



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

FOI Reference number: FOI 49/2015

Date: 30 September 2015

Request: I am led to believe that you had a meeting yesterday (25 August 2015) with interested parties in relation to the ongoing dispute of IOD Pensions. Under FOI legislation, I am requesting a copy of minutes taken at that meeting.

Answer:

Under FOI legislation, attached is a note of the meeting held on 25 August 2015.

Where redactions have been made this is to protect the personal data of third parties in accordance with the Exemption under Section 40 (2) (Third Party Data) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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
12 Cromac Place
Gasworks
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.

**MEETING WITH RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS ON OVER 65 REVIEWS –
TUESDAY 25 AUGUST 2015, AT WATERSIDE TOWER**

Present:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mr J Craig (NIPB)

[REDACTED]

Mr B McGahan (NIPB)

Mrs A Stewart (NIPB)

[REDACTED] (NIPB)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr McGahan opened the meeting, welcoming those present and introduced NIPB Officials in attendance at the meeting.

Mr McGahan advised that the main issue for discussion at the meeting was the Reviews of over 65's and the proposed actions taken by the Board to address Recommendation 19 of the Scofield Report through a process of reconsideration.

A member of the group asked if the issue of permanency could also be clarified, and for a discussion on the matters relating to how this situation came about and remedial action taken by the Board.

2. Permanency

Mr McGahan clarified at the outset of the meeting that in relation to the issue of permanency, Scofield made clear that permanent meant permanent, and should never be reviewed. He stated that anyone marked permanent would not therefore be reviewed. Mr McGahan also advised that the issue of how the Board had got to this position was before his time, stating that nobody set out to do anything wrong and that Scofield had provided clarity on the issues.

3. **Over 65 Reviews**

A representative from the Group asked Mr McGahan to clarify the position in relation to the over 65 reviews.

Mr McGahan advised that it was agreed and accepted that nobody will be referred for review on the basis of age (ie because they have reached their 65th birthday). A member of the group asked if a normal review can take place, and a Board Official advised that the Board had a statutory duty to review, but not on the basis of age.

A member of the group asked for clarification on the process for reviewing the 47 cases, and to explain why the Board could not just reinstate the original position before the review.

Mr McGahan advised that the Board has to act in accordance with Regulations as reports and certificates issued are presumptively lawful. The mechanism within the Regulations is reconsideration. He confirmed that the Pension Ombudsman had been asked, but said couldn't take 47 cases. It was the Board's view that the quickest way was reconsideration with intention of reinstating to their pre-review banding.

A discussion took place on the process for carrying out a reconsideration of the 47 cases. Mr McGahan explained that the Selected Medical Practitioner (SMP) will take forward the reconsideration of those cases where the Board has received written agreement to proceed. Mr McGahan advised that the Board had consulted and issued a revised assessment policy and that the guidance for SMP was out for consultation until late September 2015. Once the guidance is finalised, the cases can be referred across to SMPs.

Members of the group expressed concern at the potential distress at having to undergo a further reconsideration with the SMP. Mr McGahan advised that it was the Board's expectation that the cases could be reconsidered as a paper/file review, but that if the doctor feels there is a need for an assessment, the Board could not interfere with the discretion of the doctor.

Action: It was agreed to provide the group with a copy of the revised assessment policy and for NIPB to explore if SMP could carry out a paper/file review for the 47 cases.

A member of the group asked for clarification on the numbers of cases that are progressing and the timescales.

An NIPB Official advised that of the 47 cases, twenty (20) had agreed to a reconsideration; two (2) had refused; two (2) were with the Pension Ombudsman and responses were outstanding on twenty-three (23) cases. Mr McGahan confirmed that it was not the intention to call anyone back who had gained from the last review.

Mr McGahan advised that the normal turnaround time for reconsideration was 6-8 weeks. It was proposed to ask SMP to prioritise these cases, so that once the guidance was finalised in late September, that cases could be sent across for reconsideration. Mr Craig acknowledged that people had lost faith in the process, however assured the group that the Board was doing everything that it could to rectify the situation. He proposed that a meeting with the representatives once the results of the first 10 cases were known would be helpful.

Action: It was agreed for the group to meet again with the Board representatives to review the situation once the outcome was known from the first 10 cases that are referred for reconsideration.

The meeting concluded and it was agreed to circulate a note of the meeting for factual accuracy.