



East Area Equality Meeting

Minutes

7 April 2014

1. Attendance

Nigel Bathgate (NB)
Graham Capes (GC)
Raymond Dutton (RD)
Murray McKenzie (MM)
Ben Merrick (BM)
Jackie Muller (JM)

Apologies were received from Neil Elder, Stuart Oliver and Andy Malcolm

2. Opening of the meeting

NB as secretary welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Committee and urged everyone to take a full part in the proceedings. It was acknowledged at this stage that without the presence on the Chair, a Vice Chair should be elected. NB then moved to point 4 on the agenda and BM was duly appointed as Vice Chair and Equality Subject Committee representative. MM was appointed as first reserve.

BM thereafter took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

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 Representative for Equality Subject Committee

Dealt with under Agenda Item 2.

5. Equality Secretary Update

JM highlighted that the most issues under Equality were in the East area and this could potentially be assisted by more liaison between the East Area Committee Representatives and East Area Management. JM also raised the question of the distribution of Equality cases to representatives of the East Area Equality Committee. NB responded that up to this point the volume of enquiries though several in number had not necessitated allocation to committee members. Should the volume increase allocation would take place, although GC highlighted individual's capacity to take on cases over and above their 'day job' responsibilities.

JM fully acknowledged the potential increase in workloads and reiterated her availability as point of reference for individual's cases.

JM also highlighted the potential for Ill-Health cases coming to the SPF as a result of regulatory changes.

Regular meetings with SEMPER, GPA (Scotland), Disabled Police Association, Trans Police Association and Scottish Police Muslim Association continue.

JM made mention of the Equality for All Events which have been held at the Scottish Police College and that anybody from this committee could attend and represent the SPF at their stall in the future.

6. Maternity/paternity

In the east area no issues under this discipline raised.

Nationally the concerns of the new SOP were highlighted although DCC Richardson in his responses to JM has not recognized the failings as an issue.

Maternity pay and leave has been dealt with in 8 different ways and until a standard position is achieved several officers are in a disadvantageous position although these officers have failed to raise this so that their individual cases can be taken forward.

JM stated that the specific Maternity/Paternity leaflet is currently on hold until the up rating to 18 weeks for maternity pay is ratified but being held up at PNB.

7. Part Time/Flexible working

Locally this has been an area of concern and some negotiation to have flexible arrangements approved or supported through appeal. In case where a trial period was requested the flexible arrangement was approved.

MM and GC raised the potential for this to be an issue in FVD. JM advised of the need for an EIA and that this position had been supported previously by the JCC.

JM has submitted proposed guidance on Part-time/Flexible working through Scotland Standing Committee of the PNB and a response is still awaited.

A further lengthy discussion followed in relation to this. All present raised concerns in relation to the application of local guidance and the potential for inflexibility for officers applying for flexible arrangements.

NB highlighted that in Edinburgh Division most if not all flexible arrangements had now been resolved.

8. Disability

NB informed the committee of one particular case in this area and also a further case which MM and GC were aware of in FVD. It appeared from initial discussions that this was an emerging area for our attention and would no doubt raise challenges with the introduction of the new attendance and performance regulations.

JM pointed out the existence of relevant legislation which could prove useful locally when dealing with individual officers.

GC raised concern around the potential for officers to be moved areas and that could be classed as a reasonable adjustment.

9. Fitness Testing

JM has written to Police Scotland and asked for all fitness testing examples although the response received was incomplete compared to the requested information. The committee also appointed GC to work alongside JM identify any areas of concern in relation to Fitness Testing.

10. Positive Action

Forms have now been returned and the evaluation and report completed. JM has now formed a sub-group to continue analysis in this area and our Chair forms part of the group.

JM highlighted that at an earlier stage Positive Action Days were planned in OSD but since a change of Commander that had now become Open Days.

JM further talked about positive action in relation to encouraging colleagues to become involved with the SPF as representatives.

11. Consultations

There were no consultations at this meeting but in the future all matters for consultations would be circulated and after views had been sought, progressed via the national meeting. RD raised concerns in relation to response times for consultation and it was noted as an issue.

12. Competent Business

It was raised and noted that the next Equality meeting may be subject of a date change due to the Commonwealth Games.

13. Closure

The Vice-Chair thanked members for their attendance and invited them to remain for the training which followed the meeting.

Time and date of the next meeting will be 1000 hours on 14 July 2014 at East Area Office, Livingston.

