

JOINT FORUM

**MEETING HELD AT 3:45 PM ON 26th April 2007 IN CONFERENCE ROOM
D2, CASTLE BUILDINGS**

In Attendance

Mr David Bingham (Chair)	Mrs Mary Caddell
Mr Michael Daly	Ms Kathy Clarke (for Mr Danny Lambe)
Mrs Mary Moreland (Minutes)	Mrs Mary Hinds
Mr Damian Prince	Mrs Janice Smyth

Apologies

Dr Andrew McCormick
Ms Patricia Carey

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr Bingham welcomed everyone and noted apologies.

2. Matters arising from February/March

The business of the March meeting was completed by email. Mr Daly advised the meeting that progress has been slow since the last meeting due to Devolution. It is possible that Minister will set aside major decisions for the new Executive however he may give a view on some outstanding issues for example

- Finalisation of the Code of Practice on Staff Transfer
- Model Legislation
- 3rd Party Resolution
- Outstanding responses regarding the 5th GP (Severances)
- Location and the compensation arrangements

It is expected that the Library's Order will be the first piece of legislation to pass through the new Assembly, although the calendar has not yet been confirmed.

Trade Union Side raised the issue of expected timescales. While there was relative certainty regarding timescales under the Parliamentary System the same certainty does not exist with the new Assembly; they will have the authority to change business priorities.

Mr Bingham reported that his meeting with the PSC covered a range of issues including the definition of the RPA affected Group. It was becoming clearer that the current definition was too wide and there was a need to develop a more focused approach.

While PSC agrees that systems are working well they have concerns surrounding some breaches under the Vacancy Controls however it is recognised that this is difficult to police fully in large organisations.

3. Equality Update

Ms Carey was unable to attend the meeting but had provided an update, attached annex a. Striking a balance is important as this database will contain a much wider dataset providing a useful baseline. Different definitions are used throughout organisation making uniformed measurements difficult.

4. Implementation Update

Item covered by Mr Prince under Matters Arising

5. Cross Sector Update

Item covered by Mr Daly under Matters Arising

6. AOB

I. Equality Monitoring Information

Trade Union Side expressed concern regarding the new appointments to Trusts, which they reported reflected a selection of greater than 75% male; does this reflect the make up of the original pool. It is important to be aware of any difficulties at this

early stage in the process and Mr Bingham agreed to share the information he has available.

There have to be some assumptions made

Action Mr Bingham to share information as discussed with the Trade Union Side.

II. Job Losses – at risk posts

Trade Union Side expressed concern that the principles and strategic direction has not been communicated regarding the figure of 1,700 posts quoted as possible job losses. It is important that information is shared. Mr Bingham explained that the timing of the announcement was unavoidable. The figures had to be made public to ensure that provision was made to carry over funding from 06/07 to 07/08. He said that a further presentation would be made to the HSC trade unions at the next RPA Implementation Group meeting.

III. Recruitment Principles – Good Practice

Trade Union Side expressed concern that there were some panels not meeting best practice, for example one gender panels, or no professional representation. They queried if established recruitment processes had changed and if so were they in line with good practice.

8. Date of the next meeting (to be confirmed if required)

**Thursday 24th May 2007 @ 9am Conference Room C3: 18
Castle Buildings**

Update on RPA database

Phase 2 of the pilot of the database was completed by the end of March 2007. Anne Jordan has met with data providers in a number of public authorities as part of this exercise. A number of authorities have indicated that they can provide the data in the required format, a number can provide some but not all of the data and a number of authorities are reluctant to provide the data (particularly National Insurance numbers) and have concerns regarding data protection.

Whilst verbal confirmation has already been obtained, Stephen Donnelly has now written to the Information Commissioner to seek written confirmation that they are content that the database is compliant with data protection legislation and that they are content that their terms and conditions regarding storage/use of the data are being met.

OFMDFM are currently awaiting a response from the Information Commissioner before going back to data providers to formally commission the data.

13 April, 2007