

Public Services Forum
17th Meeting: 5 March 2009
1-3pm, Cabinet Office

The meeting was chaired by Tom Watson MP, Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office.

1. Chair's welcome and work programme updates

1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the Forum.

1.2 The Chair reported that the Forum had been asked by BERR to consider producing a statement and collection of case studies focusing on the ways in which workforce representatives and managers can support and deliver positive change within public services.

1.3 The Forum agreed to work collaboratively to progress this, and for BERR to announce this in their forthcoming statement for the private sector.

2. Learning and Skills in Public Services

2.1 The co-chairs of the PSF Learning and Skills Task Group presented their final recommendations to the Forum.

2.2 The Chair agreed to:

- Formally present the Task Group's recommendations to UKCES, DIUS and LSC for action;
- Task the Government to make a formal response to the Task Group's report, including on how to skill up procurement colleagues to better specify skills outcomes in contracts;
- Reflect the issues on local government SSC's to relevant colleagues.

3. What does the recession mean for the public service workforce?

a) Minister of State for Employment

3.1 The Minister of State for Employment spoke about the recession and the role of public services.

3.2 The Chair noted that the NEC and REC were the key forums through which real-time solutions and outcomes in the recession would be delivered. The PSF should feed into and complement this as appropriate.

4. What does the recession mean for the public service workforce?

b) Minister for the Cabinet Office

4.1 The Minister for the Cabinet Office talked about how Government was keen to focus its efforts on recovery and described how public services would play a key role in supporting communities. The Minister also highlighted the Government's principles for public service reform as set out in *Excellence and Fairness*.

4.2 The Minister for the Cabinet Office agreed that partnership working and

collaboration were the key to delivering innovation and public service reform. Personalisation will be a hallmark of the next stage of public service reform, and will look at how to unlock 'richer' relationships between users and professionals.

4.3 The Forum agreed that workforce reform issues in the context of the recession should be a major theme of work going forward. The Chair would explore how to develop the conversation across the Forum ahead of future meetings.

5. Work programme

5.1 The Forum noted that the review of the Joint Statement was underway and would report its final recommendations to the next PSF.

5.2 Cabinet Office reported that Acas were keen to be involved in ongoing work on Drive for Change/ staff engagement.

Chair and Visiting Ministers

Tom Watson MP, Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office

Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office

Rt Hon Tony McNulty MP, Minister for Employment and Welfare Reform

The following organisations were represented at this meeting:

Government and employers

Cabinet Office

Department for Communities and Local Government

HM Treasury

Local Government Employers

National Offender Management Service

NHS Employers

Number 10

University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Trade unions

GMB

Prospect

NASUWT

National Union of Teachers

Society of Radiographers

Trades Union Congress

Unison

Unite

Third and private sector

Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations

CBI

National Council of Voluntary Organisations

Apologies

Business Services Association

Department of Health

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

PCS