

Association for Clinical Biochemistry



FEDERATION OF CLINICAL SCIENTISTS NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Fourteenth Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Clinical Scientists will take place at 17:15 hours on **Monday 23rd May 2011**, in the King's Suite of the Harrogate International Centre, Harrogate.

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To receive and, as the members see fit, to approve the Minutes of the thirteenth Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Clinical Scientists held on 10th May 2010 in Glasgow.
3. To consider matters arising from those minutes.
4. To receive the Chairman's report.
5. To receive the National Negotiator's report.
6. To receive the Secretary's report.
7. To receive the Treasurer's report.
8. To consider any other competent business.

Note to Agenda Item 8

Members wishing to raise issues under Item 8 are requested to give advanced notice to the FCS Secretary (e-mail Secretary.FCS@ACB.org.uk) by 28th April 2011.

R Goodall
Secretary

THE ASSOCIATION FOR CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTRY

FEDERATION OF CLINICAL SCIENTISTS

Minutes of the Thirteenth Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Clinical Scientists, held in the Carron Room, SECC, Glasgow on Monday 10th May 2010 at 17.15.

Present: Geoff Lester, Chairman
Roberta Goodall, Secretary
Brian Smith, National Negotiator & NHS Staff Council Representative
Terry Dyer, Treasurer

and 39 other FCS members

13.1 Apologies for absence

Received from Mr MHS Lee, Dr EJ Lewis, Dr M Firth and Dr GS Challand.

13.2 Minutes of the twelfth FCS AGM held on 18th May 2009 in Liverpool

These were received and APPROVED. The acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Mrs R Lapworth, seconded by Dr JH Barth and carried *nemine contradicente*.

13.3 To consider matters arising

None were raised.

13.4 Chairman's report by Geoff Lester

NHS Pensions

An NHS pension is a valuable asset. It represents deferred payment of salary. Contrary to the impression given by elements of the red top press it is not a goose laying golden eggs for public sector staff. It costs you between 6.5% and 8.5% of your salary and your employer a further 14%. The National Audit Office has checked the costs of public sector pension schemes and again concluded that currently NHS scheme members are paying more into the Treasury than NHS pensioners are taking out.

Along with the implementation of the April 2008 part of the pension scheme for new entrants, with a retirement age of 65, accrual at 60ths rather than 80ths and considerably more flexibility in how benefits are taken, has come the Pension Choice exercise. This is a once only opportunity for members of the 1995 part of the scheme to opt into the new scheme. This is happening in tranches determined by your age and SHA over the next two years, although the start of the rolled out exercise is delayed.

The issues are technical but the features of the two schemes are clearly explained in updated and revised pension scheme literature that now consolidates the former scheme booklets. Copies can be downloaded from the scheme's web site or contact your FCS representative for information.

Whilst many may regard the decision simply as one between retiring at 60 or 65, it is emphatically one that only you can make based on your personal circumstances, intentions and expectations. Only those properly regulated by the finance authorities can give pensions advice, so do not ask FCS to help make the decision for you. However we will help you understand what is on offer. Our overarching advice is do not take this lightly. Make the asset work for you. So far the uptake in the pilot areas has been quite low.

In the current economic climate there has been much speculation of what a new government may do to curb public sector pensions. The NHS scheme is a contribution scheme with benefits guaranteed by the Treasury. Its regulations are legal entities in the form of statutory instruments. Changes to these require considerable negotiation and consultation. There have been no approaches yet to start such negotiations. Should changes be introduced they should not apply to existing scheme members but, just as with the introduction of the 2008 part of the scheme, will apply only to new entrants.

On Call Negotiations

Covering 24/7/365 service provision was an element of the UK-wide Agenda for Change terms and conditions that was left for future negotiation although the new national terms introduced a base-line of the *Interim Regime*. Most employment groups enjoyed provisions prior to Oct 2004 under Whitley that were better than this and they are protected until 31 March 2011 whilst the negotiations are concluded. Clinical Scientists are one of the few groups that, in general, have benefitted from the *Interim Regime*. In order to protect the position of our unusual group FCS is part of the Staff Council sub-group seeking an alternative national model.

The sub-group agreed that this should be based on sound evidence guided by the wide range of current provisions and developments in working time regulations and employment law and case law in the UK and

Europe. Staff Council Executive, in partnership, has made it very clear that the protection arrangements cannot be extended further beyond March 2011. Pilot work and analysis of the scope of the necessary data gathering exercise planned has led NHS Employers to the conclusion that a fully costed national model arrangement will not be feasible within the time scale. The staff side are adamant that we must meet our remit although the nature of the output is likely to be more in the form of a set of national standards against which local arrangements can be tested. The sub-group will be working intensively during May and June with a view to consulting on its recommendations for a revised Section 2 from the July meeting of Staff Council to give local partnerships time to consider arrangements before protection expires in March 2011.

Modernising Scientific Careers

After an anxious wait we have recently seen the publication of the MSC UK policy document, *Modernising Scientific Careers – The UK Way Forward*, the associated England Action Plan and importantly the England Impact Assessment. The devolved administrations are responsible for implementation in Scotland, Wales and N Ireland.

This is one of those issues where the ACB benefits from its special status as a professional body recognised as an independent trade union as this gives us legitimacy and roles across the wide range of issues involved in this complex initiative. These are listed in Annexes 1 and 5 of the Action Plan. FCS is liaising with our colleagues in UNITE and with NHS Employers and working closely with ACB Council Executive to protect the standing of our profession and our members during what we must recognise is a time of attrition

13.5 National Negotiator's report by Brian Smith

NHS Pay

For AfC staff, there was a pay uplift of 2.25% from April 2010. The new AfC pay rates - and the uplifts agreed for Medical staff, were published in the April 2010 ACB News. A public sector pay freeze is widely expected for at least the next financial year. Staff Side will however be submitting evidence to the Pay Review Body. A survey gathering evidence for this has been commissioned from Income Data Services (IDS). Would everyone please respond electronically to this survey, which was emailed by the ACB Office? You have until June to respond.

Agenda for Change (AfC)

As reported last year, the entire AfC Job Evaluation Scheme, was challenged last year as not delivering Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value (the "Hartley" case). This challenge was unsuccessful and was not appealed.

An updated Job Evaluation Handbook is now published incorporating clarifications produced from experience of applying the scheme.

The Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) has been reviewed to try to get greater uptake. It is intended to provide model KSF Outlines and to simplify the process.

Mileage Expenses

Discussions have been taking place for four years regarding the revision of mileage payments. As of March 2010 the four governments have instructed their senior civil servants that they could no longer fund any protection arrangements, even though after the first year it will produce net savings. Therefore, mileage discussions will be restarted.

Ill Health Retirement

New provisions are now in force. The NHS Injury Benefit scheme is still under review and a report is still awaited.

Redundancy Arrangements

There have been moves in several Trusts to introduce *ad hoc* arrangements to avoid full redundancy costs. Local Staff Sides are urged to resist "signing off" any such arrangements.

Serco/GSTS

GSTS is a partnership between Serco and Guys and St Thomas' Foundation Trust. Existing Guys and St Thomas' Pathology staff were seconded into GSTS but retain NHS conditions of employment. GSTS is very actively trying to provide Pathology services throughout England by takeover or via partnerships with local Trusts. The Treasury directed that in all future partnerships, Pathology staff should become GSTS employees. It however appears that at least one Trust forming a partnership with GSTS, will maintain existing Pathology staff on NHS conditions of employment.

13.6 Secretary's report by Roberta Goodall

Ms R Goodall referred to the written report on page 14 of the ACB Annual Report. 2009 was an exceptionally busy year for FCS which saw its representatives and officers having to deal with a number of difficult and high profile cases. This year has seen a worrying increase in cases involving organisational change, transfer of

undertakings and, sadly, redundancies. We have also seen our first cases involving referral to the HPC. The FCS will be embarking on discussions with HPC with regards to several of their procedures.

AfC and pre-registration trainees

In an almost identical scenario to that reported last year there are still one or two unresolved issues regarding implementation and assimilation issues – often involving Foundation Trusts or those where local agreements had previously opted out of Whitley, causing confusion over correct assimilation to AfC bands and subsequent difficulties over back pay. Five years after AfC was introduced it is outstanding that there are still areas where matters are not complete.

Representatives' training

On a positive note the National Committee grows in strength and skill with new regional representatives for Scotland and Northern Ireland added to our ranks. This year we once again held a very successful induction training day for local representatives, this year in Birmingham, whilst a second day, at Tooley Street in November, dealt with organizational change issues, as this had been such a prominent area in our caseload this year. Both training days, received very positive feedback from participants. We feel that such training not only equip local reps to participate fully in the negotiating and representative process locally but also provides valuable professional development and transferable skills in HR related matters

Modernising Scientific Careers

Ms R Goodall added that members of the FCS Executive have been involved in various discussions on the MSC programme. This included the discussion held by the Chief Scientific Officer with the Trade Unions on the final draft of the policy document. Trade Unions have so far been unsuccessful in securing a second seat on the Regulation Working Group and are currently represented by one UNITE member. Various FCS members, along with ACB members, have been involved in the curriculum workshops.

13.7 Treasurer's report

The ACB Finance Director is, ex officio, the Hon Treasurer of FCS. Mr TF Dyer referred the meeting to page 30 of the Association's Annual Report for details of the accounts for 2009. FCS Expenditure had risen from £33,659 to £38,316. Around £28,000 of the FCS expenditure is for the professional advice contract with the CSP.

13.8 Amendments of membership subscription

The Treasurer proposed an increase in membership subscriptions for Federation membership from £86.00 to £90.00 from 1st January 2011. The proposal was seconded by Miss JM Smith and carried *nemine contradicente*.

13.9 Other relevant business

No other business was raised. Mr GH Lester thanked those attending for their attendance and continued support of the Federation. He also thanked the ACB Office staff for their help and support.

13.10 The meeting closed at 18.00.