

**MINUTES OF THE 449<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY BOARD HELD AT  
9.30 am ON THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2019  
IN MALONE HOUSE, BARNETT DEMESNE, BELFAST**

**Present:** Marie Mallon (Chair)  
Louise Crilly  
Gary McMichael  
Alison Millar  
Albert Mills  
Jill Minne  
Daire Murphy

**In Attendance:** Tom Evans Chief Executive, (CEO)  
Don Leeson Director, Corporate Services (DCS)  
Mark McAllister Director, Employment Relations Services (DERS)  
Alison Wolfe Minute Secretary  
Grainne Ni Cheallaigh Boardroom Apprentice

	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>1. Apologies</b></p> <p>Apology received from Michelle McGinley and Deirdre Fitzpatrick. Jill Minne gave her apologies for the public meeting.</p>	
<p><b>2. Conflicts of Interest</b></p> <p>No conflicts of interest declared.</p>	
<p><b>3. Chair's Opening Remarks</b></p> <p>The Chair referred to the tragic death of Aidan Fitzpatrick, husband of Deirdre. Board members extended their deepest sympathies to Deirdre and the wider family circle.</p> <p>The Chair explained that an earlier start time was required to cover essential business in advance of the public meeting, scheduled to start at 11.30. The Chair set out the structure of the public meeting.</p> <p>The Chair reminded Board members that Malone House is the venue for the Board effectiveness workshop on 28 November: a draft programme will issue in advance.</p> <p>The Chair then highlighted the key issues for discussion at today's meeting; the Board agreed to limit discussion on standard business agenda items to allow sufficient time to consider the Accommodation paper.</p>	<b>Secretary</b>
<p><b>4. Minutes of 26 September 2019 Board Meeting (Paper BP01-10/19)</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2019 <u>agreed</u> as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	<b>Secretary</b>

<p><b>5. Matters arising from the Minutes of 26 September 2019 Board meeting (Paper BP02-10/19)</b></p> <p>The DCS introduced the Board Actions Progress Report highlighting the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ EC Communications Plan – briefing pack to be shared with Board members for wider circulation;</li> <li>✚ SMT attended Powerful Presentations training which was very effective;</li> <li>✚ Collective Conciliation training will take place w/c 11 November; open to Board members;</li> <li>✚ A social media lunchtime training session is being planned for 20 November; again, board members welcome to attend;</li> </ul> <p>The DCS provided an update on the Agency’s Customer Service Excellence project. The next external assessment scheduled for February/March 2020.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the progress report.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>6. Chief Executive’s Update</b></p> <p>The CEO highlighted the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ EC regulations require some adjustments but on target to launch in January;</li> <li>✚ DfE has confirmed that recruitment competitions for Board appointments can be initiated;</li> <li>✚ Attended a CIPD leadership event focusing on strategies to address skills and labour shortages;</li> <li>✚ CEO will follow up with Graeme Wilkinson, DfE lead on skills;</li> <li>✚ Staff conference well received;</li> <li>✚ Visited regional office; staff are well settled;</li> <li>✚ CEO meeting Susan Clews, Acas, and Liam Kelly, WRC, in early December to discuss potential joint projects and the 2020 International Agencies event;</li> <li>✚ CEO’s mid-year assurance statement.</li> </ul> <p>The Board noted the content of the Chief Executive’s update.</p>	<p><b>CEO</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b></p>
<p><b>7. Business Plan Performance Report (Paper BP03-10/19)</b></p> <p>The CEO indicated that the OBA scorecards require further development work and that some of the qualitative evidence will not be available until the year-end.</p> <p>The CEO provided an update on progress against a number of Strategic Theme 2 Targets; the ER/IR conference now scheduled for September 2020 and tender documentation being developed for the research project focusing on International ER Models.</p> <p>The DERS and DCS provided progress updates against Strategic Themes 1 &amp; 3.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the Report.</p>	<p><b>CEO</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b></p>

<p><b>8. Management Accounts (Paper BP04-10/19)</b></p> <p>The DCS presented the six-month management accounts for the period ending 30 September 2019. The Agency has received assurances from DfE that in-year bids covering a number of pressures (pension contributions, inward secondment and rent review) are likely to be met. The additional funding will be reflected in the November management accounts.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the paper.</p>	<p><b>DCS</b></p>
<p><b>9. Head Office Future Accommodation (Paper BP05-10/19)</b></p> <p>The Chair reflected on the discussion at the September meeting and the Board's genuine concerns about the proposal to move to James House. The key issues were around accessibility, independence, affordability and impact on staff.</p> <p>The CEO presented a paper based on recent discussions with Gareth Kimpton, from DoF's Review of Property Management. The CEO acknowledged the Board's concerns about the immediacy of the decision required, but, as the Accounting Officer, believes that a move to James House is in the best interests of the Agency.</p> <p>The Board approved the proposal to relocate to James House. The CEO agreed to consult with TUS and to provide updates to the Board as the project progresses.</p>	<p><b>CEO</b></p>
<p><b>10. Mid-Year Assurance Statement (Paper BP06-10/19)</b></p> <p>The Board noted the CEO's mid-year assurance statement.</p>	
<p><b>11. Report from Chair of the Finance &amp; Personnel Committee (Paper BP07-10/19)</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Finance &amp; Personnel Committee provided an update on the meeting of 24 September. He also expressed his appreciation to Gary McMichael for joining the Committee.</p> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p>	
<p><b>12. Report from the Chair of the Audit &amp; Risk Assurance Committee</b></p> <p>In the absence of the Chair of ARAC, the CEO and ARAC members highlighted the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Chair of ARAC, CEO and DCS to meet to discuss improvement actions;</li> <li>✚ CEO provided an update to ARAC on Early Conciliation and accommodation issues;</li> <li>✚ Agency received a satisfactory internal audit report on HR systems;</li> <li>✚ Risk Register reviewed;</li> <li>✚ ARAC asked that a number of HR policies are updated.</li> </ul> <p>The Board noted the paper.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>DCS</b></p>

<p><b>13. Stakeholder Meetings - update</b></p> <p>Chair will be attending a host event for Boardroom Apprentices on 8 November.</p> <p>Follow up information on Boardroom mentee.</p>	<p><b>Chair</b></p> <p><b>Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>14. Any Other Business</b></p> <p>None</p>	
<p><b>15. Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the <b>Agency Board</b> will be the Board effectiveness workshop on <b>Thursday, 28 November 2019 at 9.30 am in Malone House, Belfast. A programme will issue in due course.</b></p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p>

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