

**Labour Relations Agency
Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting
held on Tuesday, 10 December 2013 in Room 2, Gordon Street**

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

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

- | | Minute | Action |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1. Apologies | No apologies were received. | |
| 2. Minutes of Meeting held on 7 October 2013 | Subject to the following amendment the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2013 were agreed.

Para 7.4 – change December to November. | Secretariat |
| 3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes | There were no matters arising from the previous minutes. | |
| 4. Innovation in Employment Relations | | |
| 4.1 Review of NI Employment Law | The Agency submitted a response to the DEL Review of Employment Law on 1 November 2013. The consultation period finished on 5 November. The Agency awaits discussion on the review with DEL. | SMT |
| 4.2 Roundtable Discussion on NI ER | It was noted that the ER Roundtable Residential took place on 7 & 8 November. The Roundtable will be meeting with the DEL Minister this afternoon to discuss a number of topics with regard to the review of employment law. | CEO |
| 4.3 Employee Relations Institute – Founder Membership | [Remove pending further updates] | Secretariat |
| 4.4 Launch of LRA Annual Report & Accounts 2012/13 | It was noted that the LRA Public Lecture and launch of the Annual Report & Accounts took place on 19 November. It was agreed that the lecture given by Professor Linda Dickens had been very well received.

It was agreed to discuss the future format of the public meeting/launch of the Annual Report and Accounts. | CEO |

4.5 International Agencies Meeting 2013

It was noted that the International Agencies conference 2014 will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand at the end of September or beginning of October 2014.

CEO

4.6 Employment Relations Research

It was agreed to hold a special informal SMT meeting on Tuesday, 4 February 2014 to discuss the McClure Watters report in more detail. Secretariat to look at appropriate venues.

**SMT/
Secretariat**

4.7 SROI

It was also agreed to discuss SROI at the above meeting.

SMT

5. NI & GB Employment Relations Systems

It was noted that the DCA had presented a paper on the Role of the Organisational Ombudsperson in the US to the Board. The paper was very informative and was well received. The paper had provided the DCA with the opportunity to report formally to the Board on her Fellowship work and allowed the Board to discuss the role of the Ombuds as a means of facilitating dispute resolution in organisations.

It was noted that the DCA will be visiting ACAS Glasgow to see how bulk claims and collective disputes are recorded on the ACAS case management system. The DCA will also be visiting ACAS London to discuss the ACAS approach to re-routing and arbitration.

DCA

The CEO is to organise a meeting with the new ACAS CEO, Anne Sharpe.

CEO

The DAS will also be discussing with ACAS how they handle advisory cases and small firms issues.

DAS

6. Agency Strategy and Services

6.1 Corporate Plan 2014-17

6.2 Business Plan 2014-15

It was noted that the Board, at their meeting on 31 October 2013, approved the draft Corporate Plan for consultation. The draft Corporate Plan has now been issued for consultation; closing date 15 January 2014.

CEO

The CEO is now preparing the first draft of the Business Plan for SMT consideration. It was noted that the current Business Plan is on target.

CEO

It was noted that the above documents will require equality screening.

DCS

7. Leadership Organisation and Performance Management

7.1 Cross Directorate Working Groups

It was reported that the Engagement group were making positive progress with communications and CSR. There were several areas where progress had been made. Some matters required SMT consideration. The group were re-examining the categories for staff recognition.

DCS

The ISIT group are continuing to meet with sub-group meetings also taking place outside the main group.

DCA

Service Development - SROI remains a topic for discussion.

DAS

7.2 Performance Management

It was noted that half year appraisals continued to be completed and returned to HR.

DCS

7.3 HR Strategy

7.3.1 Stress Risk Assessment

A report on the recent stress risk assessment is expected in January.

DCS

7.3.2 Staff Recognition & IiP

Work was continuing on recognition. A very informative meeting had taken place with Action Mental Health (AMH) concerning the approach taken by AMH towards IiP re-accreditation. It was noted that recognition may be a possible theme for a staff conference in 2014.

DCS

It was hoped to have a pilot scheme for an Agency Intranet up and running in early 2014.

DCS

7.3.3 Staff Conference

It was agreed to add the staff conference to the topics for discussion at the SMT away day on 4 February 2014.

SMT

The DCS is to look at possible speakers for the conference scheduled for late March/early April 2014.

DCS

7.3.4 Evaluation/self-assessment of JNCC

It was noted that evaluation/self-assessment would be discussed at the JNCC meeting on 11 December.

SMT

7.3.5 Staffing

It was noted that the Agency is still recruiting to full establishment up to 31 March 2014 at which point the recruitment policy will be reviewed in light of the Agency budget position.

CEO

The current vacancy at ERO is being progressed while vacancies at EOII are under consideration.

SMT

It was noted that an ERO from Advisory services will be working

	with the IC section on the new case management system.	DCA
	Appreciation was expressed to the DAS for releasing a member of staff to facilitate the above.	DCA
	It was noted that absence levels have reduced considerably.	DCS
8.	ICT	
	8.1 IS Managed Services	
	It was agreed that the service being provided by Kelway was working well. The next milestone would be upgrading all pcs to Windows 8; it was hoped this could take place in early 2014.	DCS
	8.2 Security Accreditation	
	HR policies and procedures have been prioritised and are currently being reviewed by MS and TUS secretaries.	DCS
	8.3 ICMS	
	It was noted that the business case for ICMS has been approved by DEL/DFP. The steering group has met and now awaits the first draft specification before moving to the procurement stage.	SMT
	8.4 Website Security Accreditation	
	It was noted that the specification for the above is being progressed.	DCS
9.	Evaluation	
	9.1 PPEs	
	It was noted that PPEs were being progressed.	SMT
	9.2 SROI	
	SROI will be discussed at the SMT away day on 4 February 2014.	SMT
	9.3 Value for Money	
	It was noted that the CEO will be preparing a paper on vfm for the March 2014 Board meeting.	CEO
10.	Governance and Accountability	
	10.1 LRA Funding 2014/15	
	DEL has indicated that the Agency should anticipate the same budget for next year as that for 2013/14.	
	The DCS is to provide a draft budget profile 2014-15 to the CEO.	CEO/DCS
	Staffing arrangements are to be reviewed 1 April 2014.	SMT
	The Agency is currently breaking even in respect of current budget performance 2013-14.	DCS
	It was agreed to look at the Agency corporate image early in 2014.	SMT

10.2 Statutory Compliance

It was noted that section 75 training for the SMT, ERM's and HR staff had been arranged for 28 January 2014.

DCS

It was noted that a paper on equal pay would be considered by the Board on 19 December. The Agency plans a further review of equal pay in 2014 and a complete re-assessment by NISRA in 2015.

DCS

10.3 Environmental Review

It was agreed that the formation of a sub-group to focus on the environmental review should wait until the Agency has resolved current higher priority premises issues (e.g. the lift).

SMT

It was noted that tenders had been issued for a replacement lift. A business case has been approved by DEL to install a stair lift in HQ as a contingency.

DCS

10.4 Corporate Social Responsibility

It was noted that a quiz in aid of Clic Sargent Homes from Home would be held following the Christmas lunch on 19 December.

SMT

A policy on CSR is to be issued to the SMT for consideration.

SMT

11. JNCC

11.1 Redundancy Procedure

It was noted that there have been further informal discussions with the TUS secretary. Both sides have agreed that one paragraph of the draft procedure remains outstanding.

CEO/DCS

11.2 The Black Book

The 'Black Book' was being progressed. A set of policies had been identified for consultation and these would be raised at JNCC on 11 December.

CEO/DCS

12. Any Other Business

12.1 Mobile Phones

It was agreed that the SMT will review the use of mobile phones for business use.

SMT

12.2 Publications

Discussion took place on the merits of printing Agency leaflets in-house or externally. The CEO agreed to consider the matter.

CEO

13. Date of Next Meetings



SMT Away Day – Tuesday, 4 February
2014 at 9.30 am (tbc)



Informal Meetings: Tuesday, 7, 14, 21, 28
January at 10.00 am
Tuesday, 18, 25 February at 10.00 am



Formal Meeting: - Tuesday 11 February 2014