

## **RPA – Cross Sector HR Forum Meeting – 8 June 2006**

Present: Linda Brown (CPG)  
Jacqui Wallace (CPG)  
Noel Kelly (DSO)  
Jim McKeown (RPA)  
David Bingham (DHSSPS)  
Matthew Alford (DE)  
Wendy Hunter (DOE)  
Colin McWhirter (DRD)  
June Ingram (DEL)

Apologies: Michael Daly (CPG)  
Mary Bunting (OFMDFM)  
Orla Murray (DSO)

### **1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising**

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2006 were agreed and matters arising discussed.

In relation to the submission of papers to PSC Linda Brown highlighted that she considered that in future papers should be circulated to the Cross Sector Forum and then submitted to John McMillen for clearing with the Steering Group and the NICICTU Forum prior to submission to PSC.

Noel Kelly highlighted the legislative requirement for consultation with local TUS.

### **2. Membership of Group**

The membership of the group and the areas represented by the current membership was discussed. The need for a representative from DSD was highlighted. It was agreed that membership would be kept under review. Linda Brown emphasised that representatives on the group are the major point of contact for their organisation in terms of communication to and from the Cross Sector HR Forum.

### **3. Schedule of meetings**

Dates of future Cross Sector HR Forum meetings and PSC meetings were noted.

### **4. Standing Items**

Standing Items as proposed were agreed:-

- I. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

- II. Update on feedback from PSC meetings
- III. Discussion on any proposed submissions to PSC
- IV. Discussion on any merging Cross Sector issues
- V. Tour de Table

## **5. Future Work Programme**

Linda Brown confirmed that PSC had provided an indicative work programme including issues such as Harmonisation, Pensions, Legislation, Matching of posts, Communication etc. She highlighted the importance of the Cross Sector Forum agreeing and prioritising a work programme. It was agreed that CPG would provide an initial list for consideration.

*Action point: Issue initial list of future work programme issues - CPG*

Linda Brown also suggested to members of the Forum that they should ask their Permanent Secretaries for sight of Steering Group papers in advance of the meeting so that they can provide briefing.

*Action point: Forum members to ask their Permanent Secretaries for sight of Steering Group papers in advance of meetings*

## **6. Update on PSC meeting with S of S and David Hanson**

Linda Brown gave a brief update in this regard and undertook to issue informal notes of the meeting to members of the group.

*Action point: Issue informal note of PSC meeting with S of S and David Hanson - CPG*

## **7. Public Service Commission – First Guiding Principle and Associated Recommendations**

Jim McKeown confirmed that the recommendation on communication was cleared at the Steering Group and that NICICTU had informally indicated that they are content. Therefore following the next meeting of the NICICTU Forum it is anticipated that Nigel Hamilton will issue a Statement in this regard.

## **8. HPSS draft document on Employment, Redundancy And Early Retirement Options Scheme**

David Bingham updated the meeting on the current status of this document. He confirmed that it would be subject to screening and that he would also send it to Noel Kelly for comment. Once this is completed the document could go to PSC. He flagged up the importance of the document in terms of criteria for dealing with Chief Executives who are unsuccessful in competition.

Linda Brown referred to Workforce Planning within the NICS and emphasised the need for departments to feed information on possible surpluses into this process at an early stage.

#### **9. Draft submission to David Hanson on Staff Implications**

Linda Brown referred to the document prepared by Michael Daly and highlighted the annex containing legal advice. The paper was discussed and agreed with a few amendments.

#### **10. Legislation – staffing clauses**

Linda Brown informed the group of the commitment given to the PSC by the Secretary of State on consultation on staffing clauses in legislation.

Noel Kelly clarified that there are standard clauses which would normally be included in primary legislation.

#### **11. Preliminary discussion on harmonisation**

David Bingham stated that the Health unions would in principle be opposed to harmonisation across the public sector. He flagged up a current issue that they are wrestling with on salary protection and sought clarification on civil servants right to salary protection.

On a more general note it was agreed that CPG would prepare an initial issues paper in this regard.

*Action point: Preparation of paper on harmonisation - CPG*

Colin McWhirter highlighted references made by TUS to Two-Tier Workforces and to Cabinet Offices guidance in this regard.

#### **12. Tour de Table**

The PSC draft recommendation on Managing Vacancies which was informally circulated was discussed briefly. Issues were raised in relation to avoiding creating new posts, delaying retirements, employing staff on fixed term contracts and redeployment across sectors.

Noel Kelly advised that redeployment across sectors would require legislation.