

**Labour Relations Agency
Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting
held on Tuesday, 2 December 2014 in Room 3, Gordon Street**

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

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

	Minute	Action
1. Apologies	There were no apologies.	
2. Minutes of Meeting held on 30 September 2014	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2014 were agreed subject to the following amendments:</p> <p>Para 7.3.4 – 6th para, delete ‘temporary’.</p> <p>Para 8.4 should read - “A penetration test of the Agency’s website has been completed as required by the website host, DID. From the Agency’s viewpoint, the report was positive but a small number of weaknesses require attention from DID.”</p>	Secretariat
3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes	None.	
4. Innovation in Employment Relations		
4.1 October Board meeting/launch of Annual Report/Annual Lecture	<p>It was agreed that the launch of the Annual Report and the Annual Lecture, delivered by Jim Mather, was informative and well received. The Agency was optimistic that the link between Scotland and Northern Ireland could provide a platform to maintain on-going discussions on industrial relations.</p>	CEO
4.2 Review of NI Employment Law	<p>It was noted that there were no significant legislative changes to report. The Agency was working towards, and in discussions with the Department in relation to resources generally and in particular any additional resources required for the implementation of the Review.</p>	CEO
	<p>The Agency was conscious of the impact of the paternity and parental leave rights due to be implemented in April 2015.</p>	DAS

4.3 Roundtable Discussion on NI ER	The next meeting of the Roundtable will take place on 16 December 2014.	CEO
4.4 International Agencies Meeting 2014	The CEO is to contact the international agencies for an update on the outcome of the 2014 meeting and to enquire about venue/dates for the 2015 meeting. It was hoped that the Agency will be in a position to attend the 2015 meeting.	CEO
4.5 Employment Relations Research	The Research Committee met on 20 November 2014 and is in the process of reconfiguring the research agenda taking account of the views of the social partners and stakeholders. The Committee will examine problems facing NI and the impact of changes to legislation, along with an evaluation of the Agency's services.	CEO/DAS
	It was agreed to forward the record note of the Research Committee meeting to the SMT for information.	CEO
	It was noted that the external representative on the Committee was now a QUB rep. It was agreed that UU representation on the Committee would be useful.	CEO
4.6 SROI	It was noted that the Board were examining, and reviewing, the effectiveness of the Agency's services.	CEO
4.7 Consultation on the LRA Code of Practice on Discipline & Grievance – proposed amendment to paragraphs 103 & 104	It was noted that the Agency awaits DEL approval of the amendments to the Code.	DAS
4.8 ECNI Project	The CEO is to follow up on information received from the DCA on the project.	CEO/DCA
5. NI & GB Employment Relations Systems		
	It was agreed to forward the Acas research paper on 'Young People's experiences in the Workplace' to the Research Committee.	CEO/DAS
	It was noted that arrangements would be made in early 2015 for the new Agency Chair to visit Acas and LRC.	CEO/Secretariat
	Following the appointment of a new CEO and three Board members a visit would also be arranged to Eurofound, Dublin.	CEO/Secretariat
6. Agency Strategy and Services		
6.1 Corporate Plan 2014-17		
6.2 Business Plan 2015-16		

At their November meeting the Board agreed to review the Corporate & Business Plans following the appointment of a new CEO and three Board members. In December the Board will be discussing the appointment of a facilitator with a view to holding a business planning session in January/early February.

Chair/CEO

7. Leadership Organisation and Performance Management

7.1 Cross Directorate Working Groups

Communications Strategy – Directors to nominate staff to form a working group to examine communications issues facing the Agency. This is in line with Strategic Aim 5, objective 15 in the Business Plan 2014/15 and will also contribute to IiP. It was noted that the Agency remains structurally underfunded to take forward any issues which the group may identify.

DCS

It was noted that the Agency website will have to be replaced in December 2015. Following discussion it was agreed that the DCS contact Webcraft NI to ask them to identify possible solutions with a view to making a presentation to the SMT in early January 2015.

CEO

7.2 Performance Management

Secretariat to re-arrange CEO/Director quarterly meetings.

Secretariat

7.3 HR Strategy

7.3.1 Stress Risk Assessment

A meeting has been arranged for 16 December with the CEO, DCS and a representative from Carecall to discuss the findings of the confidential recipient review.

CEO/DCS

Members of the Health & Safety Committee met representatives of HSE on 1 December to review the stress risk assessment. The Agency will be taking forward pointers raised by HSE.

DCS

7.3.2 HR Strategy

An IiP self-assessment day has been arranged for 14 January 2015. It was agreed that the Agency should apply for assessment against all standards as this will provide a stronger base from which to achieve silver status. This will cost an extra £700.

DCS

Feedback from staff who have attended the leadership and management training has been positive.

It was agreed to provide strategic thinking training for the SMT and ERMs. This would involve one day training at a cost of approx. £2,000 for 20 members of staff.

DCS

7.3.3 Staff Conference

The focus of the recent staff conference was on staff welfare. It was

noted that this would contribute to liP. DCS

7.3.4 Staffing

It was noted that the Board has changed its policy in respect of filling posts on a permanent basis subject to discussions with DEL. The Chair and CEO will be meeting DEL representatives on 3 December to discuss the budget position. It was noted that the operational sections were working to full capacity with their normal workloads. CEO

The CEO recruitment process is progressing. DCS

The following appointments have been made:

- ✚ 2 x temporary ERO candidates
- ✚ 1 x temporary EOII candidate in the Regional Office
- ✚ 1 x Clerical Officer

A request for a variation in working hours has been successfully accommodated. DCS/DCA

It was noted that Jill Minne, Daire Murphy and Deirdre Fitzpatrick have been appointed to the Agency Board, effective from 1 December 2014.

CEO/staff briefings will be taking place on 10 December. CEO

8. ICT

8.1 IS Managed Services

8.2 Security Accreditation

8.3 ICMS

8.4 Website Security Accreditation

It was agreed that the minutes from the ICMS Steering Group meetings would be tabled at SMT. DCS/ERM

9. Evaluation

9.1 PPEs

None outstanding.

9.2 Value for Money

The Board have indicated that the Agency concentrate on effectiveness rather than efficiency re vfm. The CEO has reflected this in the Business Plan. CEO

10. Governance and Accountability

10.1 LRA Funding 2014/15

It was noted that the Chair and CEO will be discussing funding at the meeting with DEL representatives on 3 December. The outcome of the meeting will be discussed by the SMT and matters arising communicated to staff and JNCC. CEO

10.2 Statutory Compliance

The DCS has completed a formal review of the services provided under the SLA for the Certification Office. These have been documented.

DCS

10.3 Corporate Social Responsibility

It was noted that a quiz in aid of Assisi Animal Sanctuary would be held following the Christmas lunch on 18 December.

Approval was also given to a fundraiser for Barnardo's.

SMT

SMT - energy plan.

Directors were asked to nominate staff to form a Disability Action Group. The DCS had issued a specification outlining the role of the group which would be to review policies and procedures in terms of highlighting issues, identifying gaps etc. The Group would run alongside JNCC.

11. JNCC

11.1 Redundancy Procedure

It was noted that the Redundancy and Recruitment Procedures would be discussed at JNCC on 4 December.

DCS/CEO

12. Any Other Business

Staff Recognition – DCS to discuss with Chair.

DCS

Suggestion scheme

DCS

As a result of the meeting with HSE on 1 December it was agreed to look at the issue of roles and relationships with a view to consistency across the organisation. This would highlight any stressors which exist in the organisation and would form part of the stress risk assessment.

SMT


Stress risk action plan – there was a proposal to provide information to staff.

DCS

The DCS requested feedback from SMT on the draft flexible working policy issued on 16 October.

DCS

13. Date of Next Meetings

 Informal meetings: Wednesday, 17 December

All meetings will be held in Room 3 (unless otherwise indicated) commencing at 10.00 am.

Secretariat