

**MINUTES OF THE 420th MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY BOARD HELD AT
10.00 am ON THURSDAY, 20th OCTOBER 2016
IN THE DEN, THE MAC, 10 EXCHANGE STREET, BELFAST**

Present: Marie Mallon (Chair)
Louise Crilly
Deirdre Fitzpatrick
Michelle McGinley
Gary McMichael
Alison Millar
Albert Mills
Jill Minne
Daire Murphy
Pauline Shepherd

In Attendance: Tom Evans Chief Executive, (CEO)
Penny Holloway (Director, Conciliation & Arbitration, (DCA))
David McGrath (Director, Advisory Services (DAS))
Alison Wolfe (Minutes Secretary)

Action

<p>1. Apologies</p> <p>There were no apologies.</p>	
<p>2. Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>	
<p>3. Chair’s Opening Remarks</p> <p>The Chair explained that the Board meeting would cover only essential business to be followed by the Annual Public Board Meeting to present the Annual Report and Accounts 2015/16 and the annual lecture by Anne Sharp, Acas. The Chair also clarified that the public meeting would be used to highlight the Agency’s 40th Anniversary and that Aidan Harkin, son of Brendan Harkin, the Agency’s first Chair/CEO, had agreed to speak. The Chair thanked the Director Advisory Services for putting together the commemorative booklet to be distributed at the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair also referred to the very positive Staff Conference which had taken place the previous day. The CEO confirmed that feedback from the workshop on values and behaviours would be brought to the Board in advance of the upcoming corporate planning workshop and that he intended to follow up on the area of research with Victor Dukelow, Chief Economist with DfE, and Professor Neil Gibson, Ulster University.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>4. Minutes of 22 September 2016 Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2016 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>

<p>5. Matters Arising from 22 September 2016 Minutes</p> <p>5.1 DCS Recruitment Jill Minne had expressed a possible conflict of interest in being a panel member for the Director Corporate Services recruitment exercise. The Chair advised the Board that Albert Mills had agreed to take Jill's place on the panel. The closing date for receipt of applications is 4 November; a date has been set for shortlisting and the panel hope to interview candidates in early December.</p> <p>5.2 PFG The Chair and CEO reported back on the recent DfE workshop to update ALBs on the PFG and the budget position; a final draft of the PFG is about to issue for consultation and there is likely to be between 3-6% reductions to DfE's 2017/18 budget. A copy of the workshop presentations was tabled at the meeting. It was agreed that the CEO should explore how the Agency could respond to a budget reduction with minimal impact on frontline services. The CEO also confirmed that he would be meeting with DfE to discuss corporate/annual business planning in the context of PFG and the Agency's statutory duty.</p> <p>5.3 Workplace Relations Commission The CEO advised the Board that he has been asked to present at an ILO Conference in Turin w/c 24 October. Oonagh Buckley, the new CEO of the Workplace Relations Commission will also be attending and he would take the opportunity to discuss a potential joint meeting in early 2017.</p> <p>5.4 Joint LRA/ECNI Board Meeting The Chair confirmed that the joint LRA/ECNI Board meeting would be held on the afternoon of the November Board meeting at ECNI. The CEO will be meeting with Evelyn Collins to discuss the agenda for the meeting but it was agreed that it would be useful to concentrate on PFG. An agenda for the joint meeting will be issued in due course.</p> <p>5.5 Board Sub-Committees Date to be agreed for a meeting of the Finance & Personnel Sub-Committee.</p> <p>A meeting of the Employment Relations Model Sub-Group has been arranged for Monday, 7th November.</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO/Sec</p> <p>SMT/Sec</p>
<p>6. Finance Issues</p> <p>6.1 Budget update (Paper 7/16 updated)</p> <p>The CEO presented the finance report which set out a profile of expenditure up to 30 September 2016. The Agency is currently operating at a 1% underspend. The Board were updated with regard to staff changes and termination of contracts for employment agency staff which would result in a reduction in the salary budget for the remainder of the year. The CEO reported that management continued to exercise caution with regard to the budget. A potential pay rise had been factored into the year-end forecast. Board noted the current financial position. The CEO confirmed that he meets regularly with the DCS and Finance Officer and also with TUS to monitor the budget situation. The Board will be kept informed of budget progress.</p>	<p>SMT</p>
<p>7. Business Plan Performance Report for 2016/17 (Paper 8/16 updated)</p> <p>The CEO reported on performance for the first 6 months of the reporting year. The vast majority of service delivery targets were on target or had been exceeded;</p>	

<p>other targets where there is a risk of not being achieved are dependent on third party input.</p> <p>The Board noted a growing number of new users of the Advisory Services. Work continued with INI to develop videos and podcasts – an issue which had been highlighted at the staff conference the previous day and will be discussed by the Board at their corporate planning day.</p> <p>The Board also noted the increase in claims, particularly bulk claims, to the Conciliation section and the growth of the Agency’s public sector work.</p> <p>The Board agreed that the update provided useful insights to the nature and scope of the operational work being undertaken by staff. It was also agreed that it is important to compare year-on-year statistics and perhaps more information on the nature of the cases could be provided in future Director updates. The Board congratulated Directors on their work.</p>	<p>Directors</p>
<p>8. Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
<p>9. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Agency Board will take place on Thursday, 17th November 2016 at 10.00 am in the Agency’s offices, Gordon Street, Belfast.</p> <p>The meeting will be followed by the joint LRA/ECNI Board meeting commencing at 2.00 pm in the offices of the Equality Commission.</p>	<p>Secretariat</p>

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