

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
STAFF COUNCIL
Held on 18th October 2007
1100-1330 in the Conference Room, HQ**

<u>Chair:</u>	Eddie Brand – Staff Side Chair	Unison
	Caron Hitchen – Director of Human Resources & OD	HQ
	Eric Roberts – Assistant Staff Side Secretary	HQ
	Martin Flaherty – Director of Operations	HQ
	Tony Crabtree – Assistant Director, Employee Support Services	HQ
	Steve Sale – Head of Workforce Modernisation	HQ
	Phil Thompson – Trade Union Side Secretary	Unison
	Nic Daw – Head of PTS	HQ
	Gary Edwards	Unison
	Pat Osliff	GMB
	Darren Jobson	TGWU
	Bob Buck	Amicus
	David Lamey	Unison
	Pete Hannell	Unison
	Mark Lione	Unison
<u>In Attendance</u>	Chris Hartley-Sharpe (CH-S)	HQ
	Scott Velleman (Minutes)	HQ

ACTION

25/07 Apologies for Absence

None

26/07 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 19th July 2007

Agreed.

27/07 Matters Arising

27.01 Mileage Rates – Other Trusts’ Arrangements (05/07)

TC stated that he has not taken this action forward as yet. He suggested that this is picked up by the Joint Secretaries.

28/07 Community Responders Scheme

CH-S gave a presentation on the current situation regarding the introduction of a Community Responders Scheme, inviting comments from the group.

Community Responders Scheme (continued)

PO asked how responders will be recruited.

CH-S replied that volunteers will be advertised for in the local press, and the Service will then follow standard recruitment procedures including a Criminal Records Bureau check.

ER expressed some concerns about the principles of such schemes, and underlined the importance for staff side to be involved in this scheme in order to ensure any difficulties can be overcome. ER pointed out the need for clear guidelines to be put in place and said that a member of staff side should sit on the project board managing implementation.

MF echoed the importance for staff side and management to work together on this scheme, and was clear that he would insist on the same standards being adhered to as those used by the rest of the Service. MF stated the importance of the scheme in helping to further improve cardiac arrest survival rates in London, and felt that it would also give the LAS a good opportunity to engage with local communities.

29/07 Partnership Agreement

TC stated that the updated draft partnership agreement, with appendices still to be prepared for consideration, had been presented for comment ahead of the meeting, and asked for a response from staff side on the core document.

ER agreed the core document but stated that the appendices still needed to be discussed and agreed.

CH asked for staff side's comments on the Partnership Conference. The consensus was that this had been a positive and useful event, but that it had been too short.

CH and MF both stated a desire for more regular partnership events in future in order that there should be no loss of momentum. It was agreed that next steps should be discussed by the joint secretaries, and that ideally a similar event, this time a full day, could be held in 6 months' time.

30/07 Performance and Funding (Standing Item)

MF distributed a printout from the BBC news web site citing the LAS as the best ambulance service in the country based upon the annual health check. He stated that we should be proud of this and that it is a real achievement. MF also said that the next step was to try and get the

Performance and Funding (Standing Item) (continued)

message out to the media about improved cardiac arrest survival rates. He reminded the group that there are still new targets to achieve, but the Service has improved from last year and staff should be very proud.

ER gave credit to staff that have to work in such a difficult capital city.

PT reminded everyone of how far the LAS has come since 1995, and that we should recognise the positive impact the LAS has on the rest of the NHS in London and its good reputation with other NHS bodies.

31/07 HR Policy (Standing Item)

31.01 Update

TC distributed a summary of HR policies that have been or are due to be updated and discussed these with the group.

31.02 Disciplinary Policy (for approval)

TC asked for agreement from staff side for the updated policy.

EB replied that staff side agree to everything subject to clarification on the paragraph relating to the principle and timing of any notification to the HPC of issues regarding the ability of paramedics to practice.

CH stated that she would check the HPC wording and clarify. ER confirmed agreement pending that particular point.

TC agreed to write to ER with clarification.

TC

32/07 PTS Issues (Standing Item)

ND reported that the PTS financial performance remains good, and that staff are providing very good levels of service. ND also stated that PTS has won the Barts contract and is winning others back. He felt that various NHS Trusts had tried other providers and realised that the economies and quality they had been promised had not materialised.

33/07 Fleet Issues (Standing Item)

BB referred to the current review of Fleet Support, stating that he would prefer consideration to be given at an early stage to alternative models. Additionally he stated a desire to have input into ideas on how to fill the

Fleet Issues (Standing Item) (continued)

vacant posts in workshops.

MF replied that this issue would be added to the agenda for the A&E Resources Group.

ER enquired about further consideration of establishing an apprenticeship scheme, and CH confirmed that this remained a possibility.

34/07 Cost Improvement Programme (Standing Item)

CH stated that the LAS is on track to deliver against its required savings this year.

In response to a question, she confirmed that the resource centre review is out to consultation at present and no decisions will be taken until that is complete.

ER requested that all the email comments from staff should be submitted to SMG along with the consultation papers. MF replied that it would be more usual for a summary to be presented, but that he would consider the matter.

ER underlined that this was an emotive decision and staff would feel easier knowing all their views had been taken into account. He stated that he would send all the emails to MF.

35/07 Managing Attendance Policy

EB stated that the policy had been discussed at his sector meeting last week and it appears that anyone managed under the policy is put on a 12-month warning period as standard. He felt that this was unfair as the policy states a period of “up to 12 months”.

CH replied that she could check what length of monitoring period staff were being given from the audits of sickness absence and its management. She agreed to feed back to EB.

CH

MF also said that he would provide guidance to DSOs if necessary as they have not been instructed that they must automatically impose a 12 month period.

36/07 Christmas Pay Day

Staff side asked for clarification/confirmation of Christmas pay arrangements, suggesting that these be publicised as soon as possible. They also asked that consideration be given to bringing forward the pay date in both December and January.

CH replied final arrangements were being made and that the likeliest Christmas pay date was 24 December. This would be confirmed and formal notification issued as soon as possible. That being the case, there would be a five week gap to January's pay day, and this was not an unusual interval. This, coupled with the disruption caused by changing pay dates, meant that there would be no change to the usual arrangements for January.

MF commented that already there were significant concerns about levels of operational cover at Christmas, and asked reps to work with local managers to try and improve local cover on Christmas day and Boxing day.

37/07 Report on 2007/08 Pay

ER asked for confirmation that the November payment would include the nationally agreed increase, and that the December payment would contain arrears due.

TC replied that this depended on when the national ESR system was prepared and loaded with the new rates, and that unfortunately it isn't within the control of the LAS, but he hoped that this would be the case. He agreed to notify ER as soon as he hears anything official, but TC did not anticipate any problems.

38/07 Return to Practice Document

PH distributed copies of a draft Return to Practice document prepared by the Education and Development Department. He stated that Staff Side supported such an approach because otherwise there was a concern that when staff return from a significant absence, the support that they receive across the Trust may not be consistent. He also endorsed the fact that the spirit is supportive rather than punitive.

CH suggested that the wording of the section around re-sits could be reviewed to better reflect this, and undertook to do so.

CH

MF clarified that all staff need to reach a satisfactory performance standard when they return from absence, and if this cannot be reached then the capability procedure is in place to deal with this. However, this does not

Return to Practice Document (continued)

need to be stated in the Return to Practice Document.

39/07 Information Item: Corporate Health & Safety Minutes

TC stated that as the meeting had only taken place 2 days previously the minutes would be sent out when they had been written.

40/07 Any Other Business

Service Improvement Programme

ER felt confusion existed over the proposals for “Exemplar Complexes” and new ways of working mentioned by Peter Bradley at the road shows. He suggested that not all staff had heard Peter’s message and that there was a need to publish guidance on the process of how a complex applies for consideration, how the selection decision is made, and what are the implications of the change.

GE added that he understands that AOMs have to tender for their complexes to be designated as exemplar by December. GE felt the problem was that staff have no idea what this will mean for them.

MF responded that the main idea is that the exemplar complexes will be much more clinically lead. At present this is still at the concept stage and needs to be debated much more with staff side. MF suggested Bill O’Neill and Ian Todd could be invited to the next Staff Council to discuss the matter further.

ER requested that an extraordinary meeting be arranged, to which MF agreed and felt it should take place within the next 4 weeks.

Date of Next Meetings: 21st February 2008, 1100-1330
Conference Room, HQ