

**Communicating Change Consultative Group, 16th Meeting, CnaG Offices,
Belfast, 20 January 2010**

Present: Karen Gribben (CCEA)
Sarah Lowe (SEELB)
Patricia Weir (Staff Comm)
Frances Donnelly (NICIE)
Micheál Ó Duibh (CnaG)
Richard Bullick (SELB)
John Martin (BELB)
Daryll Kenny (NEELB)
Emma Hegarty (CCMS)
Alma Abbs (RTU)
Pat Ward (WELB)

Apologies: David Guilfoyle (YCNI)
Nigel McCosker (WELB)
Michael Henderson (DE)

In attendance: Joe Reynolds (DE)
John McCourt (DE)
Geraldine Quinn (DE)
Robert Shilliday (ESAIT)
Angela Devine (ESAIT)
Frances Byrne (ESAIT)

1. Robert Shilliday welcomed Alma Abbs to the group and thanked Micheál Ó Duibh for hosting the meeting. Introductions were made.

2. Minutes of meeting 07 December 2009

The minutes were agreed without amendment.

3. Actions Arising

Actions arising will be covered during the ESAIT Update agenda item.

4. Legislation Update

Robert Shilliday advised the group that the Department had written to the BELB, NEELB, SELB and WELB advising them that transitional arrangements will be put in place in the period up to the establishment of ESA.

Joe Reynolds added that Transferors and Trustees have been asked to make nominations and individuals invited to extend their membership. Interviews for general interest members are currently taking place and the names of the successful

applicants will go to the Minister for approval. It is the intention that the ELBs will be populated by the end of February. The arrangements for the other ESA affected organisations are still being finalised.

The group then discussed the transitional arrangements and how the ELBs will operate in the period up to the establishment of ESA.

5. ESAIT Update

5.1 Convergence Plan

Robert Shilliday advised the group that work on the convergence delivery plan has progressed considerably. This will go to the Minister for her approval and communicated thereafter.

5.2 Director of Strategic Planning

No appointment was made following the interviews held before Christmas. A range of options are now being considered and the group will be kept informed of any decisions.

5.3 Deputy Director Structure

The structure is near completion and will be submitted to DE for approval.

5.4 Voluntary Severance

It is hoped that the voluntary severance programme will progress once the convergence delivery plan is agreed. All who expressed an interest have been written to. Proposals for a small number of staff to be released by the end of this financial year and further next financial year are still to be agreed by the Minister. The group will be kept informed of any decisions.

5.5 Internet/Intranet

Good progress has been made on developing internet and intranet sites for ESA. Andrew McAfee, chair of the Internet working group, will be in contact with the nominated Content Champions from each organisation regarding the Terms of Reference for the group. The initial meeting of the group is scheduled for the end of February.

5.6 Vodcast

Gavin Boyd is due to record his next vodcast on Friday 22 January. Robert thanked those for their feedback on December's vodcast and asked the group to forward to him any issues they would like to see covered in future vodcasts.

The group then discussed the role ESAIT will play in taking forward the convergence plan without an agreed date for the establishment of ESA.

5.7 ESAIT Update

Frances Byrne advised the group that January's edition is currently being drafted and will be circulated to the group for comment before publication.

5.8 ESA Intranet Demo

Frances thanked those for their feedback on the intranet demo from the meeting of 07 December. This will be collated and presented to the intranet working group for their consideration and also shared with the group.

It is the intention that the group will receive a further demo on the proposed intranet site at a future meeting.

5.9 Communication Surveys

Robert advised the group that a short communications survey of those DE staff transferring to ESA was carried out over the Christmas period. The results will be collated with the survey carried out within the other organisations in November and published on the ESAIT website.

The next short survey will take place from 22 – 28 February with the annual communications survey scheduled for 17 – 28 May. In the forthcoming short survey, NISRA will ensure the staff from each organisation across the RPA Education Sector Group sampled in the last short survey are not included this time.

A member of the group enquired why the survey was carried out by NISRA and not one of the sectoral organisations. Robert replied that to underscore transparency and objectivity, it was decided to use a third party.

Angela Devine added that the short survey would again be 10 questions and the questions will be circulated to the group for comment before they are finalised. Angela also asked the group to encourage those of their colleagues identified to complete the survey.

6. AOB

A member of the group raised the issue that staff were voicing concerns about the possibility of redundancies due to financial constraints in next years budgets. Robert replied that he recognised that this was a real concern for many staff and it was important this area was clarified as soon as possible. However any decisions taken in this regard, if necessary, would be made at a higher level and were not for this group.

A member enquired regarding the legislation situation. Robert replied that political discussions were on-going. Joe added that we would continue under extant legislation until ESA is established. It remained the Executive's and Minister's policy to establish ESA and convergence activities will continue until that is achieved.

However the realities of the current financial climate (and the inability to deliver on savings predicated on ESA's establishment) would also impact on how the sector

would move forward. These issues, in the context of convergence, would have to be managed skilfully.

Patricia Weir enquired from other members how the message of convergence was being communicated within their respective organisations to staff and stakeholders.

Pat Ward replied that WELB were organising seminars for staff with the main message that convergence was happening regardless of what is currently happening with the legislation.

Richard Bullick replied that SELB were communicating to their staff via the normal channels and also to their customers via the local press that service delivery would continue.

Karen Gribben from CCEA replied that they are communicating with their stakeholders via newsletters, email and presentations that service continuity will continue. Staff are being communicated with in the normal channels and through Gavin Boyd's webcasts that convergence is happening.

7. Dates for future meetings

The group agreed to meet again on Monday 22 February at 10.30am in RTU Offices, Black's Road, availability of venue permitting.

During this meeting it will be decided whether to continue with the monthly meetings or return to one every two months.

Action Point	Assigned to	Due by
5.7 ESAIT Update to be circulated to the group for comment	Frances Byrne	
5.8 Feedback on Intranet demo	Frances Byrne	
5.9 Communications Survey update to be published on ESAIT website	Robert Shilliday	
5.9 Draft questions for pulse survey to group for comment	Angela Devine	