

**SUMMARY OF THE OFMDFM DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING
ON 11 AUGUST 2003**

PRESENT: Mr Hamilton, Mr Haire, Mr Gray, Ms Flanagan,
Mr Grimason, Dr Smyth, Mr McConnell,
Mr McCartney, Mrs Angus, Dr Mulligan.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Ferguson (Secretary).

APOLOGIES: Mr Jardine, Ms Bunting

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the Departmental Board meeting on 9 July 2003 were noted and agreed.

2. Matters Arising

The Board noted that the Service Delivery Agreement Out-turn report for 2002/03 was now available on the Departmental web site.

3. Standing Items / Current Issues

a) Political and Assembly Issues

Ms Flanagan updated the Board on the latest political developments including Assembly issues.

4. Papers

a) Departmental Conference

Mrs Angus introduced a paper setting out proposals for the OFMDFM Departmental conference for 2003. The Board discussed a number of issues around the structure, format and draft agenda for the conference.

A number of changes were suggested to the opening plenary session of the conference and a range of alternative workshop topics were discussed. Subject to these changes the main proposals for the conference were agreed.

[Action: Mrs Angus]

b) BDS Review of the provision of cover for PS posts

Mrs Angus introduced a paper proposing a number of recommendations arising out of a review by BDS into the provision of cover for Personal Secretary posts in OFMDFM. The paper was agreed subject to Directorates being grouped together so as to ensure that smaller business areas had access to cover. The new arrangements would also be subject to a three-month trial period.

[Action: Mrs Angus]

c) Employee Assistance Programme

Mrs Angus introduced a paper that provided the Board with an update on the introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme and a health check scheme. The Board noted that a contract for counselling services has been awarded and that work is ongoing in relation to the health check scheme.

d) Team Briefing – Departmental Brief

Mrs Angus introduced a paper that followed up on previous Board discussions about the content of the Departmental Brief element of the bi monthly Team Brief. The paper, which contained a list of issues staff would most like to see included in the Departmental Brief was noted and agreed by the Board.

e) OFMDFM Equality Scheme Progress Report

In Mrs Bunting's absence Dr Mulligan introduced two papers, one providing the Board with an update on implementation of the OFMDFM Equality Scheme for the quarter ended 31 March 2003 and the other providing the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland with a progress report covering 2002/03.

Dr Mulligan outlined a number of background issues in relation to the two papers, which the Board agreed could be submitted to the Minister. It was also agreed that Dr Mulligan would arrange an autumn seminar on equality scheme issues for staff in the Department at senior civil service and Grade 7 level and make a presentation to the Permanent Secretaries Group ahead of a meeting with the Equality Commission.

[Action: Dr Mulligan]

5. Tour de Table

- a) Mr Haire updated the Board on the Public/Private Partnership review and the Urban Regeneration Company.
- b) Mr Gray reported that a number of Bills arising from the Joint Declaration were currently being prepared.
- c) Mr Grimason updated the Board on communications issues.
- d) Mr McConnell reported that the Secretary of State had given approval to commence a consultation exercise on the Review of Public Administration in September. A consultation paper is currently being drafted.
- e) Dr Smyth updated the board on his programme of visits to the North/South bodies.
- f) Ms Flanagan updated the Board on a number of issues including Parliamentary Questions, Assembly issues and consultation in relation to the Civic Forum.
- g) Dr Mulligan also updated the Board on a number of issues including consultation on the European Directive on age discrimination, the Youth Development programme in North Belfast, his attendance, as part of the UK delegation, at a conference on the eradication of race

discrimination and a major publicity campaign in the autumn on the European Year of People with Disabilities.

- h) Mrs Angus reported that the Department's Resource Accounts had been delivered within the deadline to the Northern Ireland Audit Office and updated the Board on the consultation exercise for the Civil Contingencies Bill.

6. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Departmental Board will be on Tuesday 26 August 2003 at 10.45 am.

Michael Ferguson

11 August 2003.