

Labour Relations Agency

Minutes of a Senior Management Team Meeting held on Wednesday, 9 September 2015 at 2.30 pm

Present: Tom Evans
Penny Holloway
David McGrath
Gerry O'Neill

In Attendance: Alison Wolfe (Minute Secretary)

Item	Minute	Action
1.	Apologies There were no apologies.	
2.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 July 2015 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July were agreed.	Sec
3.	Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes not listed on this Agenda Item 3 - 7.1 – Cross Directorate Working Groups It was agreed to defer discussion to the informal SMT meeting on Tuesday, 15 th September. Item 3 - 10 – Disability Action Group It was noted that the Health & Safety Committee meeting scheduled for July had been postponed and is to be re-arranged following the JNCC in September. Meeting to be chaired by the CEO. Item 13 – AOB At their meeting on 1 July the SMT had discussed the DCA's request for permission to recognise the work undertaken by the Conciliation section in progressing the new case management system. In line with the Reward & Recognition Policy the DCA suggested providing refreshments at her October team meeting along with a small gift to her staff. The DCA will also take the opportunity at the team meeting to review where the section is halfway through the year and to look ahead for the next 6 months. It was agreed that the DCA bring gift ideas back to the SMT who were supportive of the action. It was also agreed that the SMT recognise opportunities to reward staff.	SMT DCS/CEO DCA

4.	<p>Business Plan 2015-16</p> <p>The CEO had issued an adapted business plan performance report to Directors indicating individual and collective responsibilities for the achievement of targets. This would form the basis of FJPs for the SMT.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 1, point 2 - It was noted that in some areas work was evaluated on a continuous basis and therefore some reports would be completed by the target date of 31 December 2015.</p> <p>DAS appraisal to be arranged.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>DCA</p> <p>DAS/Sec</p>
5.	<p>Annual Report & Accounts</p> <p>A process management exercise is to be completed managing the timing of submissions to the Annual Report & Accounts.</p> <p>DCS currently preparing documentation to re-tender the annual accounts; to be in place by January 2016.</p> <p>DCS to set out the logistics of tendering for 1 year or 3 years.</p>	<p>CEO/Sec/WH/ Finance</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>DCS/CEO</p>
6.	<p>Board Meetings – Action Points from 27 August 2015 meeting</p> <p>TUC – Chair no longer able to attend; agreed to contact Board members to check availability. If no-one available DCA may be able to attend.</p> <p>Items for September Board</p> <p>Amended form of words to be provided to para 3, 25 June minutes</p> <p>Section 75 report</p> <p>Tribunal Rules consultation</p> <p>F&P and Research Committee meetings to be arranged in liaison with Committee Chairs</p> <p>Public Meeting/Lecture – Kieran Mulvey has agreed to be the speaker at the lecture which will take place in November. Venue tba</p> <p>October meeting - Regional Office (tbc). CEO, DCA and ERM (Regional Office) to discuss invitations to local stakeholders.</p> <p>CEO to follow up issues with Certification Officer.</p>	<p>Sec</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO/DCA DCS/DAS Cttee Chairs</p> <p>CEO/Sec</p> <p>CEO/DCA/ERM</p> <p>CEOc</p>

	<p>CEO to email Evelyn Collins re joint Board meeting.</p> <p>CEO reported that he has been holding informal meetings with individual Board members. New Board members had indicated that they would appreciate meeting Directors for an overview of the work of the Agency. It was agreed that arrangements should be made for a presentation from both the Advisory and Conciliation sections along with the opportunity to chat to some staff.</p> <p>Monthly budget meetings have been arranged between the CEO, DCS and Finance Officer.</p> <p>The SMT discussed the Agency budget and in particular DEL's mandate that the Agency should plan for possible cuts. The Board expressed the view, at their meeting on 27 August that any cuts would result in a diminution of Agency frontline services. There was currently a £58K underspend, however the Board would have to consider the implications of any cuts. An updated paper on finances was being prepared for the September Board in which Directors should articulate what they believed to be the diminution of the current way in which the budget was being managed. The paper would also indicate that the reason for the current underspend in the budget was due to the Agency restricting spend. The CEO would be seeking clarification from DEL in October as to whether or not any cuts would be made to the budget and expressing the Agency's concerns.</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>DAS/DCA/Sec</p> <p>CEO/DCS/FinOf</p> <p>SMT</p>
7.	<p>Human Resource Issues</p> <p>(a) A provisional offer had been made to the successful candidate in the recent ERM recruitment exercise. The Agency awaited a reference.</p> <p>(b) TUS had agreed to an internal (temporary) trawl to all staff; due to resourcing issues this would probably not be issued until after liP assessment.</p> <p>(c) In light of resourcing issues the SMT need to ensure that all areas of the Agency were running efficiently and up to speed.</p> <p>(d) Currently there are 1.5 permanent AA vacancies and a 0.5 temporary AA vacancy.</p> <p>(e) Vacancies were having an impact on the work of the Agency.</p> <p>(f) DCS to speak to Certification Officer again about releasing a member of staff to undertake supervisory duties in CS.</p> <p>(g) DCA will be advising Conciliation staff of the impending changes to working hours of 2 ERMs and the possibility that the resultant vacancy may not be filled (Sept team meeting).</p> <p>(h) Acting up periods have been extended.</p>	<p>DCS</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>SMT</p> <p>DCS</p> <p>DCA</p>

	<p>(i) Arrangements are being made for the return of an ERO in Conciliation.</p> <p>(j) CEO attended the Advisory team meeting on 9 September and will attend the Conciliation team meeting on 16th September.</p> <p>(k) Agreed that staff should be formally advised that the Agency has received a letter from DEL to plan for 10% cuts and was therefore not committing to any expenditure at the moment.</p>	<p>CEO/DCA</p> <p>SMT</p>
8.	<p>liP</p> <p>The DCS distributed an up-to-date plan of action and updated sample list. HR is currently preparing an information pack for the assessor. Presentation on Monday, 28th September to involve SMT and Engagement Group and to set out a clear understanding of where Agency strategy lies and where it links to the external environment. Workshops were being planned for those staff being interviewed by the assessor; Chair and SMT to be briefed.</p>	<p>DCS/SMT/ Chair/Sec</p>
9.	<p>Finance Issues</p> <p>See above.</p>	
10.	<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement paper to be forwarded to Directors for comment.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
11/12.	<p>IS/IT Priorities/ISO27001 Accreditation</p> <p>Meeting dates for the Steering Committee had been arranged with the first meeting to take place on 10 September. The IS Manager was preparing a report setting out issues around management of the system; ownership etc.</p> <p>It was noted that there were delays in resolving problems with ICMS which was impacting on staff.</p> <p>The main priority was ISO27001 accreditation.</p> <p>Date to be organised for ISIT cross Directorate group. In preparation for this a post implementation document is to be issued to Directors.</p> <p>There was an issue over the time taken to raise pcc referrals – to be raised with SFW. There was also uncertainty and apprehension amongst Advisory staff in using ICMS. It was</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>DCA/DCS</p>

	<p>agreed to log problems as there was a linkage in bringing the two areas of the system together in Phase 2.</p> <p>In the absence of an Employment Bill and early conciliation the Agency needed to look at how it could re-package its services.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>SMT</p>
13.	<p>CEO/Directors Update</p> <p>It was noted that the proposed UU survey of SMEs was unlikely to take place due to financial restrictions.</p> <p>Holiday pay cases – statistics are being generated and tracked.</p> <p>Coaching – Conciliation champion – R Bell. A number of staff have still to receive coaching training – this is being progressed by HR.</p> <p>15 October event – 3 tickets/circulate BMs/on website?</p>	<p>DAS</p> <p>DCA</p> <p>DCS/HR</p> <p>Sec</p>
14.	<p>Agency Pocket Diaries</p> <p>The SMT discussed the value in promotional terms of Agency pocket diaries. Cost around £600.</p>	
15.	<p>NI & GB Employment Relations Developments</p> <p>Noted – TUC – response to picketing.</p> <p>NI – unlikely that the Employment Bill will proceed depending on the political situation which will impact on early conciliation. Tribunal regulations will proceed. CEO and DCA had a positive meeting with DEL officials to discuss Tribunal rules. This was an opportunity to work with DEL strengthening their position before moving to a new Department. CEO to draft Board paper.</p> <p>The Agency may need to focus on an advertising campaign publicising all services.</p>	
13.	<p>AOB</p> <p>None</p>	
14.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Informal – Tuesday, 15, 22, 29 September, Informal – Tuesday, 6th October Formal – Tuesday, 13th October </p>	

	<p style="text-align: center;">Informal – 20th October, 27th October</p> <p>Meetings will be held in the CEO's office at 10.00 am.</p>	
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