



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING

Agricultural Advisory Panel Meeting: 6 March 2020

Summary of the minutes of the meeting held at the President's Pavilion, Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells.

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Present

Chair - Lionel Walford

Panel Members – Steve Hughson (Independent), Peter Rees (Independent), Ivan Monckton (Unite), Daryl Williams (Unite), Darren Williams (FUW), Will Prichard (NFU Cymru)

Legal Adviser - Helen Snow (Geldards)

Welsh Government - Ryan Davies (Panel Manager), Sian Hughes
Observer - Brian Troake (Unite)

Apologies – Dan Ricketts

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including Brian Troake from Unite who will be taking over the role from Daryl Williams in September 2020.

Agenda Item 2 – Chair’s Update

The Skills Development Subcommittee met on 28 February. They are working on organising a work shop to get all parties with interest in skills and training within the agricultural sector around a table to discuss how to take this forward. Presentations were also received from LANTRA on CPD and Welsh Government’s Apprenticeship Policy Team.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of Minutes of the Last Meeting and Action Points

No changes to the record were made and the minutes were approved.

The Chair assured members that after a productive meeting with Mark Alexander willingness was shown to help address the concerns of the panel in terms of obtaining data to help formulate policy.

Agenda Item 4 – Modernisation of the Agricultural Wages Order 2021

A contradiction with Grade 1 and Grade 2 was highlighted within the rebanding of the grade structures. Currently it reads that a Grade 1 worker has less than 3 years’ experience; however a Grade 2 worker has 2 years’ experience.

PROPOSAL: The wording is amended so a Grade 2 worker needs to have 3

years' experience.

The Panel agreed unanimously with this proposal.

It is imperative workers do not lose out when the new model comes into effect and changes will safeguard all workers from any detrimental effect caused by transferring to the new structure.

Safeguarding was discussed to make sure any worker is not left worse off by re-grading lower than the pay band they are in. If this were to happen, the salary would be ring-fenced until the grading structure has caught up or the contract is terminated.

It was proposed that if a worker has managerial responsibility they would automatically slot in to Grade 5. The Panel agreed unanimously with this proposal.

It was confirmed there were no "standard" HR rules to follow as this is a contractual issue. However it would be a policy position and wording could be either put into the Order or guidance (although the latter would not hold as much weighting). If it was in the Order it would be law and non-compliance would need to be enforced through the current procedures.

PROPOSAL: To avoid confusion between regimes the new grading structure is Grade A to Grade E

The Panel agreed unanimously with this proposal.

Concerns were raised about the assumption apprenticeships take 2 years to complete. In some instances this can take longer, depending on the circumstances. It was advised this can be addressed by re-labelling this as 'Yr2 +.

The Way Forward

The Chair asked if the Panel now felt better prepared for any form of negotiation in September. The Consultation is likely to go out in spring 2020 and this would give sufficient time to review the responses in order to make a sound judgement

at the negotiation stage.

Panel members had a discussion around the approach to negotiations and a four stage approach was agreed

1. Both parties to present position papers;
2. Meet to present claim;
3. Informal negotiation stage; and
4. If no agreement found, bring in the independent members.

Panel members all felt this was the right step forward.

Agenda Item 5 – Any Other Business

On Call

A paper was distributed to all Panel members which gave a more detailed definition in terms of how “On Call” is interpreted. It was confirmed that this would need to be added into guidance.

Statistics

There has been an evidence gap since 2010 when Defra (MAFF then) stopped conducting their own data collection.

There were three options currently available as vehicles to help furnish these datasets. (i) FBS; (ii) June Survey and (iii) ONS Hours and Earnings Survey.

In the previous attempt 85% of participants refused to answer. The concern by members was that a low response rate would provide inconclusive data. An action point was raised to look at how weighting of data is worked should a low turnout be achieved.

All the unions agreed to help encourage participation.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is over two days – Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th September 2020.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.

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