

## MINUTES

### SCTS PEOPLE COMMITTEE

MEETING: Wednesday 23 August 2023 –in-Person, Parliament House, Edinburgh

#### Present:

Dr Sophie Flemig, Non-Executive Member, SCTS Board (Chair)  
Anne Scott, Non-Executive Member, SCTS Board  
Ruth Innes KC, Non-Executive Member, SCTS Board  
James Saville, Non-Executive Member  
Sheriff Wendy Sheehan, Non-Executive Member

#### Also Attended:

David Fraser, Executive Director Court Operations, SCTS  
Lisa Sellars, Director HR, SCTS  
Jessica MacDonald, Director Education & Learning, SCTS  
Steven D'Arcy, Corporate Secretary, SCTS  
Christina Bardsley, Senior HR Manager: Engagement, Wellbeing and Organisational Development  
Tom Sadler, HR Strategic Partner Wellbeing  
Victor Vickers, Senior HR Manager: Senior HR Manager of Employment Advice, Policy and Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)  
Katie Leighton, PCS (SCTS Branch Chair)  
Alastair Young, PCS (SCTS Branch Secretary)  
Sarah Imery, Executive Support Officer, SCTS (Minutes)

#### Apologies:

Professor Alan Boyter, Non-Executive Member

### SCTS People Committee – Appraisal Exercise 2023

A summary of members' responses to the appraisal questionnaire was discussed in a members' only session ahead of the formal meeting. Members reiterated their availability to support SCTS members both within meetings and informally where required. Members would welcome a revised approach to the completion of the appraisal next year.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members.

#### 3. Minutes of the Meeting

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2023 were approved.

#### 4. Action Points and Matters Arising

4.1 The Chair provided an overview of discussions from the June and August 2023 board meetings.

## **5. Attendance Levels**

5.1 The Committee reviewed the sickness absence report for the period April 2022 to March 2023, and welcomed the new Senior HR Manager of Employment Advice, Policy and EDI who provided a detailed analysis of the paper.

5.2 The Executive highlighted that the average working days lost to sick absence had increased over the past year when compared to the 2021-22 reporting year. As a consequence, the overall costs of sick absence, as a percentage of the pay bill, had also increased. The Executive confirmed that absences related to COVID-19 were now treated the same as normal absence figures, a change that was introduced in June 2022. It was noted that a range of actions were being taken to address absences, such as an increased focus on wellbeing; enhanced reporting to managers and support to deal with sick absence; and work with providers of the Employee Assistance Programme to ensure staff on long term sick were receiving the right support to enable a return to work at the earliest opportunity.

5.3 The report detailed that mental health sickness absence figures had decreased by 5% but still accounted for 32.2% of all sickness absences. SCTS has introduced measures to provide additional support, and increase awareness of mental health, such as: increased staff resource within the Human Resources Business Unit to support wellbeing initiatives; mental health awareness training for staff. Mental Health First Aiders had been identified and would be trained to provide support to staff and improve awareness and signposting, with external chartered Psychologists being made available to staff members across the organisation where required.

5.4 The Committee welcomed the update and requested, for future reporting, that an executive summary be provided and specific areas be identified where the Executive would require input.

## **6 Wellbeing hour pilot**

6.1 The Committee welcomed the new Senior HR Manager: Wellbeing, Engagement and Organisational Development and the new Strategic Partner: Wellbeing who provided an update on the wellbeing hour pilot. The pilot, which was introduced in July 2023, will run for one year (staff are now entitled to use up to one hour of their normal weekly working hours to undertake non-work activities that will improve their own physical or mental wellbeing). Detailed guidance and an FAQ document had been made available to staff, with the wellbeing team assisting with any queries.

6.2 The Executive confirmed that there had been a positive uptake in the first month of the wellbeing hour being introduced, with 67% of staff logging at least one hour so far. The Wellbeing Team would continue to monitor feedback and engage with other organisations to check best practice. During the pilot period, the SCTS would undertake a review, the wellbeing time would be maintained until a review has been undertaken. SCTS were developing the criteria against which the pilot will be measured, which would include measuring any positive impact on employee wellbeing.

6.3 The Committee acknowledged the update and emphasised the importance of wellbeing across the whole organisation. Members requested more in-depth analysis in the coming months in order to highlight any areas of the organisation that are not able to benefit from the wellbeing hour, ensuring that the role out is benefitting as many roles across the organisation as possible.

## **7. Trauma informed training**

7.1 The Executive updated the Committee on the organisations approach to becoming a trauma-informed organisation (supporting its workforce to respond to the needs of everyone affected by trauma).

7.2 The Committee were informed that in December 2022 the Victims Taskforce approved the Trauma Informed Justice Knowledge and Skills Framework which identifies three levels of trauma training and maps them against workforce roles in the justice sector. The Education and Learning Unit (ELU) were in the process of creating learning content to address the three levels according to the different needs of its workforce. The levels are: level 1, all employees to be trauma informed; level 2, staff who come into contact with victims, witnesses and the accused to be trauma skilled; and level 3, staff dealing with domestic abuse and sexual offence cases to be needs-assess for trauma-skilled or trauma-enhanced training.

7.3 The Executive confirmed that a third party supplier had been procured to provide accredited trauma “train the trainer” training. This would enable the upskilling of in-house trainers to design and deliver training for internal staff and senior justice leaders. In addition, funding for two additional staff had been approved with someone having recently been appointed as the Trauma Informed Strategy and Implementation Manager.

7.4 The Committee noted that the first training course on trauma informed practice and procedure had been delivered to senior leaders, from across the justice sector, involved the Trauma Informed Domestic Abuse court model, that was due to be implemented in Aberdeen. Positive feedback was received from both internal and external participants. Feedback from this pilot would assist in the design of a training programme going forward.

7.5 The Committee welcomed the update on the training developments.

## **8. People Strategy 2023-2028**

8.1 The Executive sought the views of the Committee regarding the development of the next SCTS People Strategy which would cover the period 2024-2029. The key themes and aims that were proposed the next strategy would cover were:

- Valuing Everyone’s contribution – focusing on flexible working, Employee benefits, My Career, wellbeing and Dignity at work.
- Our Team – the focus on embedding the centralised Recruitment function, retaining and recruiting a younger talent pool and developing strategic workforce planning and succession planning.
- Learning - Focusing on Technical training, embedding the leadership attributes and supporting the organisation through change.
- Realising Potential- a focus on developing and encouraging the next generation of talent, coaching and career development.

8.2 The Committee welcomed the opportunity to input into the development of the next People Strategy. Members agreed, in-principle, with the key themes and aims but requested more detail in respect of steps that would be taken to achieve the aims and how the delivery of the strategy would be monitored. Further discussions would take place with the Committee at an upcoming workshop.

## **9. Draft Annual Report to the board**

9.1 Members reviewed their draft Annual Report to the SCTS Board that summarised the work of the Committee over the past year and set out the structure and priorities for the coming year.

9.2 The Committee noted the contents of the draft report. Members expressed that they would welcome additional time to work together on finalising the draft. The Executive would provide a revised draft report for consideration ahead of the next meeting.

## **10. Review/Discussion of Other Papers**

10.1 The following papers were provided for scrutiny/exception reporting only:

- HR Risk Register
- ELU Risk register
- HR Measures for SCTS Board
- HR Business Plan Tracker
- ELU Business Plan Tracker
- Learning Council Minutes

10.2 Members considered the HR Risk register, specifically those risks that were reporting as red. The Committee were assured that there was active management of the risk and that recent actions taken would reduce the score.

## **11. Any Other Business**

11.1 The Executive informed the committee that this would be Jessica MacDonald's last meeting before leaving SCTS next month. The Chair thanked Jessica for her insight, input and service to the Committee over the past few years.

## **12. Date of Next Meeting**

12.1 The next meeting on 8 November 2023 would be a hybrid meeting with the option to attend in-person in Parliament House, Edinburgh or join virtually.

SCTS Secretariat  
August 2023