * Disciplinary procedure = 1 * Internal resolution process (formerly Grievance) = 1 * Dignity at Work = 0 * Whistleblowing = 0 * Official complaints against staff (external) = 1 | | |
| 3.5 | Industrial relations | | |
| 3.5.1  3.5.2 | The charity recognises and engages with the following unions:   * EIS (Music instructors) * GMB * UNISON * Unite the Union   Ongoing communication and consultation with the above unions is undertaken through the Joint Consultation Forum (JCF), chaired by the Director of Corporate Services and which meets quarterly. | | |
| 3.5.3 | The JCF met on 7 June 2023. The following items were discussed:   * HLH budget position * New OH provider and referral process * Payment of time for essential and non-essential training | | |
| **4.** | **Attendance Management** | |
| 4.1 | At HLH’s Board Meeting in June 2023, Directors requested a detailed report on absence monitoring and other interventions undertaken by to HLH in the management of absence. | |
| 4.2 | HLH provides managers with comprehensive Absence Management guidelines which should be followed, before, during and after any absence. | |
| 4.2.1 | Through the guidelines, managers are advised to review employee absence records at least once a month, to assess:   * Cost and rate of absence to the service * Patterns of absence * Absences which are a cause for concern * Absences where the employer might offer assistance. | |
| 4.2.2  4.2.3  4.2.4  4.2.5 | Managers are responsible for recording and monitoring any absence from work. This information is collated centrally and submitted to THC for payroll purposes.  The information supplied monthly by managers, is added to the central monitoring spreadsheet where a process known as the ‘Bradford Factor’ is applied for each employee who has been absent from work.  The Bradford factor uses a formula based on the number of periods, and the number of days absent in a particular period – giving the employee ‘a factor score’.  This is provided to assist managers in determining whether or not an employee’s attendance record requires further action. However, it should be noted that these figures only consider the previous 12 months and are only one tool for attendance management. | |
| 4.2.6 | Managers are advised to carry out return to work interviews for all absences and this should allow for emerging patterns to initially be dealt with informally. Information from the Bradford Factor in 4.2.3 should be part of the wider discussions, but not relied on solely. | |
| 4.2.7 | When a pattern of frequent short-term absences is emerging and where formal follow up is required, HR will support the manager in determining whether:   * an Occupational Health referral is required; * adjustments need to be made to the workplace or work pattern; * support is required through counselling; and * determining whether termination may be required on the grounds of capability or misconduct, if no medical or acceptable reason can be established. | |
| 4.2.8 | Where an employee has been off sick for a period of three working weeks or more it would be normal for the manager to arrange for a referral to Occupational Health unless an acceptable timescale has already been provided by the employee’s doctor. | |
| 4.2.9  4.2.10 | If an employee is exhibiting signs of mental health or musculoskeletal disorders it is recommended that immediate referral to Occupational Health is made whether or not the employee is off sick.  Recent training has been offered to managers whereby they are being encouraged to use OH referrals proactively to support employees. | |
| 4.3  4.3.1 | Role of HR in absence management and monitoring  Whilst the monitoring and management of employee absence is the responsibility of the line manager, as outlined above and in previous reports to the Board, HR can provide a range of advisory and consultative functions to support managers as follows: | |
| 4.3.2 | * HR maintains a record of all long-term absences (over 10 days) and reports this monthly to the Executive Team. This notes any actions being taken within a service during the month, records the number of OH referrals and is a record of length of absence and returns to work. * HR works closely with managers, particularly with long-term absences, to ensure that: * employees are receiving appropriate welfare support during absence; * OH or counselling referrals are made in a timely manner; * reasonable adjustments are made, where appropriate; * phased returns are implemented as required; * managers are supported in formal absence management meetings. * HR may also act as first point of contact for absent employees where there has been a breakdown in relationship with line manager; * In addition, HR will advise on matters, in particular where absence may be related but not restricted to: * Stress at work * Grievances and Disciplinary * Early/ill health retirement * Redeployment | |
| 4.4 | Review of Absences in 2022/23  The Head of HR recently carried out a review of all absences in 2022/23. This review identified that almost 87% of all absences in that period were classed as short-term i.e. less that 10 consecutive days, and whilst HR was aware of and had been involved in the management of all long term absences it had not been made aware of any concerns regarding patterns of short term absence. | | |
| 4.4.1 | The top five reasons for absence were identified as:   1. Cold 29.50% 2. COVID 19.75% 3. Gastro 15.50% 4. Headaches 9.75% 5. Mental Health 7.65%   The remaining ‘other’ absences would include reasons such as rheumatological, gynaecological, surgical operations, strokes, sprains, UTIs and cancer:     1. Other 17.85% | |
| 4.4.2  4.4.3 | It is clear from reviewing these figures that there is work to be done in all services to address some of the short-term absences and work with employees to try to reduce these.  Board Members will be given a summary presentation on the findings of the review at the meeting. | |
| 4.5  4.6  4.6.1 | Interventions available to support absence management  Occupational Health  The OH clinician is able to provide independent, evidence-based opinion and advice which will enable managers to make well informed decisions on how to manage an employee (both at work and in a return to work). This service is aimed at improving staff wellbeing and reducing absence. OH will also provide managers with advice to consider regarding phased return or reasonable adjustments, for example. | |
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| 4.6.2 | With the appointment of a new OH provider recently, the HR Officer, supported by the Head of HR, has, to date, facilitated, three training sessions for line managers, which not only outlines the process and reasons for OH referrals but also reminds managers of the importance of early intervention and management of all absences, not just the long term ones. These sessions have been well attended and more are planned for later in the year. | |
| 4.6.3 | It has been proven that early OH referrals can prevent an employee from going absent from work and can support employees to remain healthy at work. As outlined in 4.2.7, Managers are being encouraged to use the OH referral service proactively and positively. | |
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| 4.7  4.7.1  4.7.2 | Counselling  There are some instances where referral to OH is not required but where managers, or the employee themselves may have recognised that counselling may be of benefit. HLH will normally cover the cost of up to six counselling sessions but if additional are required this will be discussed with the manager and employee.  Counselling is provided by independent counsellors either face to face or by phone and when necessary, can be arranged at very short notice. | |
| 4.8  4.8.1 | Access to physiotherapy  Where an employee has a musculoskeletal disorder which would benefit from early intervention to assist an employee remaining at work or returning to work earlier, and they are unable to access this through their GP, HLH can refer employees to private therapy where deemed appropriate. | |
| 4.9  4.9.1  4.9.2 | ‘Togetherall’  HLH provides all employees with free access to Togetherall. This website provides a safe online community where people can share feelings, emotions, and experiences in a confidential safe space with people who understand what they may be going through. Togetherall is moderated by clinical professionals and is available with 24/7 access.  This service is managed and operated by the Head of Health of Health and Wellbeing and team. | |
| 4.10  4.10.1  4.10.2 | Mental Health Reps  HLH has a number of volunteer employee Mental Health Reps, trained to provide support and signposting to colleagues.  This service is managed and operated by the Head of Health and Wellbeing and team. | |
| 4.11  4.11.1 | Attendance management RAG Rating  At a previous board, there was discussion around the RAG rating applied to attendance figures highlighted in section 3.3. The current ratings are set against the ONS figures and have been set at this comparative rate for around three years. (It was felt the ONS figures were the most consistent and reliable from which to undertake comparisons.)  In considering the information presented to the board in section 4.4, further discussions will take place with Senior Management colleagues regarding whether the ONS figures remain the most appropriate benchmark. If change is recommended then these alterations will be reflected in future HR reports to the Board. | |
| **5.** | **Redesign – staffing impact** | |
| 5.1 | The Board will be aware that for financial business reasons, discussions around a new service level agreement between HLH and HRFC for service provision at Canal Park, Inverness were entered. At the board meeting on 13 June 2023, in principle agreement was given to placing three staff into an ‘at risk’ status and as a result HR is working with affected staff to try to find suitable redeployment opportunities within HLH as per the charity’s phased process in terms of cessation of a service outlined to the Board at its last meeting. | |
| 5.2 | In addition, liaising with The Highland Council’s (THC) HR department, suitable redeployment opportunities within THC will also been made available to affected employees. | |
| 5.3 | The process for Cessation of Service pro-forma is attached at **Appendix C**, for information. | |
| **6.** | **Employment of Under 16s** | |
| 6.1 | The Board was previously asked to consider a proposal to create a policy relating to the employment of children under the age of 16. This came at a time when HLH was experiencing recruitment issues in a number of areas of work, but particularly within the catering service. | |
| 6.2 | Whilst information from service colleagues would indicate immediate requirement for creating employment opportunities to a wider range of ages is no longer urgent, the Head of HR recognises the importance of developing a young and vibrant workforce and providing training opportunities for its future workforce. | |
| 6.3 | The new policy and guidance will therefore continue to be developed in consultation with key services and as with all policies will be discussed, negotiated and agreed as part of HLH’s commitment to our union partners in the JCF. Once this position is reached final approval will be sought from the Board. | |
| **7.** | **Corporate Training Update** | |
| 7.1  7.2 | The Director of Corporate Services is currently undertaking a portfolio review of the areas within Corporate Services and as part of that, identifying resource and service gaps within each department. This includes a review of corporate training (delivery and monitoring) and establishing a budgetary and resource mechanism to support this. (Directors should also note the specific matter of a training resource has been raised by the members of the Health and Safety and Environmental Compliance Committee (HSECC).  An update will be presented to a future Board meeting through the HR Report. | |
| **8.** | **Policies update** | |
| 8.1 | The following policies have been considered in line with the review schedule:   * Code of Conduct – Currently under review to reflect ‘Making Life Better’ standard which also incorporates the ‘i-care’ people values. Updated Code of Conduct will be presented to a future Board meeting. * Protection and Safeguarding Policy – Reviewed with no changes required * Security of Disclosure Information – Reviewed with no changes required * Recruitment and Engagement of Ex-Offenders – Reviewed with no changes required * Protecting Vulnerable Groups - Reviewed with no changes required * Data Protection Policy – Reviewed with minor update to reflect post Brexit reference to UK GDPR. | | |
| **9.** | **Implications** | | | |
| 9.1 | Resource Implications – there are no new resource implications arising from the report, at this stage. However, there is potential for additional financial resources, depending on the outcome of the highlighted ‘trial redeployment period’. | | | |
| 9.2 | Legal Implications – there are no new legal implications arising from this report | | | |
| 9.3 | Equality Implications – there are no new equality implications arising from this report. | | | |
| 9.4 | Risk Implications – there are no new risk implications arising from this report. | | | |
| **Recommendation**  It is recommended Directors:   1. note and comment on the standing HR matters for Q1 (April - June 2023); and 2. note and comment on the:  * attendance management review; * redesign staffing impact; * employment of under 16s update; and * Corporate training update. | |

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 10 August 2023

Authors: James Martin, Director of Corporate Services

Morven MacLeod, Head of HR

**Appendix A**

**CHANGES TO STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT IN Q1 (April – June 2023)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Post Title** | **Location** | **FTE** | **Additional comments** |
| Youth Development Officer | Inverness | 1 | Fixed term 12 months |
| Assistant Youth Worker | Inverness (HIS) | 0.29 | Fixed term 12 months |
| Youth Support Officer | Inverness | 0.29 | Fixed term 6 months |
| Catering Assistants x 2 | IBG | 0.63 |  |
| Senior Software Developer | Inverness | 0.13 | Fixed term 36 months |
| Adult Learning Tutors (Numeracy) x 9 | Dingwall, Inverness, Nairn, Brora, Tain, Fort William, Portree, Wick | 1.8 | Fixed term 27 weeks  Fully funded – Highland Multiply Funding |
| Tutor Coach | Plockton | 0.28 | Fixed Term 45 weeks  Fully funded – Highland Cares Fund |
| Green Health Link Officer | Inverness | 0.2 | Fixed term 4 weeks  (additional hours for limited period)  Fully funded - CNPA |
| Outdoor Centre Assistant (seasonal) | Torrin Bunkhouse | 0.29 | Fixed term 4 months |
| Swim Instructors x 4 | Dingwall Leisure Centre | 1.04 | Fixed term 12 months |
| Swim Team Leader | Dingwall Leisure Centre | 0.26 | Fixed Term 12 months |
| Caretaker Steward | Hilton Community Centre | -0.3 |  |
| Adult Learning Tutor (ESOL – Ukraine) | Inverness | 0.4 | Fully funded - UK Home Office |
| Adult Learning Tutor | Invergordon | 0.4 |  |
| Youth Support Officer x 2 | Tain | 0.14 |  |
| Assistant Youth Worker x 2 | Tain | 0.14 |  |
| Assistant Youth Worker (term time) | Tain | 0.43 | Fully funded - Tain Royal Academy |
| Library Assistant | Broadford | 0.13 |  |
| Leisure Assistant (Wet) | Lochbroom Leisure Centre | -0.59 | Staffing restructure |
| High Life Support Assistant | Inverness | 0.77 | Fixed term 6 months |
| Clerical Assistant | ECCF | -0.5 | Staffing restructure |
| Clerical Assistant | IBG | -0.14 | Staffing restructure |
| High Life Support Assistant | Inverness | -0.2 | Staffing restructure |
| Assistant Youth Worker x 2 | Invergordon | 0.34 | Fixed term 10 weeks |
| Tutor Coach (Youth Sport Workers) x 2 | Wick & Tain | 0.92 | Fully funded – Highland Alcohol & Drugs Partnership |
| Senior Adult Learning Co-ordinator | Inverness | 1 |  |
| Library Assistant | Inverness | -0.24 | Staffing restructure |
| Leisure Assistant | Poolewe | -0.2 | Staffing restructure |
| Leisure Supervisor | Poolewe | -0.31 | Staffing restructure |
| Leisure Supervisor | North Coast Leisure | -0.1 | Staffing restructure |
| Leisure Assistant | North Coast Leisure | -0.24 | Staffing restructure |
| Tutor Coach | Inverness Leisure | 0.02 |  |
| Youth Support Officer | Wick | 0.14 | Fully funded – Gordon Cook Foundation |
| Youth Support Officer x 2 | Culloden | 0.23 | Fully funded – Highland Cares |
| Highland Disability Sport Co-ordinator | Culloden | 0.43 | Fully funded – Highland Disability Sport |
|  |  | **8.88** |  |

Table 1

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**Appendix B**

**Attendance Management Tables**

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| **SHORT-TERM ABSENCE RATES** | | | | |
|  | **Quarter 1**  **(Apr–Jun)**  **%** | **Quarter 2**  **(Jul–Sep)**  **%** | **Quarter 3**  **(Oct–Dec)**  **%** | **Quarter 4**  **(Jan–Mar)**  **%** |
| **2021/22** | 0.66 | 0.66 | 1.13 | 1.62 |
| **2022/23** | 2.07 | 1.63 | 1.35 | 1.52 |
| **2023/24** | 1.49 |  |  |  |

Table 2

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LONG-TERM ABSENCE RATES** | | | | |
|  | **Quarter 1**  **(Apr–Jun)**  **%** | **Quarter 2**  **(Jul–Sep)**  **%** | **Quarter 3**  **(Oct–Dec)**  **%** | **Quarter 4**  **(Jan–Mar)**  **%** |
| **2021/22** | 1.93 | 2.88 | 2.96 | 2.51 |
| **2022/23** | 3.76 | 3.52 | 3.38 | 3.12 |
| **2023/24** | 2.79 |  |  |  |

Table 3

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AVERAGE SICKNESS ABSENCE DAYS PER EMPLOYEE** | | | | |
|  | **Quarter 1**  **(Apr–Jun)** | **Quarter 2**  **(Jul–Sep)** | **Quarter 3**  **(Oct–Dec)** | **Quarter 4**  **(Jan–Mar)** |
| **2021/22** | 1.63 | 2.33 | 2.70 | 2.73 |
| **2022/23** | 3.61 | 3.40 | 2.89 | 2.83 |
| **2023/24** | 2.61 |  |  |  |

Table 4

**Appendix C**

**PROCESS FOR CESSATION OF SERVICE(S)**

**WHERE REDPLOYMENT / REDUNDANCY MAY APPLY**

**SERVICE:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Stage | Action | Responsibility | Details | Status |
|  | Creation of a one-pagers business justification (this will be used throughout the process). | Service |  |  |
|  | Internal consultation with HR.   * Identify those potentially at risk * Age * Length of service * Pension strain * Protected characteristics * Impacts on those involved * Consideration of VR | Service |  |  |
|  | Pre-discussion with JCF. | HR and Service |  |  |
|  | Informal discussion (heads-up) with staff at-risk. | Service |  |  |
|  | Initial consultation (generally with all parties at risk and unions)  Consultation will include:   * Details of post being "at risk" and notification (letter) * Selection process - where fewer members of staff may be affected. * Conversations around 'other ideas' from member of staff and Union. * Ring-fencing of vacant posts for redeployment.   Note **minimum** 30 days | HR and Service |  |  |
|  | Discussion with THC colleagues regarding ‘reasonable redeployment’ to THC. | HR |  |  |
|  | Meetings with individual members of staff. | HR and Service |  |  |
|  | Formal process:   * Personal profile identifying skills and qualifications etc. * Identifying suitable vacant posts (redeployment) within HLH/THC. * Instigate trial period. * Financial declarations to the member of staff (i.e. how much redundancy payments etc.) | HR |  |  |
|  | (If appropriate) Redeployment trial period   * Matching to services * Agreed period * Review discussions | HR and Receiving Service |  |  |
|  | Follow-up consultation (Post 30 days)   * Alternative proposals. * Further questions * Notify employee of Formal Notice issue | HR |  |  |
|  | Formal notice of redundancy issued with appropriate period of notice as discussed as part of above process. (Stage 8 continues). | HR |  |  |
|  | Final meeting with member of staff. | HR and Service |  |  |
|  | Processing of terminational paperwork. (Basic SAL information completed by service). | HR |  |  |

Table 5