

**Labour Relations Agency
Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting
held on Tuesday, 24 February 2015 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 2 December 2014		
	The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014 were agreed.	Secretariat
3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes		
	It was agreed that future SMT meetings would be arranged after Tom Evans, CEO Designate, takes up post.	
4. Innovation in Employment Relations		
	4.1 Board away days (February 2015) It was noted that the Board corporate/business planning session took place on 12 & 13 February 2015. The Board discussed a wide range of issues with respect to employment relations. A record note of the topics discussed will be issued to Board members with a view to progressing matters.	CEO/DCS
	An Acas discussion paper on 'Researching the current and potential reach of Acas services' had been submitted for discussion at the Board meeting on 26 February.	CEO/DAS
	4.2 Review of NI Employment Law It was noted that the Bill is currently progressing through the Assembly.	CEO
	It was also noted that the current emphasis was on the re-organisation of NI government departments; the resultant employment relations implications and any possible role for the Agency.	CEO/DAS
	4.3 Roundtable Discussion on NI ER The Roundtable meeting scheduled for 16 December 2014 had been postponed. The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 25 February at 10.00 am in the Agency. Tom Evans would be attending the meeting to familiarise himself with Roundtable discussions.	CEO

4.4 International Agencies Meeting 2014

The next International Agencies meeting was due to take place in Cape Town, South Africa 9-13 November 2015.

CEO

It was hoped that an Agency representative/s would attend the 2015 meeting.

4.5 Employment Relations Research

Following discussions at the recent Board away days it was noted that the Research Committee may be subsumed into a general purposes committee of the Board.

CEO/DCS

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

5. NI & GB Employment Relations Systems

Arrangements are to be made in early 2015 for the new Agency Chair and CEO to visit Acas, LRC and Eurofound, Dublin.

CEO/Secretariat

6. Agency Strategy and Services

6.1 Corporate Plan 2014-17

6.2 Business Plan 2015-16

The Board discussed the Corporate and Business Plans at their business planning session on 12 & 13 February 2015.

The CEO has written to DEL indicating that, due to changes in senior personnel within the Agency, and pending further discussion by the Board on future focus and objectives, submission of the Agency Business Plan 2015-16 will be delayed until March/April 2015.

Chair/CEO

7. Leadership Organisation and Performance Management

7.1 Cross Directorate Working Groups

ISIT – the DCS was preparing terms of reference for the group which would cover generic issues such as strategy, infrastructure and performance.

DCS

Engagement – continues to have a function in relation to IiP.

DCS

Customer service – the group has finalised its work.

It was noted that the Cross Directorate Working Groups would be reviewed by the new CEO in line with the objectives in the Business

Plan 2015-16.

CEO Designate

Website training – discussions were on-going with the ISIT Manager, SFW and Webcraft NI given that this was a cross government issue.

In relation to the internet, www.lra.org.uk, the DCS had indicated to DFP that senior personnel within the Agency were willing to participate in any collaborative work in this area.

DCS

7.2 Performance Management

Performance management of Directors would be subject to discussion with the new CEO.

CEO Designate

Performance appraisals for 2014-15 will be issued to staff in due course.

DCS/HR

7.3 HR Strategy

7.3.1 Stress Risk Assessment

The CEO and DCS met with a representative from Carecall on 16 December 2014 to discuss the findings of the confidential recipient review. CEO to circulate the report to SMT.

CEO/DCS

7.3.2 HR Strategy

It was noted that the main focus of the HR Strategy was on gaining iIP (Silver). The DCS expressed his gratitude to the ERM (HR) for her work on iIP. It was noted that whilst the ERM (HR) would be moving to the Conciliation section in March she would continue with iIP work in the interim period. However, her departure would create a vacancy in Corporate Services which would have a knock-on effect on HR issues such as issuing performance appraisals.

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 iIP.

DCS

7.3.4 Staffing

It was agreed that the SMT would discuss staffing issues including the possibility of deputising for the ERM (HR). A paper seeking Board approval to permanently fill the ERM (HR) post would be discussed at the February Board meeting.

DCS

8. ICT

8.1 IS Managed Services

8.2 Security Accreditation

8.3 ICMS

8.4 Website Security Accreditation

The ICMS Steering Group met on 16 & 24 February 2015; DCS to circulate the minute from both meetings. It was agreed that the minutes from the ICMS Steering Group and ICMS working group meetings provided an accurate note which would be appended to the

SMT minutes for information.

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

It was agreed that evaluation exercises/reports undertaken throughout the organisation are submitted for information/discussion to SMT as and when complete.

SMT

10. Governance and Accountability

10.1 LRA Funding 2014/15

It was noted that the CEO had received correspondence from DEL with respect to Agency funding 2015-16. The Agency budget will be allocated accordingly.

CEO/DCS

The SMT continued to monitor the budget for the 2014-15 year on a monthly basis and the Agency expected to break even at the year end.

DCS

10.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

It was noted that staff fundraising events held in December had raised the following amounts:

- £400 for Assisi Animal Sanctuary
- £102 for NSPCC/Barnardos.

Energy plan – it was noted that the Agency recognised its responsibility to review energy use by the year end.

SMT

A Disability Action Group had been formed within the Agency, chaired by an ERM from the Advisory section. The group had held their first meeting and had consulted with staff regarding terms of reference for the group. A second meeting was being arranged to take account of staff suggestions.

SMT

11. JNCC

11.1 Redundancy Procedure

Following a request from TUS, MS have agreed to postpone the JNCC scheduled for 4 March. The meeting will be re-arranged when the new CEO takes up post in the Agency.

DCS/CEO

12. Any Other Business

Staff Recognition – it was noted that the Chair had written to staff in December acknowledging their professionalism and commitment to

the work of the Agency. The correspondence had been well received by staff.

Suggestion scheme – on-going.

DCS

Induction for the new CEO – to be arranged between HR & Tom Evans.

DCS/HR

International Women’s Day, Spires 5 March 11.30-2.30 – DCS to email staff re interest in attending.

DCS

Arbitration panel – open competition.

The SMT discussed a request from a member of staff to undertake study leave at home. Health & safety implications would have to be considered including a risk assessment of the work station, and any statutory provisions with respect to equipment. It was agreed that any issues identified would be raised with the SMT. It was also agreed that the Agency needed to be specific about any arrangements made - is it maternity/is it study?


DCS/DAS

It was noted that the DCA had attended the Department of Leadership & Management prize event at UUI where she presented the Agency prize to the successful MSc HRM student. The University is appreciative of the support of the Agency. The event provides good public relations and networking opportunities for the Agency with regard to meeting students and staff from the department along with representatives from other organisations who provide similar awards. It also maintains a relationship with the University and introduces students to the Agency. The SMT also discussed the possibility of presenting a small piece of crystal to the successful student.

SMT

The CEO expressed his thanks to the SMT for their support during his time at the Agency. He said he would be sorry to leave but was looking forward to new opportunities. The DCA, in reply, thanked the CEO for his good work and wished him well for the future.

13. Date of Next Meetings

 To be arranged

Secretariat