
Union-Management Consultation Committee Field Operations Branch

May 22, 2014

RECORD OF DECISION

UVAE participants

Kim Coles	National Executive Vice-President.
Jayne Auranen	National Vice-President, Ontario
Bonnie Heidt	National Vice-President, Western Region
Michelle Bradley	Vice-President, Atlantic Region
Daniel Gaulin	Quebec Representative

UVAE absences

Management participants

Charlotte Bastien	Director General, Field Operations
Paul Brown	Area Director (Nova Scotia Area)
Lee Marshall	Area Director (Newfoundland and Labrador Area)
Claude Bourque	Area Director (New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Gaspésie Area)
Rick Christopher	Director, Field Operations
Johane Verville	Area Director (Eastern Ontario Area)
Robert Cormier	Area Director (Western Quebec Area)
Diane Peterson-Razos	Area Director (Saskatchewan and Manitoba Area)
Duane Baldwin	Acting Area Director (Alberta Area)
Adrienne Alford-Burt	Area Director (British Columbia Mainland and Yukon Area)
Graham Williams	Director, Co-ordination, Transition and Integrated Services
Michelle Fortier	Director, HR Operations
Wendy Shail	Senior Resources Advisor
Cindy Meyer	Human Resources Consultant (Team Leader)

Management absences

Renate Fournier-Bélanger	Director, Planning and Support Operations
Stephen Little	Area Director (Central Ontario Area)
Stella Schepis	Area Director (Southwestern Ontario Area)
Mary Sebastian	Area Director (Northeastern Ontario Area)
Lina Matos	Director, Operations Support
Bridget Preston	Area Director (Vancouver Island and the Islands Area)

Note-taking: Amanda Lafontaine, Executive Assistant, DGFO

The meeting was co-chaired by Charlotte Bastien, Director General, Field Operations, and Kim Coles, National Vice-President, UVAE.

ITEMS	Status/Action
<p>1. Review of the minutes of the previous teleconference</p> <p>Charlotte called the meeting to order, welcoming everyone.</p> <p>No changes were made to the minutes.</p>	
<p>2. Adoption of the agenda</p> <p>The proposed agenda was approved by management and the UVAE. Two items were added to the agenda at the UVAE's request: Situation in Scarborough and assurance of a safe work environment.</p>	
<p>3. Field Operations SD update</p> <p>The acting director of the Southwestern Ontario Area (Hamilton, London and Mississauga), Beverly Martin, started on May 20, for a period of four months. The acting director of Central Ontario Area (Peterborough, Trenton, Kingston and Toronto), Katherine Richards-Solc, started on April 22, 2014, for a period of four months.</p> <p>Rick Christopher started on assignment as Operations Director with Field Operations in January for a year. He is assigned to a variety of HR and Finance files, as well as Field Operations files.</p> <p>Audrey Jacques, Communications Advisor, Field Operations, has accepted a deployment to Ottawa with Head Office Communications. The request to have Audrey replaced has still not been approved.</p> <p>The Field Operations WIKI was launched on March 14. To date, results have been good, with good questions and good comments. Updating and coordinating answers on the WIKI used to be one of Audrey's responsibilities.</p> <p>The Human Resources Plan provides for filling the area director positions in Southwestern and Central Ontario based on the situation of the position incumbents concerned.</p>	
<p>4. NUMCC Field Operations guidelines</p> <p>Kim mentioned out that there was a mistake in her title; the change will be made and the document will be redistributed.</p> <p>There were no other changes to the guidelines.</p> <p>The NUMCC guidelines for Field Operations were adopted.</p>	<p><u>G. Williams:</u> Update the document.</p>
<p>5. National performance goals</p> <p>Management explained the purpose of the performance objectives, which are national for each position. A working group was formed to develop the objectives for each position (client service team manager, client service agent, paramedical clerk, administrative assistant to the</p>	<p><u>Robert Cormier:</u> Pass on the names of the members of each working group.</p>

ITEMS	Status/Action
<p>area director and chief of administrative services).</p> <p>These objectives were approved by the Field Operations Management Committee.</p> <p>Management pointed out that the performance objectives for 2014-2015 would be explained at performance review meetings with each employee individually.</p> <p>The working groups were composed of the area director and the client service team manager, who consulted with human resources experts and service delivery experts at Head Office to develop the performance objectives.</p>	
<p>6. Statements of merit criteria for case manager, client service agent and client service team manager</p> <p>Management indicated that the French version was not the right one. The correct version will follow.</p> <p>Management reviewed the statement of merit criteria for each position.</p> <p>The SOCs had been approved by the Assistant Deputy Minister, effective May 13, 2014.</p> <p>It was clarified that there would be no grandfather provision.</p> <p>The union would like to receive a list of the education levels of the case managers and client service agents. Management explained that the information was not available but that Human Resources would request it again.</p> <p>Management explained that the education requirements for case managers had been changed to include specialization in case management.</p> <p>The employment conditions for client service agents had been changed to meet operational requirements.</p> <p>Educational requirements had also been modified to meet changing client demographics, including the larger number of complex cases.</p> <p>The union felt that with all these changes, employees would no longer have access to promotion and would want to leave VAC for other organizations.</p> <p>The union asked if the combination of experience and education would be considered for employees on secondment.</p> <p>Management indicated that the experience requirement could be removed for post-secondary recruitment.</p>	<p><u>HR</u>: 2nd request for list of credentials.</p> <p><u>HR</u>: Action</p>

ITEMS	Status/Action
<p>The union mentioned that in the past, client service agents had a grandfather provision for the transition period.</p>	<p><u>HR</u>: Forward document.</p>
<p>7. Workload – Case managers, client service agents, etc.</p> <p>Management explained the workload intensity tool and how it worked. The issue of the tool's reliability in establishing the number of cases per employee was raised.</p> <p>Management explained that CAS Workload Measurement Tool was in development. The current situation after the closure of eight offices was also explained.</p> <p>The last stage had been postponed given the lack of resources for these two tools. The Case Management and Support Services Directorate is responsible for both of them.</p> <p>The Deputy Minister is informed on a regular basis of the status of the tools.</p> <p>The area directors are working on an action plan for case management wait lists. The results will be shared.</p> <p>The union was concerned about the increasing employee workload and the tool promised by management, which has yet to materialize. It also mentioned that although overtime had been authorized for employees, they were overwhelmed by the workload. Given the heavy workload, the union noted that employees eligible for retirement were not interested in staying on with the department and those staying were swamped.</p> <p>The Finance/Human Resources Committee had approved going ahead with post-secondary recruitment for CSA and CM positions.</p> <p>Management confirmed that none of the workload would be transferred to private companies.</p> <p>The union mentioned that National Public Service Week would be boycotted again this year. Employees indicated that they do not feel supported by management.</p>	
<p>8. Staffing</p> <p>The union requested a staffing update. Management said Human Resources would share staffing request results for the past three months by the Friday following this teleconference.</p> <p>The union said that pressure was being brought to bear in some areas with regard to resourcing and staffing. Many areas are dealing with staff shortages, including the Regina Area Office. She asked if there were plans to close this office.</p>	<p><u>HR</u>: Forward results to the union.</p>

ITEMS	Status/Action
<p>Management indicated that no more office closures were planned for the time being and that the focus was currently on staffing case manager positions.</p>	
<p>9. Local union-management consultation committees (Halifax & Dartmouth)</p> <p>Management asked if the union wanted to merge the two local committees in Halifax and Dartmouth. Jayne suggested having one committee, but two separate locals. The union and management agreed to have one committee per area, except for the NCCN, which would keep its own committee.</p> <p>Management hoped to have a working group to assess the structure currently being put forward for Field Operations. The working group will comprise both Field Operations and union representatives. This item should be added to the agenda for the next meeting.</p>	<p><u>Charlotte:</u> Canvas directors to form the working group.</p>
<p>10. Health and safety meetings</p> <p>The union raised the issue of health and safety committee meeting minutes not being shared.</p> <p>Management explained that the process had changed. The minutes now have to be sent to the National Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator, Simone Cormier. Staff will be reminded of the process for inspection reports.</p>	
<p>11. Business Continuity Plan</p> <p>The union was deeply concerned about the situation in Scarborough. Management explained that plans had to be changed because there was not enough room for all the employees. Public Works had confirmed that a temporary space would be allocated for an indefinite period of time. Employees will be informed shortly.</p> <p>The continuity plans should be updated in the next few months.</p>	
<p>12. FCR and ICE system</p> <p>The union raised employee concerns about incorporating FCR into their already heavy workloads.</p> <p>Robert said it would be a challenge to integrate FCR, but on average it would mean taking two calls a day. He encouraged the area offices to develop a strategy to manage backlogged cases. There was also discussion of what Montréal had done to manage the case backlog effectively and to control the workload.</p> <p>The Department had received approval to purchase the rest of the licences required to have ICE in each office. The Scarborough office</p>	

ITEMS	Status/Action
<p>will have priority.</p> <p>Management noted that a working group would be formed to discuss next steps and ensure consistency across the country.</p> <p>The union raised the issue that there was not enough time in the day to post the notes taken during phone calls in the CSDN. Management will ask to have to the CSA phone lines shut down from 4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>The union mentioned that there was no schedule for Montréal employees on ICE. Management explained that local management in Montréal had tried to establish a schedule but there were too many issues and managing absences had proved too difficult. The CSAs on line could end up with a too-high call volume.</p> <p>The FCR working group has to look at the problem of call-backs when CSAs are on line and at the number of CSAs in each office.</p> <p>The union pointed out that there was mention in a document that the statistics on walk-in clients would be considered.</p> <p>It was reported that the Regina Area Office did not have the option of putting the ICE system on "not ready" when staff had to serve a walk-in.</p> <p>It was reported that when VAC employees call clients, the number 11111 is displayed and consequently clients won't answer the phone. The union asked that when employees call clients, the Department's name be displayed if possible.</p>	<p><u>Management:</u> Ask if lines could be cut after 4 p.m.</p> <p><u>Management:</u> Raise this problem with the working group and get an update from FOMC.</p> <p><u>Union:</u> Share the mentioned document.</p> <p><u>Management:</u> This option should be validated with the FCR working group.</p> <p><u>Management:</u> Validate with Shared Services.</p>
<p>13. Iron Mountain and turnaround time for document requests</p> <p>The turnaround time for document requests is four to six days.</p> <p>The union raised the issue that Iron Mountain had no follow-up system in place for forwarded files.</p> <p>The terms of reference for document requests and the documentation retention period are being reviewed. Documents must be kept. The standards for packaging client files have not yet been formalized.</p> <p>The union was very concerned about employee working conditions in the records management office in Kirkland Lake.</p>	<p><u>Management:</u> Follow up with Renate Fournier-Bélanger's group for details on the process.</p> <p><u>Management:</u> Situation to be analyzed.</p>

ITEMS	Status/Action
<p>14. FHGPS contract</p> <p>The DGFO mentioned she had not been briefed on the contract with Medavie. She asked that this item be on the agenda of the next meeting.</p> <p>The union and management agreed that there would be representation from the union and the CSAs on the working group.</p>	<p><u>Management:</u> Add this item to the October agenda.</p>
<p>15. CSDN monitoring</p> <p>There was discussion on access to information requests for client notes written by the CSAs. The union is concerned about protecting employees.</p> <p>A request was made to have the working group look at the pop-up that requests the reasons for accessing client files.</p> <p>Management added that these pop-ups were designed for research into security screening issues. Management will follow up on the criteria used to identify an employee for a security screening.</p>	<p><u>Management:</u> Follow-up on monitoring of security screening done when employees access client files.</p>
<p>16. Providing a safe and respectful environment</p> <p>With regard to the matter of clients wanting to record VAC employees, Bonnie asked if the practice applied to home visits. Legal counsel had advised against allowing clients to record VAC employees.</p> <p>More information about recording employees during home visits is forthcoming.</p> <p>Nancy indicated that telephone companies have the option of recording telephone conversations. Management explained that companies usually offer this service to people with hearing impairments.</p> <p>Posters prohibiting recording will be distributed to area offices very soon.</p>	
<p>17. Round Table</p> <p>The directors indicated that they appreciated the discussion.</p> <p>Jayne asked to have more representation from the Ontario Area Office.</p> <p>Daniel mentioned that teleconferences this long were difficult since he primarily speaks French.</p> <p>The union thanked all participants and expressed satisfaction with the contributions everyone had made.</p> <p>Kim indicated that since their convention was to take place the first week of October, it would be preferable to hold the next union-</p>	

ITEMS	Status/Action
<p>management meeting in late October. The union and management agreed to hold the next meeting during the week of October 27. Management added that a request would be made to make this a face-to-face meeting in Montréal.</p>	

Original signed by

Original signed by

Charlotte Bastien
Director General, Field Operations

Kim Coles
National Vice-President
UVAE / PSAC