



East Area Equality Meeting

Minutes

6 April 2015

1. Attendance

Nigel Bathgate (NB)
Allan Symington (AS)
Murray McKenzie (MM)
Scott Callaghan (SC)
Colin Nicoll (CN)
David Reid (DR)
Jackie Muller (JM)

Apologies were received from Andy Malcolm, Iain McGregor and Norman Towler.

2. Opening of the meeting

NB welcomed everyone to the first quarterly meeting and acknowledged those that were new to the Committee and also highlighted those who had left the committee for their contribution in the past. NB urged everyone to take a full part in the proceedings and emphasized the challenges ahead in the sphere of Equality.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting had been circulated prior to this meeting and no changes, additions or deletions were noted.

4. Election of Chair

Following a short discussion AM was proposed and seconded and was re-elected Chair for this committee. In his absence AS was duly elected Vice Chair and thereafter conducted the remainder of the meeting.

5. Election of Representative for the equality Subject Committee

AS was proposed and seconded and was duly elected into this position.

6. Equality Secretary Update

JM welcomed all the representatives to the committee especially those who were there for the first time. JM highlighted the opportunity for everybody on the committee to resolve local issues. JM further informed those present the need for items to be highlighted early for inclusion on the Agenda and the reasons for that and emphasized the importance to the membership of this area of business. Cases would be distributed now that the new committee had been formed and that a programme of training will begin soon to support representatives in dealing with individual cases.

Action: Contact details to be forwarded to JM of all Equality Representatives (NB)

JM also reiterated the need for representatives to use either their SPF e-mail addresses or home e-mails and the reasons for that.

JM also covered the recent re-issue of the Monitoring Forms that she will audit in the near future and again the reason for these and the role they fulfil in relation to 'positive action' particularly with further local SPF elections in the near future.

The issue of representatives not receiving duty time to attend to Federation matters was raised and NB informed the committee that should such instances arise then anyone affected should highlight this to him as soon as possible so that representations can be made.

7. Maternity/paternity

In the east area no issues under this discipline raised. There had been some general enquiries through the East office but all had been dealt with. NB informed the group that this was a good example of where officers are generally aware of their entitlements but not necessarily specifics which highlighted the role training has in this area as well as all other areas.

JM highlighted the responses that Politicians had given at Conference in relation to Maternity Pay and explained the history of this claim. This led to a wider discussion of PNB Scotland.

8. Part Time/Flexible working

NB informed the Committee that this was a perpetual area of involvement for the SPF as officers in this area had their patterns reviewed or were applying for the first time.

The Vice Chair raised the issue of part-time officers cited for court and subsequent child care costs associated with this.

This led onto a general discussion around this topic particularly in relation to a question raised by MM around the rigours apparent in 'C' Division which did not conform to the SOP guidance.

CN raised a further issue in relation of reallocating rest days to shortened hour days for those on patterns.

Action: For all to confirm examples of issues around part-time/flexible working and attendance at Court with an early indication to LNCC of this work and issues around court stand-by (ALL)

9. Disability

NB made the committee aware that this was an area of increased activity for SPF and that would further increase in the near future.

JM discussed the principles of redeployment and her stance on that. This led to a further discussion in relation to PNB circulars and legislation relevant in this field.

MM raised the issue of 'stress' which had featured at inputs at Conference. JM indicated that not all instances of stress can be considered under the Equality Act.

MM raised a further point of a perception that the Force attempted to return officers to work without consideration of any reasonable adjustments. NB informed the group that at Divisional meetings he attended that was not the apparent case and favourable views were applied to officers returning to the work place.

SC raised the issue that self-certification had been withdrawn in 'C' Division. NB informed the committee that issue had been raised in correspondence with the Division.

10. Consultations

JM gave a short introduction to consultations and the areas that the representatives should consider when asked to respond to circulated consultations.

Action: Electronic Equality Forms to be e-mailed to all members (NB)

11. Competent Business

Dates for future meetings were shared with the group along with the Equality Standing Committee dates.

12. Closure

The Vice-Chair thanked members for their attendance and contributions and invited them to remain for a short training input.

Following the closure of the meeting JM gave an input in relation to Equality Forms and equality recording and the process required. The East equality Committee who were present at the meeting and the full-time officials from the East Area received this training.

This will be recorded on the training database in the near future.

Time and date of the next meeting will be 1000 hours on 13 July 2015 at East Area Office, Livingston.