

HCS-62-15 PERMANENT SECRETARY GROUP MEETING

FRIDAY 13 MARCH 2015

Minutes

1. **Present:** Malcolm McKibbin (Chair)
Leo O'Reilly
Richard Pengelly
Andrew Hamilton
Derek Baker
David Sterling
Cynthia Smith
Peter May
Andrew McCormick
Paul Sweeney
Nick Perry

Apologies: Noel Lavery

In attendance: Brenda King
Oswyn Paulin
Stephen Grimason
Mark Browne
Neill Jackson
Gerry Lavery
Colin Lewis (Item 5)
Kellie Sprott (secretariat)

2. **Minutes of 6 March 2015 Meeting**

The minutes were approved.

3. **Matters Arising**

NICS Live Speech & Compelling Story

Action complete, HOCS circulated his final speech and compelling story to PSG.

DFP Renewal of Mapping Agreement 2015

Action complete, relevant departments have made their returns.

Project management support for project

Derek is working with the SIB and CPD to secure a project manager.

Election Guidance for civil servants

Action complete, the guidance has been issued by HOCS office.

FM/dFM visit to Scotland

HOCS will liaise with the Chief Constable closer to the time about people that FM and dFM should meet on their visit to Scotland.

4. **Executive & Assembly Update**

Neill Jackson provided an update on Executive and Assembly business. He asked PSG to take a critical look at the legislative timetable between now and summer recess and liaise with Brenda King if necessary.

Action: PSG

Malcolm McKibbin provided an update on the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement.

5. HR Monthly Update

Colin Lewis took the lead for this agenda item. He covered the following items:

NICS voluntary exit scheme

- Colin provided background and context;
- the number of people who have applied to the scheme to date;
- risks;
- impact of industrial action; &
- overview of next steps.

A general discussion followed. PSG noted the progress to date, risks and next steps.

NICS People Plan 14/15

- Colin reported good progress being made against most targets; &
- provided rationale and mitigation where targets were not on track.

PSG noted the progress being made.

2015/16 People Plan

Colin talked PSG through the key elements of the draft plan and what they would contain as follows:

- Effective leadership: growth & engaging with staff;
- High performance: talent development, performance management & recognition and reward;
- Improved skills & resourcing: knowledge & skills, internal & external resourcing and innovation in delivery;
- Enabled workforce: wellbeing.

A discussion followed. PSG approved the Plan for 2015/16.

NICS Absence Management

- Colin highlighted concern over absence figures against target; &
- recommended that departments continue to ensure compliance in the application of absence management policies.

NICS Performance Management

- Colin asked PSG to remind people to schedule performance appraisals; &
- confirmed that the new, simplified, performance management process will 'go live' in time for the 2015/16 reporting year.

PSG noted the progress.

Industrial Action

- Colin discussed the results from the NIPSA ballot for strike action on 13th March and discussed what other industrial action may be taken.

PSG noted the update.

Outside business appointments

Colin discussed Mark Bailey's paper proposing updates to the rules on acceptance of outside business appointments by civil servants. A general discussion followed. PSG agreed to recommendations 1 and 2 but not 3.

Colin Lewis agreed to consider further recommendation 3 and come back to PSG.

Action: Colin Lewis

Colin Lewis asked about the NICS staff survey scheduled for autumn 2015. PSG agreed that it should go ahead as planned.

Action: CHR

Colin finished by saying that the consultants taking forward the e-HR programme for future HR delivery will want to speak to some more Permanent Secretaries and HOCS. Colin will liaise as appropriate with the relevant people.

Action: Colin Lewis

6. **Tour de Table**

DFP

David Sterling said that the SCS event, discussed previously, should be arranged for end April /start May. It was agreed that a date should be chosen and an email sent out to all SCS.

Action: DFP

DRD

Peter May provided an update on NI Water and a consultation on the potential rationalisation of Translink services.

DSD

Andrew Hamilton advised that the second report on the Housing Executive would be published today.

OFMDFM

Mark Browne sought PSG's agreement to run an internal temporary promotion competition to fill a vacant Grade 3 post on OFMDFM. PSG agreed.