

Towards 2016 – Agreed Action Plan

Chapter IX – Vocational Education Committees

*Chairman,
Education Sector Performance Verification Group*

We certify that the following Action Plan has been agreed through a partnership process representative of the stakeholders in the sector. We also confirm that the parties have agreed to co-operate with the provisions of Chapter VIII, Section 27 of the Agreement in relation to modernisation, flexibility, stable industrial relations and the continued development of partnership in the workplace. The parties accept that payment of each of the increases provided for in the Agreement is dependent on verification that the conditions for payment have been met. Since the submission of the final Progress Report under the previous Agreement, Sustaining Progress, there has been a climate of stable industrial relations and the parties have fully co-operated with on-going modernisation, flexibility and the development of partnership.

Signed by Joint Chairs of
Local Working Group:

Verified by CEO:

Date:

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‘Towards 2016’ Paragraph & Page Reference	Specific Priority Measures/Initiatives For Each Commitment To Be Achieved During The Timeframe Of The Pay Agreement		
	No.	Details of Specific Measures/Initiatives in order of priority	What improvements will these achieve?
	<i>Focus on key deliverables & indicate what each will mean in terms of better service delivery</i>		
28.5, page 114 – Organisational Change	1	To meet the needs of increased demands of our customers the each VEC will aim to ensure the provision of high quality public services and will work to ensure high levels of co-operation and participation. This will include the following ;	Delivery of a broad range of quality public services making use of the wide variety of expertise available in the VEC.
	2	Each VEC will develop and sign off a Partnership Charter	A clear way of dealing with organisational change and improvement effectively and in a partnership way.
	3	In addition to the provisions of this action plan each LWG will include in this section details of the additional achievements, through workplace Partnership, in the VEC, at each stage of this report	An agreed way of progressing issues of benefit to the VEC and staff that are outside the scope of this agreement.
	4	Each VEC will develop an action plan to facilitate active participation at every level within the VEC. (This may be achieved by the use of support tools provided by the VECNPF) .	Increased levels of input and flexibility from staff resulting in an increased quality of service delivery to both internal and external customers
	5	Each VEC will be represented in change initiatives organised by the VECNPF.	An increased level of skilled participants and deliverables achieved in a co ordinated way across the Sector.
	6	Staff will continue to co operate with the introduction of new schemes, policies, initiatives, and redistribution of tasks among staff and flexibility of reporting	Increased flexibility and improved capacity to respond to customer needs
28.6, page 115 – Team and Cross- Functional Working	7	To meet the needs of our ever changing service there is a need to develop and maintain the capacity for cross functional working and the actions to achieve this will include ;	Flexibility to provide an efficient and effective solution to challenges facing the VEC.

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	8	It is agreed that cross functional teams of people comprised of different grades and disciplines may be established to improve or introduce new or additional services. (These may be permanent teams or temporary/project teams established for a specific purpose). Each VEC will Set out what has been achieved by these teams	A better use of cross functional teams and a structured way of improving their operation that is more effective and efficient. This will result in improved teamwork and co operation and a more effective way of discharging tasks.
	9	Each VEC will implement specific interventions to develop teamwork across the VEC This may be achieved with the use of the VECNPF Core Values Workbook across a number of teams within the scheme. Report on what was achieved.	Improved teamwork to achieve more effective results and greater service
28.7, 28.8, page 115, 31.28, page 127 – New Technology & Legislative Change	10	To respond to the demands of the service each VEC will increase the use of technology as appropriate. The actions to achieve this will include ;	Greater access to services, better efficiencies and more effective use of resources
	11	Each VEC will indicate how improvements in the use of new technology has resulted in benefits for learners, other service users or internal customers.	A more focused use of technology identifying the benefits to customers
	12	It is agreed that staff will continue to co operate with ongoing legislative change through the normal consultation process.	A smoother and ultimately more effective model of improvement.
28.9, page 115 – Service Delivery	13	Where this flexibility is required to provide services trade unions will be notified in advance and any disputes will be processed through the normal IR mechanisms in accordance with this section of the agreement.	A more robust model of managing how service delivery is achieved which takes account of staff concerns and avoids disputes
	14	It is agreed that where appropriate work be carried out by the employment of temporary staff, contracting or outsourcing within existing resources and agreed arrangements. Any disagreement will be resolved through established IR mechanisms.	A more robust model of managing how service delivery is achieved which takes account of staff concerns and avoids disputes
28.10, page 116 – Shared Services	15	It is agreed that where appropriate shared services will be introduced in partnership between the parties. The actions to achieve this will include;	Increased flexibility in the use of shared services can be used for the benefit of the VEC resulting in efficiencies and /or cost savings.
	16	Arrangements for co operation with the introduction of these services will be agreed and published by each VEC	Proactive management of issues and avoidance of unnecessary disputes
28.11, page 116, 31.27, page 127 – Attendance Patterns & Customer Service	17	It is agreed that services may be provided outside traditional working hours either through voluntary arrangements or flexible working or recruitment of staff on the basis of part time or atypical work patterns	A greater focus on delivery of customer service by identifying needs and responding to them while simultaneously providing flexible working arrangements for staff.
	18	Each VEC will produce a structure to provide for quality assurance in customer service and will report on implementation of revised arrangements	Improved customer service by tracking commitments and making relevant improvements in how services are delivered.

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	19	Each VEC will appoint a person responsible for customer service issues within the VEC. This person will work with the VECNPF to develop customer service and co ordinate a common approach on a national basis	Achieving common change across the Sector and working on common customer service issues by making use of all the resources available.
	20	Each VEC will establish a system to report on complaints and customer service issues and include summary in VEC Annual Report.	Establishing the level of complaints and working out the causes of them.
	21	Each VEC develop and document the process of ongoing consultation with customers including learners on non teaching service provision.	Ongoing improvement of customer services as identified by the customers
	22	On the basis of customer feedback each VEC will identify the principal areas where flexible working hours can make a difference. Each VEC will agree and implement changes as required	Resolving customer service issues and providing flexible working arrangements for staff
28.12, page 116 – Staff Redeployment	23	The flexible delivery of service and the best use of resources as well as the development needs of our people often require the redeployment of staff. This may include the following ;	Making better use of available resources and increasing the knowledge and understanding of staff.
	24	It is agreed that staff or posts may be redeployed as appropriate in order to respond to changing priorities or urgent work demands. For example this may include but is not confined to the following processes Review working arrangements and patterns of activity (peaks and troughs) and plan how staffing is arranged to cover the appropriate areas at peak times.	Organising staffing levels in accordance with the demands of the service.
	25	Set out what arrangements are in place to involve and engage staff working with the team on a short term or part time basis	Improved individual and team satisfaction and performance
	26	Establish an agreed procedure on how staff are proactively moved between areas to foster understanding.	Better organisation of resources and more effective management of the VEC with increased organisational understanding.
	27	Decide protocols in advance on how agreements between departments on the allocation of existing internal resources will be reached.	Making best use of resources and ensuring that working relationships are maintained.
28.13, page 116 – Management of Change	28	To achieve the successful management of change the LWG will be used to inform unions of workplace change and arrange co operation. It is agreed that staff will co operate with changes while any disputes are being resolved through the IR machinery as set out in section 27.9 of the agreement	Achieving a better way of introducing change and ensuring that key stakeholders are involved at an early stage.
31.29, page 127 - Performance	29	The management of staff and the interests of addressing the many needs of the Sector will demand the development of PMDS and include ;	Making the best use of an available management tool to improve effectiveness and to maximise the development of staff.

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Management and Development	30	The implementation of PMDS will be evaluated to gauge its effectiveness. Actions to improve the use of PMDS in the management and development of people will be implemented by each VEC	Achieve clarity of role and manage the development of people.
	31	Each VEC will report on how corporate objectives are integrated into PMDS	Guarantee the link between individual and VEC performance and service delivery.
	32	Each VEC will ensure adequate provision for the inclusion, in PMDS of full time and part time staff employed for more than 1 year and report on numbers completed.	Ensure that all relevant staff are involved and engaged in the VEC mission.
	33	Each VEC will establish a training policy and provide for staff training and development on an ongoing basis.	To improve staff effectiveness and increase the capacity of the VEC
	34	Each VEC will develop a strategy for the development of leadership capacity within the VEC	To increase the capacity of the VEC to address the challenges facing it
	35	Each VEC will provide an outline of the training needs (matrix) for the VEC to the VECNPF on an annual basis.	To maximise the use of scarce resources and to make the best use of co operation with other VECs
31.30, page 128 – Promotions /Upgrades	36	It is agreed by the parties that implementation of initiatives in the areas of flexibility and change will not give rise to claims for increased rewards for staff in the form of promotions, regradings, allowances or other benefits or claims for extra staff. It is further agreed that all promotions will be on the basis of competitive processes.	Ensure that the processes uses are in line with best practice in the service.
31.31, page 128 - Review of Human Resource Policies	37	The growing complexity of managing people and the need for compliance with increased legislation highlights the need for VECs to review HR polices to improve the effectiveness of staff management;	Achieving greater compliance with the law and making the best use of people management expertise within the Sector.
	38	It is agreed human resource policies including grievance and disciplinary procedures will be reviewed and revised to reflect best practice and developments elsewhere in the public service. It is accepted that this may require amendments to existing legislative provisions.	Ensuring the highest level of compliance and provides guidance to people managers.
	39	Each VEC will develop a policy and strategy to promote and facilitate diversity and equality.	Meet legal obligations and provide a progressive working environment.
	40	Each VEC will identify the priorities to be addressed to improve the quality of working life, employee engagement, and implement as appropriate	Achieving higher levels of staff satisfaction and productivity.

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	41	Each VEC will ensure that all HR policies and systems are consistent with Partnership core values and promote behaviour consistent with them.	Developing and achieving a partnership culture
31.32, page 128 - Education Plans	42	Education plans are implemented on a local basis across the Sector. While there are many local actions underway there is an urgent need to address the communications needs of VECs.	Taking a strategic approach to the management of the VEC and ensuring it is meeting the changing demands of the community.
	43	Each VEC will co operate with the implementation of initiatives advanced through the VECNPF originated under education plans provided for in the VE Amendment Act 2001. Each VEC will report on progress on initiatives. For example this may include but is not confined to ; Establish an internal communications strategy addressing the communications needs of the VEC Review and report on improvements achieved on the basis of staff feedback.	Achieving greater clarity and congruence between the VEC mission and its operations
	44	Strengthen consultation mechanisms through the LWG for the organisation of information and consultation with representative bodies set out in the Partnership Charter	Compliance with legislation and making best use of resources.
	45	Review the external communications of the VEC and develop a policy and strategy to increase awareness and understanding of the VEC and its mission.	Providing information on the services available and improving how the community is served.
31.33, page 128 - Common Recruitment Pool	46	It is agreed the recommendations of the Review Group will be fully implemented by the parties in 2006, i.e. graduate entry and recruitment to specialist posts. Arrangements for the filling of 20% of the posts at Grades V to VII inclusive by open competition will be in place by end-2006. Specialist posts will continue to be filled by open competition and will be reckoned for the purposes of satisfying the 20% requirement. The first vacancies arising after 1st January 2007 may be filled by open competition.	Means of attracting wider experience to work in the sector and improve organisational effectiveness
31.34 & 31.35, page 128 - Rationalisation of Pay Arrangements	47	It is agreed that all payments will be made electronically by end-2006 at the latest. It is also agreed that all staff will be paid fortnightly, to be implemented within the currency of this agreement.	Greater efficiency and access to pay.