

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
STAFF COUNCIL
Held on 19th July 2007
1100-1330 in the Conference Room, HQ**

<u>Chair:</u>	Caron Hitchen – Director of Human Resources & OD	HQ
	Eddie Brand – Staff Side Chair	Unison
	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
	Barry Bowyer	GMB
	Rob Matthews	Unison
	Bill Leaning	Unison

ACTION

13/07 Apologies for Absence

Pete Hannell (deputy Rob Matthews)
Mark Lione (deputy Bill Leaning)

14/07 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 19th January 2007

Agreed.

15/07 Matters Arising

15.01 Insulin Dependent Diabetics (25/06)

CH reported that this matter was being progressed, and it was hoped that a satisfactory conclusion would be reached in the near future.

15.02 Workforce Planning (12/07)

CH reported that, although she had previously suggested that this become a standing item, the Workforce Planning Group had not actually met pending Peter Bradley's consultation meetings. Feedback would be considered and the group re-convened.

15.03 Mileage rates

TC reported that he had attended the first national meeting to consider a review of mileage rates and arrangements, but there was no agreed timeframe for this work. As requested, he had checked arrangements at other London Trusts, and of those that had replied it seemed that the common approach was to follow the former Whitley arrangements. It was agreed that he would check with other Ambulance Trusts, and that there would be a preliminary discussion in the Joint Secretaries forum.

TC

16/07 Performance and Funding

MF summarised the current situation and issues regarding service performance and funding. Changes to national performance measures were beginning to alter the relationship between the various performance targets, some of which themselves were under review. The LAS had traditionally struggled with the category B standard, and this year failure to meet the target would carry financial penalties.

However, one of the biggest challenges remained the new call connect requirement, with the changes to clock start measurements. Significant time-savings had to be found by April 2008. New funding, for additional staff had now been agreed but, once again, it was provided on the basis that strict performance targets were met. Failure to reach the required level carried financial penalties. Overall, LAS stood about mid-way in terms of national performance when compared to the other ambulance trusts.

Although additional funding had been obtained, and was also being pursued to support other initiatives such as HART and the Olympics, overall the Trust still had to find savings in the region of £11.3m in 2007/08. At present we are on track, but a significant proportion of the savings had been profiled for the latter two thirds of the year, so there are difficult months ahead.

There was wide-ranging discussion about future performance measures, national and local targets, and the developing direct link between performance and finance. It was agreed that Performance and Funding be a standing item on future agendas.

SV

Additionally, as a result of the discussion about the Olympics, it was agreed that Peter Thorpe should be invited to the next meeting to give a presentation on preparation to date.

SV

17/07 Consultation Review

CH reported that there had been initial discussion at Joint Secretaries level, and written proposals would be prepared and presented for consultation with both management and staff side. Both CH and ER stressed the

importance of getting the correct structures, levels and membership of any agreed committees.

18/07 Cost Improvement Programme

CH reported that a programme of robust management of staff vacancies had now been implemented. This would allow greater flexibility should this be needed, but no specific posts had been identified as at risk.

It was agreed that this should be a standing item in future.

SV

19/07 Foundation Trust (update)

ER reflected the Minister had announced at Ambex that ambulance trusts could apply for foundation status from 2009. CH confirmed that eligibility criteria were not yet known, but stated that this item would be placed on future agendas and that staff would be fully involved.

ER also took the opportunity to welcome the additional announcement made by the Minister, of the introduction of a Queen's medal for ambulance workers.

20/07 Agenda for Change (Standing Item)

CH reported that the implementation phase of Agenda for Change was now complete, and questioned whether it was needed as a standing item. ER stated that he had raised this because it was important not to lose the focus on terms and conditions of employment that AfC had brought. TC suggested that consideration be given to a specific terms and conditions group, reporting to the Staff Council, in the review of consultative arrangements.

21/07 HR Policy Reviews (Standing Item)

TC discussed a schedule of recent and pending HR policy updates, and requested comments on the policies out for consultation by the end of the month.

22/07 PTS Issues (Standing Item)

ND reported that in the last year (2006/07) PTS had lost only one contract. It was important to recognise that, despite general views and perceptions to the contrary it had in fact been a good year for PTS.

2007/08 had seen some losses but these tended to be compensated by other gains, and so far staff who were affected had been accommodated on other contracts. A number of Trusts were currently out to tender, or about to start the process.

Changes to working arrangements, particularly the establishment of cluster working with two key centres for journey planning would also improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

ND particularly thanked Gary Edwards for his work on the Hillingdon and Chelsea/Westminster contracts, and stressed the need to extend and strengthen PTS representation.

10/07 Fleet Issues (Standing Item)

BB stated he believed that currently there were some recruitment issues in Fleet related to pay and market rates. He also expressed disappointment that it had been decided not to take forward the plans to establish an apprenticeship scheme.

11/07 Information Item: Corporate Health & Safety Minutes

The latest set of minutes were in draft form and would be distributed when available.

12/07 Any Other Business

HR Structure

CH reported that the HR structure had been reviewed to provide better support at Area level to operational and HR staff. Julie Cook has been appointed Senior HR Manager for the West, Andrew Buchanan for the South and Greg Masters for the East. Each retained additional corporate responsibilities.

Date of Next Meeting: 11 October 2007
11.00 – 13.30 hours
Conference Room, HQ