

**MINUTES OF THE 388th MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY  
BOARD HELD AT 10.00 am ON THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2013  
IN THE AGENCY'S OFFICES, GORDON STREET, BELFAST**

**Present:** Jim McCusker (Chair)  
Pauline Shepherd  
Lyn Fawcett  
Gary McMichael  
Alison Millar  
Trevor Morrow  
Sally McKee  
Neal Willis

**In Attendance:** Bill Patterson (Chief Executive)  
Gerry O'Neill (Director, Corporate Services)  
David McGrath (Director, Advisory Services)  
Anne Gunning (Minutes Secretary)

*Action*

<p><b>1. Apologies</b></p> <p>There were apologies from Albert Mills and Gordon Parkes.</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 20 June 2013</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on <b>20 June</b> 2013 were proposed by Lyn Fawcett, seconded by Alison Millar, and agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda</b></p> <p><b>3. 5.5.2 Equal Pay Review 2013</b></p> <p>It was noted that the DCS would, in light of the NISRA Equal Pay Review, be assessing the equal pay position of the Agency following the implementation of the annual pay settlement due in August 2013. The SMT would be reviewing the equal pay position in September prior to the CEO reporting to the Board.</p> <p><b>4.10 DEL Permanent Secretary</b></p> <p>It was noted that the Chairman had invited Derek Baker, the new Permanent Secretary, DEL to visit the Agency. However, as the invitation had been included with the International Conference invitation it was agreed that it would be re-issued.</p>	<p><b>DCS</b></p> <p><b>SMT</b></p> <p><b>Chairman</b></p>

<p><b>4 Chairman's Business</b></p>	
<p><b>4.1 Declarations of Interests</b></p> <p>No interests were declared by members.</p>	
<p><b>4.2 Board Member Training</b></p> <p>Pauline Shepherd reported on On Board training which she had attended on 7 June. Pauline said that while the training was very useful, she felt that there was a great deal of information and a lot of issues covered. Pauline felt that the course could be extended to several days for those people who have not taken part in previous governance training. It was agreed to consider a special session for Board members, updating their governance training.</p>	
<p><b>4.3 Update on Stakeholder Meetings</b></p> <p>The Chairman reported that the ER Roundtable 28 June had discussed the LRA arbitration scheme, NI Law Centre proposals on Tribunal reform, neutral assessment, Agency ADR services and independent arbitration. The meeting on 23 August was postponed. An alternative date is being arranged.</p>	<p><b>Chairman/ CEO</b></p>
<p><b>4.4 DEL/LRA Management Statement/Financial Memorandum</b></p> <p>The Chairman reported that DFP has yet to respond to DEL on the draft MS/FM.</p>	
<p><b>4.5 LRA/International Agencies Conference</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the International Conference had been well received. The evaluation results of the conference were very positive. The overall attendance at the conference had been excellent. However it was noted that employers from the private sector could have been better represented.</p> <p>It was noted that the International Agencies Meeting 2014 will be held in New Zealand.</p>	
<p><b>4.6 LRA Seminar</b></p> <p>It was noted that Kieran Mulvey has agreed to be a speaker at the conference, as well as Anne Sharp, CEO ACAS.</p>	
<p><b>4.7 Board Assessments 2012-13</b></p> <p>It was noted that completed Board Performance Assessment forms had all been returned.</p>	
<p><b>4.8 Joint LRA/EC Meeting</b></p> <p>It was proposed that the joint the Spires Conference Centre, Belfast is considered as a venue for the joint LRA/EC meeting on Tuesday, 12 November.</p>	<p><b>Secretariat</b></p>

<p>The ECNI have suggested that the DEL employment law consultation document could be an item for discussion. The Chairman suggested that discussion might focus on the re-routing of claims and neutral assessment.</p>	
<p><b>4.9 Attendances at Conferences</b></p> <p>Further to discussion on the current Agency budget situation, it was agreed that there would be no Board representation at external conferences in the current year.</p>	
<p><b>4.10 CIPD Conference Attendance</b></p> <p>It was agreed that, subject to budget, up to two members of staff could attend the CIPD conference this year, provided that there are relevant topics which would be beneficial for staff training.</p>	<b>CEO</b>
<p><b>4.11 Public Board Meeting – 31 October 2013</b></p> <p>It was noted that in order to secure a speaker the annual public meeting of the Agency may have to be moved to early November. After discussion, it was agreed that CEO should follow this up.</p>	<b>CEO</b>
<p><b>5. Chief Executive’s Business</b></p>	
<p><b>5.1 Employee Relations Institute – Founder Membership (Paper 25/13)</b></p> <p>The Board discussed the benefits of membership of the ERI. The Institute had approached the Agency and had offered free founder membership. It was noted that the ERI has a clear vision for improving employee relations focusing on skills development. It was agreed that this was an opportunity for the Agency to promote its profile. It was agreed that the Agency would accept the offer of founder membership. It was further agreed that any PR promotion should follow the inaugural meeting of the Institute on 26 September 2013.</p>	<b>CEO</b>
<p><b>5.2 DEL Employment Law Review July-Nov 2013</b></p> <p>It was noted that a draft Agency response would be put to the September Board meeting.</p>	<b>CEO</b>
<p><b>5.3 Bi-Monthly Management Report – 1 April – 31 July 2013 (Paper 26/13)</b></p> <p>The Board expressed concern about the delay in DEL approval of the Agency’s ICMS business case which had been submitted to DEL in May. Following discussion, the Board agreed that the Chairman follow this up with DEL and if required, write to DEL indicating the Board’s concern.</p> <p>With regard to recruitment, it was agreed that the revision of the composition</p>	

<p>of DP panels needs to be addressed as part of current review of the Agency Recruitment and Selection policy and procedures.</p> <p>The new Agency Events programme for Sept 2013–June 2014 was highlighted. It was noted that this had been produced in-house and had saved the Agency a considerable amount in production costs.</p> <p>The bi-monthly report for the period was ratified by the Board.</p>	
<p><b>5.4     <i>Employment Law Agenda 2012-15 (table)</i></b></p> <p>The contents of the table were noted.</p>	
<p><b>6.     Corporate Correspondence Received Relevant to Board</b></p> <p>No correspondence was received.</p>	
<p><b>7.             Any Other Business</b></p> <p>No other business received.</p>	
<p><b>8.     Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, 26 September 2013 at 10.30 am in the Regional Offices in Derry.</p>	