

MINUTES OF THE 370th MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY
BOARD HELD AT 9.30 am
ON WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2011
IN THE CANADA ROOM, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, BELFAST

Present: Jim McCusker (Chair)
Peter Williamson
Gordon Parkes
Sally McKee
Neal Willis
Brenda Maitland
Trevor Morrow
Alison Millar

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

The Chairman expressed sympathy on behalf of the Board to David McGrath on the death of his mother.

The Chairman also congratulated Trevor Morrow on the birth of his baby daughter.

1. Apologies Action

There was an apology from Lyn Fawcett.
The Chairman welcomed newly appointed Board Member, Alison Millar, to her first LRA Board Meeting.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 29 September 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2011 were proposed by Gordon Parkes, seconded by Neal Willis, and agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda

3. 7.5 SROI Feasibility Report

It was noted that the business case stating the case for implementing SROI is with the Department. The CEO is to contact DEL regarding the current status of the business case. CEO

6.3 Generic Statutory Arbitration Scheme

It was noted that the Departmental Solicitors Office (DSO) DEL was CEO

currently working on the Scheme.

It was agreed that the Generic Statutory Arbitration scheme should be a standing item on the agenda for the next few months.

CEO

4. Chairman's Business

4.1 Declarations of Interests

No interests were declared by members.

4.2 Board Vacancy – update

It was noted that there will hopefully be a decision made very shortly on the appointment to the LRA Board vacancy of a member with an independent background.

4.3 Board Performance Assessments

It was noted that all completed assessment forms have now been returned.

Chairman

4.4 Board Member Training

The Chairman reported on a recent interesting seminar which he and the CEO had attended in the University of Ulster on 10 October. The speaker was Andrew Kakabadse, Professor of International Management Development whose talk was entitled – “Rethinking Leadership”. The lecture highlighted the importance of human resources in different forms of leadership for executive development and emphasised and demonstrated the need to contextualise leadership styles and behaviour.

4.5 Board Development Programme

It was agreed that the CEF governance training workshop on “*Facilitation on Board Performance*” held on 11 October 2011 had been very useful.

After a discussion on the Agency's relationship with key stakeholders, it was agreed to include this topic on the agenda for the next Board Meeting. It was also agreed that a mapping exercise on relationships with stakeholders would be undertaken.

**Chairman/
CEO**

The Chairman thanked the DCS on behalf of the Board for organising the workshop.

4.6 Board Dates 2012

It was agreed that the date for the May 2012 Board meeting would be changed to **Friday, 25 May at 10.00 am**. It was also agreed that the Board meeting on 27 September would be held in the Regional Office. All other dates for meetings, including sub-committee meetings in 2012, were agreed.

Secretariat

It was noted that Alison Millar agreed to serve on the Audit Sub-Committee.

5. Chief Executive's Business

5.1 Review of Arbitrator Recruitment Process

Board members discussed the statistical analysis of applicants who applied for, were short listed and those who were appointed to the arbitrator positions. **CEO**

Following extensive discussion it was agreed that the SMT would further review the statistics and bring their reflections to a future Board meeting. It was also agreed that Amit Sen, ACAS and the Equality Commission would be consulted, particularly with regard to community background, gender and disability. **CEO**

It was agreed that copies of the application pack would be made available to Board members. **DCA**

5.2 MoU LRA/Tribunals

Following discussion it was agreed that the draft MoU, with two minor amendments, would be submitted to OITFET for discussions with a view to reaching an agreed final draft for Board approval. **CEO**

5.3 Bi-monthly Management Report April 2011-September 2011

It was noted that performance against year-end objectives is in a steady state at the present time.

It was noted that an analysis of claims for the period would be forwarded to Board Members after the meeting. **DCA**

After discussion, the Board noted the content of the Report.

5.4 Replacement of ICMS

It was noted that the temporary system is running well at the moment. Work on the short term arrangements for reducing risk and on the determination of a specification for a new ICSM system was on progress. **DCS/CEO**

5.5 Promotion of Pre-Claim Conciliation

Board members noted the following promotional events relating to PCC: Women in leadership Alumni Breakfast Seminar 30 September; Equality Commission Joint Meeting 11 October; DEL/RoI Civil Service meeting 4 April; Legal Island Mock Tribunal Session 12 October and an Audit Office promotion 13 October.

5.6 DEL Review of Dispute Resolution in NI

(i) DEL Advisory Group.

It was noted that DEL intend undertaking two research projects:

- a study to establish the nature of the support that SMEs require to comply with the full range of employment law;

- a study on the information advice and support needs of employees.

The two DEL research proposals are to be considered at the next Dispute Resolution Advisory Group meeting on Friday, 11 November 2011.

(ii) *Others Matters*
Nothing to report.

6. Corporate Correspondence Received Relevant to Board

Nothing received.

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business reported.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held in the **LRA Regional Office in Derry on Thursday, 24 November at 10.30 am.** After the formal Board Meeting there will be a corporate planning session in the afternoon.