

Notes and Action Points from Thursday 21st August 2014.

Present

Lord Advocate	(Chair)
John Logue	Director of Serious Casework
John Dunn	Head of East Federation
Liam Murphy	Head of North Federation
Sue Foard	North Federation Equality Lead (by VC)
Caroline Tomlin	West Federation Equality Lead (pp David Harvie)
Ruth McQuaid	Equality Champion
Karen Kennedy	Policy Adviser, Policy Division
Nancy Darroch	Rep for Federation Business Managers
Howard Hart	Corporate Communications
Lorraine Davidson	Head of Corporate Communications

Apologies

Catherine Dyer	Crown Agent
David Harvie	Head of West Federation
Sue Sandeman	Staff Information Manager, Crown Office Library
David Casey	Proud in COPFS, Staff Network (Ambassador)
Gertie Wallace	Deputy Head of Policy Division
Sandy Mackie	HR Business Partner, Staff Disability Network (Ambassador)
Dawn Lewington	Principal Depute, Policy Division
Janice Irvine	Director of Human Resources

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Lord Advocate welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted from those who were unable to attend.

The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

2. Matters Arising –

The LA asked whether a date had been set for Advocate Depute training. DC had been in touch and informed that no date had been set.

The location of a COPFS awards display cabinet was discussed – the outcome being that it should be Crown Office reception.

ACTION: KK to check dates for Advocate Depute Training.

ACTION: ND to obtain costing for Awards cabinet.

3. Update Reports from Federation Heads

EAST - JD gave an update for the East Federation. The success of the Public Speaking Competitions was discussed. The possibility of a national competition

with a grand final was explored. Logistical difficulties for the Highlands and Islands were noted with the possibility of a non face-to-face final eg by VC discussed.

JD also advised that the East Federation planned to expand their Federation Equality Network from one to three sub groups – Edinburgh, Central and Fife.

WEST - CT advised that the Public Speaking Competition was extended to include schools from Dumfries and Galloway and travelling logistics for those involved were fine. Representatives from SG Education Dept and the Children’s Commissioner attended the final event.

Mini-trials were held in Paisley. These have grown since 2012 and there are due to be more held in October/November 2014.

Also discussed was the importance of reaching out to state schools that do not always have the opportunity to participate in public speaking competitions.

The Pride event was well received and it is hoped to repeat this next year.

NORTH - LM advised that their Public Speaking schools competition took place in Aberdeen and Dundee. Future plans to continue working with schools and universities were discussed and SF has arranged for the Brownies to visit Kirkwall Sheriff Court. There were plans for Inverness schools to become involved in public speaking and nine schools were initially interested but none took part this year.

NATIONAL - JL advised that the priority for the National group had been to restructure and re-launch the network group. Gertie Wallace had replaced Gary Aitken as the chair of the group.

There was also discussion about other types of competitions that could be held involving schools eg essay writing and perhaps another art competition. The LA concluded that COPFS should continue to run public speaking competitions across the country and that they should form part of the school calendar.

ACTION: SF to consider how schools from the Highlands and Islands can be involved in the public speaking competitions and the possibility of a National grand final.

ACTION: CT to collate the progress reports from the 4 Federation Equality Networks for the Nov meeting.

ACTION: HS/KK to make enquires as to whether any current first year trainees had any involvement in Public Speaking Competitions or mini-trials whilst at school.

4. Policy Update

Transgender Prosecution Policy

The policy has been approved and is ready to be published post Independence referendum. The next piece of work will be guidance for transgender victims of crime. COPFS continues to have excellent working relations with the Scottish

Transgender Alliance. A potential gap in guidance for staff regarding this was discussed.

“Revenge Pornography”

A draft prosecution policy has been drafted and is currently out for stakeholder consultation. All agreed that a new name for this policy was required.

Social Media Policy

The policy will be submitted to LA for approval within the next week. The LA is keen for this policy to be widely publicised once published.

Other Policy updates

The interpreting and translation training event for British Sign Language interpreters is to be held on 13th September at Stirling University.

The Human Trafficking summit is planned for the 17th October, at the Scottish Parliament.

ACTION: Ask Policy and Comms staff to come up with an alternative name for “Revenge Porn”.

5. Update from Ruth McQuaid, Equality Champion

RMcQ advised that the Community DVD will be launched internally at Scottish Prosecution College on 5th September, at the Staff Equality conference. The external launch will take place in Edinburgh on 28th September. Discussion took place as to how the DVD shall be shown at the external launch and the purpose of the launch.

The third edition of the newsletter has been launched. There is going to be a rebrand of equality work under the name ‘Respect’. A logo is currently being prepared.

The Hate Crime DVD was discussed and will be sent to LA soon. This was hoped to be launched nationally post referendum but will be pushed back until the end of November. The schools involved have sent the DVD round to a variety of organisations to elicit feedback for quality assurance.

RMcQ also gave an update about the work of the Equality Act Implementation Team and the Criminal Justice Equality Strategy Sub Group, both of which she chairs. The Implementation team are entering the final year of their project and work is progressing well. The Criminal Justice Equality Strategy Sub Group has been tasked by the Justice Board to look at two issues:

- the under representation of people with protected characteristics across the criminal justice system
- access to the criminal justice system by people with disabilities.

ND provided a verbal update about work being done by the Criminal Justice Disability Group, which COPFS chairs – information about site audits, consultation work, deaf awareness training and a digital strategy was provided.

ACTION: KK to ascertain what the gender balance of current Trainees and ADs is.

6. Update on Equality Outcomes and evidence gathering

Due to time pressures, this item will be carried forward to a future meeting.

7. Future Equality and Inclusion Strategy

RMcQ has just completed her review of Initial Case Processing and suggested that this function should be the hub for equality and inclusion because it was the initial point of contact for members of the public with COPFS. Further discussion is required about the strategy.

ACTION: Future Equality and Inclusion Strategy to be added to the Nov meeting agenda.

8. Staff Conference 5th September 2014

RMcQ updated the group about plans for the Autumn Equality conference for COPFS staff. The conference will take place in the Scottish Prosecution College and the LA will be giving the keynote speech.

9. Update about Human Trafficking Summit on 17 October 2014

Karen Aitken is organising this and currently drawing up a list of stakeholders to be submitted to LA for approval before sending out invitations. The summit will consist of a Private and a Public Session and will be held at the Scottish Parliament. The prosecution Heads from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland will be attending.

10. AOCB

The situation with the Jewish Community was discussed in light of the Gaza fallout. The LA has asked that Federation Leads keep a watching brief on antisemitic cases reported to us over the next few months.

ACTION: KK to send details of any currently known antisemitic cases to the Federation Heads.

11. Date of Next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 19th November 2014, in Conference Room 1, Crown Office.