

Labour Relations Agency
Notes of a Senior Management Team Meeting
held on Wednesday, 14th April 2010 in Room 2, Gordon Street

Present: William Patterson
Penny Holloway
Gerry O'Neill
David McGrath

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

- | | Minute | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. Apologies | | Action |
| <p>There was an apology from Penny Holloway who was on annual leave.</p> | | |
| 2. Minutes of Meeting held on 1 March 2010 | | |
| <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2010 were agreed subject to the following amendment:</p> | | |
| <p>Page 6, Para 12 – Equal Pay item should read – “It was noted that the CEO is in process of arranging a meeting with NIPSA in relation to the application of the NICS/NIPSA equal pay agreement.”</p> | | |
| | | Secretariat |
| <p>It was noted that the CEO will issue a draft revised agenda for formal SMT meetings for comment by Directors.</p> | | |
| | | CEO |
| 3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes | | |
| <p>There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.</p> | | |
| 4. Board Meeting – 31 March 2010 | | |
| Visit to European Foundation & Labour Relations Commission, Dublin | | |
| <p>It was agreed that the recent Board visit to the European Foundation and LRC in Dublin had been very useful, particularly the presentation on ADR. The CEO is to advise Board Members of the website address to download the European Foundation ADR report by Professor John Purcell.</p> | | |
| | | CEO |
| <p>Potential further topics for LRA/LRC discussion include:</p> | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Mobility trends – European Foundations research findings & future perspectives;➤ General presentation on the European Foundation Company Survey and the European Working Conditions Survey;➤ Individual disputes at the workplace and alternative dispute resolution: | | |
| | | CEO |

The CEO will follow up the above with the LRC.	CEO
It was noted that the main item for discussion at the April Board meeting will be the DEL Review of Dispute Resolution.	CEO
It was noted that there was nothing further to report with regard to the remaining Board vacancy.	
5. Corporate Services Report	
It was noted that the Agency carryover of funds to 2010/11 has been verbally approved by DEL.	DCS
It was noted that the rate of payments to suppliers within 10 days continued to make steady progress.	
The DCS is progressing consultation on current vacancies. Work was progressing on appointments to the Helpline.	DCS
It was noted that the CEO had issued an all staff email reminding staff of guidance regarding political activities in the run up to the general election.	
6. Risk Register	
It was noted that the revised Risk Register had been issued to the Audit Committee. The residual risk score for the Individual Conciliation Management System is to be reviewed. It was agree to arrange an informal SMT to discuss and further rationalise the Risk Register.	Secretariat/SMT
7. Agency Corporate Plan 10/13 and Business Plan 10/11	
It is expected that DEL would like to see both plans shortened and objectives clarified. The CEO awaited final Departmental comment which was due after the Department had considered the outcomes of the DEL Review of the Agency.	CEO
➤ Management Charter	
It was noted that the CEO will be providing a further draft to Directors for discussion at an informal SMT.	CEO
➤ Research & Evaluation	
It was noted that the Research Committee met on 12 th April. The Committee had agreed to meet with the New Economics Foundation on 28 th May following which a decision will be taken as to whether to undertake an Agency evaluation of its economic and social impact by using the NEF or Pam Meadows methodology.	Secretariat/CEO
The SMT discussed the objectives set out for Research and Evaluation 2010-11 and agreed to prioritise the objectives in line with the target	

dates set. It was noted with regard to objective 1 that a draft specification was with the SMT for approval. It agreed to remove objectives 2, 3 and 5.

SMT

It was noted that:

- + progress was being made to carry out a stress risk assessment, probably during May/June 2010.
- + the corporate services user satisfaction survey would be an internal project
- + the DAS will provide the DCS with information on the last staff attitude survey carried out in the Agency.

DCS

DCS

DAS

8. 2009 DEL Review of Agency and of Dispute Resolution

It was noted that the Agency awaited the outcome of the DEL Review of the Agency and of the DEL Review of Dispute Resolution – to be published today. Once details are available the CEO will advise staff that the Board will be discussing the Review of Dispute Resolution on 30th April. After the Board meeting the CEO will be addressing staff on the Review. It was agreed that the review could be saved in ‘shared folders’ for staff to access.

CEO/DCS

9. IS/IT Strategy

➤ *IS Strategy - Security & Data Protection*

It was noted that the recent SMT meetings with PwC had been very useful.

Disaster recovery equipment has been installed in the Regional Office; the DCS is to set up an action team to progress matters as technical testing of the equipment was proving more complicated than envisaged. The DCS is also to prepare contingency plans.

DCS

A revised managed services contract has been received and is ready to be signed off.

DCS

The DCS is to review that progress being made on security accreditation.

DCS

➤ *Case Management developments*

It was confirmed that a new ICMS system is required; the DCS/DCA are to view the system used by the LRC to assess the advantages and disadvantages of same.

DCS/DCA

➤ **Project Management**

It was noted that Project Management courses are provided by a number of organisations; the training officer is to seek expressions of interest from staff.

DCS/TO

10. Operations

➤ *Customer Complaints*

It was noted that the CEO has been responding to an on-going complaint, the papers from which are to be passed to the DCS.

CEO/DCS

➤ *SMT meetings*

Following the recent meeting with PA when it was suggested that the nature of SMT meetings should be revised, it was agreed:

- ✚ to hold informal SMT meetings weekly on a Monday morning for 1 hour 10.00am to 11.00am;
- ✚ to hold a formal meeting on the Monday morning following the Board meeting;
- ✚ to continue holding meetings with available SMT members throughout the summer months.

SMT

It was agreed that the next informal meeting 26 April should address the feedback on day with PA 29th March.

➤ *PRONI – disposal of Agency files*

It was noted that a number of staff had recently attended a Records Management seminar.

CEO

Following on from the seminar PRONI visited the Agency and identified a number of files for retention by them along with files for destruction, pending approval of CEO & Directors.

It was noted that some Finance files were now stored off-site; these were easily retrieved if required.

CEO/Dir

11. Accommodation

➤ *HQ*

It was noted that Corporate Services hoped to move to Unit 1 w/c 3 May allowing the ground floor to be cleared out. The business case for the refurbishment was yet to be drafted. Liaison was on-going with Construction Services and also with regard to procurement of furniture.

DCS

There was a short discussion on the possibility of developing an intranet where staff could be kept informed of accommodation issues. The possibility also existed, if an intranet was successful, of developing this further into a general communications medium for staff.

JMcD

➤ *Regional Office*

As accommodation matters were complete it was agreed to remove this item from the agenda.

Secretariat

12 JNCC

➤ *Progress on Policies and Procedures*

Absence – MSS to discuss with the TUSS the piloting of the most recent draft version of the policy. It was noted that the newly introduced ‘fit notes’ may have implications for the policy. The DCS is to nominate attendees to the Advisory seminar on ‘fit notes’ 21 April. **DCS**

Dignity at Work – DCS to submit to TUS for comment. **DCS**

Recruitment & Selection – DCS to update for SMT comment. **DCS**

Hospitality Procedure – it was noted that a new procedure had been issued by the Audit Office which will be issued to staff. **DCS**

Code of Conduct for Board Members – to be reviewed. **DCS**

➤ *Progress on Secretary meetings*

It was noted that the JNCC secretaries are due to meet on Friday, 16th April 2010. **DCS**

➤ *Equal Pay*

It was noted that the CEO was arranging a meeting with NIPSA on the application of the NICS/NIPSA equal pay agreement to the Agency. **CEO**

13. Continuous Improvement

➤ *Continuous Improvement Action Plan*

➤ *IiP Assessment Methodology*

It was noted that a Corporate Services group had been set up to identify gaps in continuous improvement; the group may seek nominees from operational sections. **DCS**

The IiP assessment methodology will fall into the above; the Agency is aiming to regain IiP with Customer Service Excellence being piloted in Corporate Services. **DCS**

➤ *Staff Conference*

The DCS is to speak to the Compliance Officer regarding plans to progress a staff conference with a possible date of 21st May 2010. **DCS**

➤ *Diversity Training*

The DCS is to progress training in this area as a matter of priority. **DCS**

14. SMT Team Development

➤ *SMT Training Procurement Exercise*

It was noted that the CEO has forwarded PA notes of 29th March to Directors for discussion at the informal SMT on 26th April. **SMT**

15. Any Other Business

➤ *Hotel Bookings/communications*

It was noted that various staff in the Agency are involved in booking venues for conferences/seminars/workshops. In order to avoid confusion it was agreed to look at the possibility of setting up a shared folder which all event organisers could access and update with event information accordingly.

DCS

➤ *LRA Conference – September 2010*

It was agreed to examine the most appropriate means of communicating post-conference literature.

SMT

It was noted that the Future Image contract could expire in June 2010 but that it had been agreed with CPD that it could run a further year. It was agreed to discuss the strategic element of marketing/PR with Future Image. It was also agreed that the DCS contact DEL Communications Section. It was noted that the DAS will be attending a Digital Communications and Awareness Seminar.

Dirs

It was agreed to add 'Digital Communications/Marketing/PR' to the SMT agenda.

Secretariat

16. Date of Next Meeting

- Informal SMT 19th & 26th April
- Formal SMT 4th May