HR Leaders Group

Wednesday 5 July 2023

Meeting summary

Chair – Dan Appleby, Head of HR, Loram UK
Vice Chair – Iain Taylor, Head of HR, CAF Rail Services
Partner – Laura Kearsley, Partner, Nelsons
Partner – Charlotte Staples, Principal Associate, Shoosmiths
Rail Forum Host – Cat Appleby, Membership Manager

The first HR Leaders Group took place on 5 July 2023. We had 49 registrations representing 40 member companies, and 31 attendees on the day. The delegate list was issued with the joining instructions.

The event orientated around two presented sessions involving short preamble / introductory presentations followed by two break-outs where delegates were split into 5 smaller groups of 5-6, to facilitate more open discussions and support networking.

Session 1
Outlined the proposed **rationale for the group** and initial thinking of what the group can do:

- Share challenges
- Discuss current issues
- Collaborate
- Support bringing new talent to the industry
- Create a network of HR professionals

A 10 minute break-out provided smaller discussions and the following thoughts were shared, amplifying above and particularly highlighting

- Recruitment – issues around salaries, skills shortages, workforce culture change (how to), diversity and inclusion, attracting to the industry, retention, accessing military skills, aging workforce
- Industry challenges including trade unions and ER action
- Flexible working and impact of hybrid working on workforce (office / shopfloor)
- Engagement Surveys
- Mental Health
- Systems and Technology across organisations
- Training, competence
- Apprenticeships (particularly re collaboration)

The feedback survey accompanying the issue of this summary note provides additional opportunities to highlight views on what the group may do.

Formal Presentations
The group heard from two **partner speakers**:

Laura Kearsley, Partner, Nelsons – Laura spoke about changes in Parental Leave and a presentation can be found in our Members Area. This stimulated a discussion around paternity leave. Some members offer statutory, others offer 2 full weeks / 3

HR Leaders Group

Wednesday 5 July 2023

Meeting summary

full weeks. Some with qualifying criteria and one planning to introduce without any qualifying criteria for both paternity and maternity leave. Affordability is key.
Laura.Kearsley@nelsonslaw.co.uk

Charlotte Staples, Principal Associate, Shoosmiths – Charlotte spoke about restrictive covenants, which should be relevant and tailored. Similarly non-compete clauses will be limited to 3 months by the Government. Charlotte provided slides and these will be held on the members area. Changes, including restrictive covenants, constitute a change of contractual terms. Such changes are often included in wider changes such as in a salary review letter.
charlotte.staples@shoosmiths.com

Guest Speakers
We had two guest speakers.

Mark Holmes – Head of Membership & Development for NSAR to discuss newly launched Routes into Rail. This looks at encouraging more young people into rail via a range of initiatives including website, events, schools engagement, springpods, UCAs, STEMAX and Big Bang.

Tel: 020 3021 0669 / mark.holmes@nsar.co.uk

David Brough – MD, Rail Competence & Compliance to discuss competence management within Rail. / david.brough@rail-cc.co.uk / David shared an ORR Document entitled Developing & Maintaining Staff Competence – Railway Safety. Link to document: https://www.orr.gov.uk/media/10885 Specific attention drawn to page 18 and page 36 specifically.

Session 2
The second and final session provided the opportunity for the five breakout groups to discuss specific issues in more detail. These are listed below together with discussion points raised:

Recruitment (retention/ skills/ diversity)	Discussed different approaches, universities, returners to work, industry events and grad events. Discussed perceived 'lack of glamour' of rail and how the group may work together to improve this as an employment destination. Also discussed retention activities.
Apprenticeships	Discussed the contract of employment and the processes (including management) involved which should seek to deliver worthwhile return to whole business.
Unions and ER	The group allocated this topic had limited experiences directly with unionised workforce.
Systems and Technology	This group raised the issues of skills and accessibility relating to technology use in the workplace. The impact of culture, data protection and its use as a method to

HR Leaders Group

Wednesday 5 July 2023

Meeting summary

	support communication and engagement. It highlighted a potential division between users (office based / shopfloor)
Flexible Working	Discussion around hybrid working and that this leant heavily towards management and difficult to apply in shift/shopfloor activities but overall recognition that this is an important tool to retain expertise so solutions to, for example, rostering / shifts are welcomed.

Delegates have opportunity to add further items via the feedback link.

Actions

- Complete feedback survey link to give thoughts on the group purpose; key discussion themes; format of the sessions; guest speaker requests; general feedback and on sharing contacts to more easily facilitate one to one connectivity of finance professionals.

Next meeting

5 October 2023, 12:30 – 14:00 (online) – booking link:
https://www.railforum.uk/events/hr-leaders-group-meeting-2/