

**MINUTES OF THE 418th MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY BOARD HELD AT
10.00 am ON THURSDAY, 25th AUGUST 2016
IN THE AGENCY'S OFFICES, GORDON STREET, BELFAST**

Present: Marie Mallon (Chair)
Deirdre Fitzpatrick
Michelle McGinley
Alison Millar
Jill Minne
Daire Murphy
Pauline Shepherd



In Attendance: Tom Evans Chief Executive, (CEO)
Penny Holloway (Director, Conciliation & Arbitration, (DCA))
Gerry O'Neill (Director, Corporate Services, (DCS))
Alison Wolfe (Minutes Secretary)

	<i>Action</i>
<p>1. Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Albert Mills, Gary McMichael, Louise Crilly and David McGrath.</p>	
<p>2. Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>	
<p>3. Chair's Opening Remarks</p> <p>The Chair indicated that following the Board meeting there would be presentations from the Advisory Services and the Conciliation & Arbitration Directorates.</p> <p>The Chair also referred to DfE correspondence that issued on 22 August 2016 regarding the Utilisation of Transformation Fund by Arms' Length Bodies with a response due on 25 August 2016. It was agreed that the response should indicate that the Agency would only want to seek access to the Transformation Fund on the basis of any decision to cut our core funding.</p> <p>The CEO undertook to raise the Board's concerns with DfE about how this response might impact on the Agency's current bid for additional resources to deliver Early Conciliation. The CEO also undertook to raise the matter with TUS. The matter will be discussed by the Board as and when any further information is received.</p>	CEO/BMs
<p>4. Minutes of 23 June 2016 Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2016 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	Secretary
<p>5. Matters Arising from 23 June 2016 Minutes</p> <p>5.1 Report on telephone hacking incident</p> <p>The DCS presented a report on the recent telephone hacking incident indicating</p>	

<p>that the Agency's telephone system had been used as a vehicle to transit calls internationally. There has been no security breach in terms of the Agency's information systems and mitigating actions have now taken to prevent any further incidents. The Agency was currently analysing apportionment of costs which could be in the region of £3-5,000. The incident had been reported to DfE and a response was awaited. The DCS advised that the Audit Office had indicated at the last ARAC meeting that they did not regard the incident as a reportable fraud. The Board requested that all sensitive issues should be reported to the Board at the earliest opportunity. The DCS undertook to provide an update to the Board in September.</p> <p>5.2 IS Managed Services Provider</p> <p>The CEO advised the Board that the company responsible for providing the Agency's IS Managed Services had just indicated that they were restructuring their NI operations from the 5 September 2016, which could have a significant impact on the way in which the Agency's contract is managed. The CEO advised that the Agency had now met with the service provider to reinforce the legal/contractual and operational implications of the proposed restructuring and had sought absolute assurance that the Agency's IS systems would continue to be supported in line with the service standards set out in the contract. The DCS advised that DfE had been informed and advice was being sought from CPD on contractual issues. The DCS also advised that contingency measures were being actively considered. It was agreed to keep the Board, and in particular the Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, informed of progress.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DCS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CEO/DCS</p>
<p>6. Update on Roundtable/other stakeholder meetings</p> <p>The Chair reported on the International Agencies meeting in Chicago which she and the CEO attended. The meeting was worthwhile as it provided an opportunity to share information and strengthen contacts, particularly with Acas and WRC.</p> <p>While recognising that disputes exist, those attending were keen to take a more positive approach to improving industrial relations. The Chair had presented the Northern Ireland country report and highlighted the breakdown in TU membership. It was noted that TU membership generally had decreased across all countries and it was hoped that this would not lead to a diminution of employment practices.</p> <p>The CEO reported the concern expressed by delegates generally about public expenditure and the need to demonstrate value for money. The CEO in his presentation referred to the outcomes based PfG and how the Agency is seeking to demonstrate the impact of its services. He referred to research studies such as SROI and raised the need for more independent global research about the work undertaken by the Agencies and the impact on the economy. There was also the potential to partner with international agencies in the area of research.</p> <p>The Chair and CEO undertook to bring further issues from the International Agencies meeting to the Board in due course</p> <p>The Chair advised Board members that the joint LRA/ECNI meeting will be held on the afternoon of Thursday, 17 November following the normal monthly Board meeting. The event will be hosted by ECNI. Board members were asked to give consideration to the format of the meeting and topics for discussion, such as PfG.</p> <p>The Agency's annual Public Meeting and Lecture will be held on Thursday, 20 October and will also provide an opportunity to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Agency. Anne Sharp, Acas CEO, has agreed to speak at the Public Meeting and may also speak at the staff conference which is being planned for Wednesday, 19</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chair/CEO</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BMs</p>

<p>October. Further details will be provided at the September Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair and CEO reported on their attendance at a PfG workshop on 8 July. It was agreed to hold the corporate planning workshop in January 2017 by which time the PfG will have been agreed. CEO to provide a paper on the format of the away day.</p> <p>It was agreed to hold the March 2017 Board meeting in the Regional office.</p> <p>Dates for 2017 Board meetings to be drafted.</p>	<p>Ch/CEO/Sec</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO/Sec</p> <p>Sec</p>
<p>7. Finance Issues</p> <p>7.1 Budget update (Paper 7/16)</p> <p>The DCS presented the finance report which set out a profile of expenditure up to 31 July 2016. The Board noted the current financial position. The Board will be kept informed of budget progress.</p>	<p>DCS</p>
<p>8. Business Plan Performance Report for 2016/17 (Paper 8/16)</p> <p>The CEO presented the Business Plan Performance Report highlighting two specific targets where there was a lack of progress mainly due to dependence on third party input. It was agreed that future business plans should highlight where the Agency is reliant on third party input to achieve specific targets.</p> <p>It was agreed to seek clarification on the extent of the distribution of the Agency's Events Programme.</p> <p>The Board discussed the importance of initiating the work to develop a new Employment Relations model for NI. It was agreed that a paper should be prepared for the Board setting out the strategy and approach to be taken. At the Board away day in February 2016 the Director (Advisory Services) had provided information from other countries which may prove useful. It was also recognised that a dedicated resource was required from within the Agency to take responsibility for this target. Jill Minne, Daire Murphy, Deirdre Fitzpatrick and Michelle McGinley agreed to be members of a new Board Sub-Committee to progress this issue.</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>DAS</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO/DAS/BMs</p>
<p>9. Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chair read a card from Patricia McQuillan thanking the Board for their reception to mark her retirement from the Agency.</p>	
<p>10. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Agency Board will take place on Thursday, 22nd September 2016 at 10.00 am in the Agency's offices, 2-16 Gordon Street, Belfast.</p>	<p>Secretariat</p>

Following the meeting a Board workshop was held with presentations by:

-  Tommy Wright, ERM, Advisory Services
-  Helen Smyth, ERM, Conciliation & Arbitration and Penny Holloway, Director (Conciliation & Arbitration)

The Chair on behalf of the Board thanked the above members of staff for the presentations which were informative and useful. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to invite senior management from DfE to a corporate presentation on the work of the Agency.