

RPA Cross Sector HR Forum meeting 19 September 2007

Present: Derek Baker (CPG)
Philip Angus (DETI)
Eugene O'Loan (DSO)
Damian Prince (RPA)
Jacqui Wallace (CPG)
Tom McCready (DOE)
John Adams (NILGA)
Mark Browne (DE)
Paul McAllister (DCAL)

Apologies: Bernie Duffy (OFMDFM – Equality)
Michael Daly (CPG)
Noel Kelly (DSO)
Ian Maye (DOE)
Michael McLernon (DARD)
Maureen Taggart (NIHE)
Vivienne Walker (DHSSPS)

Minutes: Laura Armstrong (CPG)

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 19 April were agreed subject to the inclusion of the proposed amendment from Vivienne Walker.

Derek Baker informed the group that the aim of the meeting was to take stock and that he felt that it would be useful to formally catch up and share information.

Section 3 – Derek advised that since the last meeting of the HR Cross Sector Forum, DEL no longer has staff within the RPA Affected Group and therefore June Ingram has stood down from the forum. He further advised that CPG would chase up the outstanding action point with DEL.

2. Update on PSC Guiding Principles and Codes of Practice

Derek outlined the position in relation to the paper which was originally scheduled to go to the Executive in July in relation to outstanding PSC matters. He confirmed that he hoped that a further paper, consisting of non-contentious issues, would go to the Executive meeting on 27 September.

Derek invited Jacqui Wallace to lead the update in respect of the Guiding Principles and Codes of Practice.

i) 3rd Guiding Principle on Staff Transfers – Code of Practice

Jacqui informed the group that work was ongoing in relation to the draft Code of Practice, which had recently issued to Forum members for comment. Jacqui advised that whilst the draft would be sent to TUS and the PSC for comment this week, it was still a work in progress and there were a number of outstanding issues.

ii) Draft Addendum to the 3rd Guiding Principle.

Jacqui advised the group that they had been consulted in respect of the draft addendum to the third Guiding Principle and that it was considered that the issues raised therein were non-contentious. Jacqui outlined that it was hoped that it would be included in a draft Executive paper scheduled to be dealt with on 27 September.

iii) PSC's 5th Guiding Principle: Severance

Jacqui informed the group that TUS were once again pressing for a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies and advised that TUS had asked for a meeting with FM/dFM on the issue. Jacqui advised that she understood this had been arranged for early October and that until after that meeting had taken place, the issue would not be taken forward.

iv) PSC's Draft 7th Guiding Principle on Location

Jacqui advised the group that they had been consulted in respect of the draft seventh Guiding Principle and that it was considered that the issues raised therein were non-contentious. Jacqui outlined that it was hoped that it would be included in a draft Executive paper scheduled to be dealt with on 27 September.

v) PSC's Draft 8th Guiding Principle on Equality

Jacqui advised that once again the group had been consulted in respect of the draft eighth Guiding Principle, that the issues raised in it would most likely be non-contentious and that it was hoped that it would be included in a draft Executive paper scheduled to be dealt with on 27 September.

vi) PSC's Draft 9th Guiding Principle on Capacity Building

Jacqui advised that the draft ninth Guiding Principle fell into the same category as the draft eighth Guiding Principle.

Jacqui outlined that the PSC are planning to merge the draft tenth and eleventh Guiding Principles and that these would issue for comment to the HR CSF once received.

Derek summarised to the group that, if all went to plan, a paper would be taken to the Executive later this month in relation to the non-contentious Guiding Principles, potentially followed by a further paper on severance in late October. He advised that there would probably be another paper in the Autumn/Winter to deal with the later Guiding Principles and maybe an additional paper in relation to the role of the PSC in December/early New Year. Derek highlighted that the big issue at the minute was TUS pressing for a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies and that the outcome of this was awaited.

3. Sectoral Updates

The group was referred to the Emerging Issues brief issued in advance of the meeting. Derek invited the group to provide an update in addition to the brief.

In response to Philip Angus' query in relation to the current position of the Equality database, Damian Prince advised that, following a paper to PSG regarding the provision of staff National Insurance numbers, the Information Commissioner signed off on the issue. He advised that the current position was that TUS had been asked to endorse collection of the information. Derek advised the group that Damian had covered the update he had received from Equality and thanked him for the update.

Mark Browne advised the group that the Minister for Education had taken a paper to the Executive in July and had received agreement to take forward RPA from April 2009 on a two Bill approach. He further outlined that in the meantime, the Minister had announced a convergence programme to help identify work to design and build the organisation. He advised that they were also taking forward active management and oversight of the vacancy control scheme.

In respect of Local Government, Tom McCready advised that in July the Executive had agreed to a review of RPA decisions as they affect Local Government which was being taken forward by a sub-group of the Executive. This sub-group has met twice and will meet again on Monday 24 September where a draft emerging findings report would be tabled. If the sub-group were in agreement, this would go forward to the Executive meeting on 11 October. He further advised that once agreement was received from the Executive, this would then be taken to stakeholder events and after this there would be an Executive paper in December outlining final decisions.

Derek reported that whilst there was no representative at the meeting from Health, he could advise that there was a lot of work ongoing to establish the Trusts and that DHSSPS were awaiting Minister McGimpsey's decisions on the new Health Authority.

In respect of DCAL, Paul McAllister advised that decisions were needed in respect of whether the Events Company would transfer under RPA. He informed the group that work to establish the Libraries Authority was progressing satisfactorily as was work in relation to the Fisheries Conservancy Board. Paul advised that there were no significant issues at the moment.

Derek referred to group to the emerging issues report in respect of DARD.

With regards to an update from the Centre, Damian advised that the next meeting of the Strategic Review Group was scheduled to take place on 28

September and the main aim of the meeting would be to collect information for the quarterly update and to discuss a December handling plan in respect of the Local Government review. Damian outlined that a tripartite meeting with the PSC, TUS and OFMDFM/DFP was scheduled for 24 September and that this meeting would look hard at the second and fourth Guiding Principles. In addition, Damian outlined that PSC were keen to progress the research project in Health and that a meeting had been arranged early October between Health and the PSC to finalise a circular in this regard.

4. Any other business

Derek advised the group that, given the slower pace of change, it had been suggested that future meetings of the HR CSF be moved to a bi-monthly basis. This was agreed and considering the fact that dates were already in diaries, decisions would be taken on this when it came to the meeting.

5. Date of next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 21 November 2007 at 2pm.

[September 2007]