# JOINT NEGOTIATION AND CONSULTATION FORUM FULL COMMITTEE

## Tuesday 7th October – 2pm
## Castle Buildings

**Attendees**

**Department**

[redacted]

**Employers**

[redacted]

**Gladys McKibbin** **BHSCT**

[redacted]

**Equip**

[redacted]

**Trade Unions**

[redacted]

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| **1.** | **Welcome and apologies**<br><br>[redacted]l welcomed everyone to the meeting.<br><br>Apologies were received from.<br>• [redacted]) – Gladys McKibbin OBO<br>• [redacted]<br><br>[redacted]asked the forum to note also that [redacted] will be in attendance from UNITE at the forum going forward. |
| **2.** | **Equip** |

[redacted]

- [redacted]
- [redacted]
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| | [redacted]. |
| **4.** | **Action Log**<br>[redacted] |

[redacted]

FC 20/25 - Regional HSC Sickness Absence Policy - Work to continue on finalising the policy and guidance document to have them ready for sign off at the next JNCF full committee in October.

It was agreed that the policy would be discussed. This can be closed

**Sickness Absence Policy**

[redacted] presented the Regional HSC Absence Management Policy to the forum for sign off.

She said it was the result of strong collaborative partnership working between Employers and Trade Unions. There were some remaining issues around the development of a stress toolkit, considerations for staff with disabilities etc, but that employers were committing to working with Trade Union Side to resolve these. She also thanked [redacted] for her ongoing work with TUS on the policy.

She said it was important to ensure that there was a robust implementation plan and that there was a need to work together to ensure that training was designed and put in place as quickly as possible, if the policy was to be implemented on the 1st April 2026. She said it was very important that the policy was in place by that date.

The policy was discussed by the forum.

[redacted] said that the policy, as it stands, was not as strong on protections for staff with disabilities as trade unions would like. He said this was being taken forward by equality leads and TUS wanted a commitment that they would be involved. He said also that TUS would like more detail on how the triggers would be applied, stages of the disciplinary process etc. He said the policy would also need reviewed on a regular basis.

[redacted] said Employers would continue to work with TUS on these issues.

[redacted]n raised the issue of Occupational Health and if sufficient staff resources would be in place to deal with referrals. Vivienne said she was not aware of those discussions.

[redacted] said if TUS had the commitment that the issues identified would be worked on in partnership with Trade Unions that this would give reassurance.

[redacted] raised an issue under section 4.1.3 of the policy, where it states that staff;

- Refrain from any activity (such as domestic, social and sporting) during sickness absence which may delay their recovery or be likely to raise doubts about their reason for absence. However, this does not apply to any activity which may aid their recovery, as may have been recommended by occupational health.

She said this could lead to a situation where a GP could state that a staff was not ready to return to work, however, Occupational Health would have the final say. Staff may have to wait a number of weeks for a referral.

[redacted] said managers would be able to pick up the phone to occupational health to discuss any such issues get advice and did not need to wait for a referral to do so. She said it was important that Occupational health retained primacy.

[redacted] said monitoring of the policy would be very important - to look regularly at areas that were going well and areas where issues had arisen.

[redacted]l asked if the forum was ready to agree the document and the way forward.

[redacted] asked if TUS were content to agree that this document would be taken forward, subject to issues such as disability policies etc being discussed collaboratively.

[redacted] said it was important that TUS were involved in the training process.

[redacted] said it was important to note that there would only be a few months available for training from April-June because of the equip schedule and the impact on line managers. She said training would need to be delivered differently as it would not be possible to release managers for 2-3 days training. It will need to be a blended approach which includes on-line training etc.

[redacted] said it was also important that training was delivered at the right time – eg when a manager had an issue rather than trying to recall training that had been delivered in the past. Online training could help with that.

[redacted] said, subject to the assurances discussed, Trade union side were content that the policy could move to the next stage.

**Action FC 27/25 - The Forum agreed that the policy could move forward and that employers and Trade unions would work together to make any necessary amendments as it progresses.**

Trade Union side also thanked [redacted] for her work on the policy and for her help in working in partnership with Trade Union Side to develop the policy.

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| **5.** | **AfC training** |
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| **10.** | [redacted] |
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| **15.** | **Meeting Close** |

For Information:

Date of next JNCF Business Committee meeting: Tuesday 2 December