



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

FOI Reference number: 01/2016

Date: 8 February 2016

Request:

- 1 Confirm dates of all joint meetings held between NIPB and the appointed Selective Medical Practitioner (SMP) Blackwell Associates Ltd, for the period between 16.6.15 and 31.12.15.
- 2 Copies of full minutes of all joint meetings held between NIPB and Blackwell Associates Ltd, the appointed SMP, for the period between 16.6.15 and 31.12.15.

Answer:

- 1 Meetings took place on 1 September 2015 and 10 November 2015.
- 2 Copies of the minutes are attached. Where redactions have been made these are in respect of Third party personal data – exempt from disclosure as per Section 40 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This is an absolute exemption and there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.

If you have queries about this request or the decision please contact the Board quoting the reference number above. If you are unhappy with the service you have received and wish to make a complaint or request a review you should write to the Board's Chief Executive at the following address:

Northern Ireland Policing Board
Waterside Tower
31 Clarendon Road
Clarendon Dock
Belfast BT1 3BG

Email: foi@nipolicingboard.org.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner. Generally, the Information Commissioner's Office cannot investigate or make a decision on a case unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Board. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:-

The Information Commissioner's Office – Northern Ireland
3rd Floor
14 Cromac Place
Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 2JB.

Telephone: - 0303 1231114
Email: - ni@ico.org.uk

Please be advised that all Policing Board replies under Freedom of Information will be released into the public domain via our website @ www.nipolicingboard.org.uk.

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

287653

MINUTES OF MEETING WITH BLACKWELL ASSOCIATES (SMP)

1 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 9.00AM

Present:

[REDACTED] – Blackwell Associates
[REDACTED] – Blackwell Associates
[REDACTED] – Blackwell Associates
Amanda Stewart - NIPB
[REDACTED] - NIPB
[REDACTED] - NIPB

Apologies:

There were no apologies

3. Minutes of last meetings

The minutes of the last meeting on 12 June 2015 were discussed and agreed. It was agreed to record a note of this meeting.

4. Review Of Contract

Blackwell said there was a reduction in cases and implications for KPIs relating to an increase/servicing any potential backlog

Action:

- NIPB to clarify any potential peak in referrals to Blackwell to address resourcing.
- NIPB – returns have seen a reduction.
- 4 cases noted as returned for clarification to be emailed with spreadsheets.
- Invoicing

5. New Assessment Policy and Consultation On Draft Guidance

Blackwell – has no issue in principle with draft guidance. Their main concern is high risk working environment. Mitigated if all action was complete. Need definitive guidance and templates. Preference is to delay implementation until clarified.

Action:

- Blackwell to schedule 9 appointments for Dr [REDACTED] to undertake a file review on the compulsory retirement age cases.
- NIPB to write to officers regarding medical evidence.

6. DPA Requests

Handwritten and third party notes and everything in the envelope. Maximum can be charged is £50.00

Action: NIPB to clarify the two cases outstanding regarding DPA cases.

7. Pricing for Reviews Introducing a new Medical Condition

Blackwell to consider pricing.

Action: NIPB to review implications and timescale for review implications and timescale for review suspension being lifted and agree to discuss at meeting in November.

8. Any Other Business

Dr [REDACTED] security clearance to be actioned by Thursday. NIPB to explore if account has been deleted.

MINUTES OF MEETING WITH BLACKWELL ASSOCIATES (SMP)

10 November 2015 AT 9.00AM

Present:

[REDACTED] – Blackwell Associates
[REDACTED] – Blackwell Associates
[REDACTED] – Blackwell Associates
Amanda Stewart - NIPB
[REDACTED] - NIPB

Apologies:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

3. Minutes of last meeting

- The minutes of the last meeting on 1 September 2015 were discussed and agreed and actions have been completed.
- Blackwell asked if the minutes could be forwarded earlier in future and NIPB agreed.
- Blackwell has recently employed two new members of staff and would be seeking security clearance with the NIPB prior to them commencing work on the NIPB/Blackwell contract.
- Dr [REDACTED] security clearance is currently being progressed through Defence Business Services.
- NIPB advised that they would be commencing preparatory in-house work on case reviews however it is unlikely that this would cause any increase in workload for Blackwell before April 2016.
- It was agreed that the NIPB would advise of any known increase in case referrals and subsequently Blackwell would advise of any delay in turnaround time.

4. Review of contract

- NIPB advised that the alphabetical sheet that accompanies the invoices is no longer required.

- NIPB advised that their submission to Blackwell is now entitled 'NIPB Case Referral' as opposed to 'Case Summary' so as not to cause confusion with the PSNI Summary correspondence.
- Blackwell advised that there were 12 cases on hold pending clarification on the new guidance.
- Discussion took place around the quality control checklist being used by Blackwell and the number of cases returned under query.

Action: It was agreed that the Board would provide details of the returns to date and provide an updated spreadsheet on a regular basis.

5. Joint Guidance.

- Discussion took place around Blackwell operating within the new guidance. It was accepted that there were difficulties in the interpretation of the new guidance by Blackwell.
- A meeting has been arranged with Dr [REDACTED], Dr [REDACTED] and NIPB Officials to discuss the guidance further with a view to establishing an agreed way forward regarding the assessment method.
- Amanda advised of the various options to return all the over 65 cases to their original banding within the context of the Scoffield review.
- Dr [REDACTED] advised that, after consideration of the nine over 65 cases that were previously submitted, he was of the view that the officers should be returned to their original banding.

Action: Dr [REDACTED] to provide correspondence to Amanda Stewart outlining his view on the above.

6. Copies of Medical files (appeals)

- NIPB queried the issue of medical files including handwritten notes and Blackwell advised that they were included in all copies made by them. This agenda item is now closed.

7. Template Referral Documentation

- NIPB provided draft copies of the new templates to be used with the new assessment method. The changes are mainly in relation to the different pension regulations i.e. 1988 and 2009, the questions in relation to Injury on Duty remain the same.

8. Any other business

- NIPB asked if the amendment in the [REDACTED] case had been made and Blackwell advised that it had.
- Blackwell queried if they could provide Dr [REDACTED] handwritten notes to [REDACTED] in their current form or was there a need to redact.

Action NIPB to clarify before Blackwell release Dr [REDACTED] handwritten notes.

9. Date of next meeting

- It was agreed that the next meeting would be scheduled for January 2016.