

JOINT FORUM

MEETING HELD AT 2:30 PM ON 23rd NOVEMBER 2006 IN MINISTER'S ROOM, CASTLE BUILDINGS

In Attendance

Dr Andrew McCormick (Chair)

Mrs Mary Hinds

Mr David Bingham

Mr Danny Lambe

Mr Michael Daly

Mrs Janice Smyth

Mr Jim McKeown

Mr Billy Gamble

Mrs Mary Moreland (Minutes)

Apologies

Mr Damian Price

Ms Breedagh Hughes

1. Welcome and Introductions

Dr McCormick welcomed everyone and noted apologies.

2. Minutes of the 26th October 2006 meeting

The minutes were agreed and will be amended to refer to the collective group of the BMA, RCN and RCM as Trade Union Side rather than Staff Side.

3. Matters arising from 26th October meeting

a) Terms Of Reference (ToR) (08/06)

Trade Union Side tabled a revised Terms of Reference and proposed that the Forum should be 'time limited'. Following a comprehensive discussion it was agreed that members would give full consideration to the ToR and find a form of words to reflect the Forum's 'discussion' format and clarify its purpose.

Action

05/06 The Forum to consider the revised Terms of Reference and report back to the next meeting

All

Trade Union Side requested that Central Joint Forum (CJF) and the Joint Forum agree to share draft minutes. Mr Daly highlighted the difficulty surrounding the issue of minutes that had not been agreed by the relevant group, however he agreed to raise this issue at the CJF and will report back.

Action

06/06 Mr Daly to ask the CJF if they would agree to circulate draft minutes to the Joint Forum **Mr Daly**

4. RPA Affected Group – HPSS bodies

There are some organisations, namely The Ambulance Service, Guardian Ad Litem Agency, and the Social Care Council, which are not changing as a result of the RPA. Following a full discussion it was noted that anyone moving from or to these bodies will not be disadvantaged regarding recruitment opportunities neither will they be at risk of redundancy at this stage, and hence there was no strong reason to include these organisations within the RPA Affected Group.

5. PSC 4th Guiding Principle

Mr Daly reported that the 4th Guiding Principle has now been issued in final form and Government were taking a view on the points made. Mr Bingham informed the Forum that he was in the process of preparing a paper to establish the principle of a definition of a ‘new post’.

6. PSC Draft 5th Guiding Principle

Mr Daly reported that responses to the draft 5th Guiding Principle (GP) are required by 30th November and would be grateful if he was copied into any replies to the PSC for information. A full discussion surrounding the GP took place and the Forum especially welcomed points 4 and 5.

7. PSC Draft 6th Guiding Principle

The draft 6th Guiding Principle has only been shared with Government at this stage and a deadline for responses has not been established. As the Forum had now the opportunity to examine the GP Mr Daly asked if members would share their thoughts with him at this stage.

8. Implementation Update

Mr McKeown tabled a summary of progress on RPA implementation (09/06) highlighting 6 major pieces of legislation in progress, the Libraries Order is the most advanced.

A 3rd communication bulletin is hoped to be available for issue by the end of November.

Many consultation processes are well under way, e.g. the HR Framework, on changes to the Departmental Professional Structure and Mr McKeown indicated that a consultation document on the Location is due for issue in January. However the proposed Assembly election on 7th March 2007 raises uncertainty surrounding the passage of the required legislation as a purdah will be imposed during an election period.

9. Cross Sector Group Update

Mr Daly expected that the 3rd Guiding Principle will be finalised and published before the PSC 12th December meeting.

Work is on-going on Codes of Practice which, when completed will be subject to consultation.

The key items requiring development in relation to the programme of works need to be considered before being issued for consultation. With only a few proposed changes it is expected that this will be resolved after the next PSC meeting.

10. Equality Update

Mr Gamble reported that the main areas focus on how legislation and policy is moving forward and being especially clear about when and where key decisions are made. One major area is data collection

relating to those employed in RPA affected Groups. Currently it is only possible to provide a snapshot analysis rather than looking at the totality of impact at this stage, however it is expected that the further down the line of implementation the clearer the picture will become.

Trade Union Side concurred that this is an important area of work and were reassured to hear of progress.

Mr Bingham endorsed the extensive and productive partnership working involved with the HR Framework EQIA.

11. AOB

a) Trade Union Side informed the Forum that they had met with Mr Sid McDowell, PSC recently. It was a very helpful meeting and they expected it would lead to future meetings.

b) Mr Bingham reported that a very positive meeting had been held with Staff Side at which it was agreed to establish a RPA implementation Group. The first meeting of this group is being organised for December and Terms of Reference/Memorandum of Agreement are currently being shared.

c) Date of the next meeting

Thursday 14th December 2006 @ 2:30pm, Castle Buildings