

Greater Manchester Protocol for Joint Working on Workforce Matters

Devolution Initiatives and high quality employment

The Interim Mayor of Greater Manchester, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), the Chief Executive of the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership Board and the Greater Manchester public service trade unions recognise that:

- Staff play a vital role in the delivery of high quality public services
- High quality employment in public services plays a vital role in the functioning of the Greater Manchester economy and society.

The parties to this protocol are committed to working together and with full employee involvement and engagement to ensure that the devolution of powers to the Greater Manchester level can be of benefit to the citizens and employees of the city-region.

The parties note that the broad GM Devolution agenda involves two strands that impact upon the organisation of public service delivery and on workers employed in public services:

1. Initiatives by Greater Manchester public sector organisations to work together in the delivery of public service functions. Some of these ‘shared services’ initiatives pre-date the formal devolution agreement of November 2014. These developments in part reflect the financial pressures on public bodies and the potential benefits to service provision of collaborative working across geographical and service boundaries. Some of these initiatives to date involve collaboration with public bodies outside the Greater Manchester city-region, and some involve a role for the private sector.
2. The development of a new institutional framework at the local and Greater Manchester levels for commissioning health and social care services following the ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ in February 2015. These new arrangements hold the potential for more integrated forms of service provision, across geographical and service (Health and local government) boundaries.

Principles

For public service workers, these devolution-related developments hold the prospect of considerable opportunities as well as some potential concerns.

There are opportunities, because devolution offers the prospect of more integrated service delivery which can involve job enrichment, skills development, career progression and a more fulfilling experience of work through more effective delivery of services to the public providing greater job

security. There is also scope for the greater provision of apprenticeship places in Greater Manchester, bringing through the next generation of public service workers.

There are though real concerns because of the possibilities of change that detriment may arise from transfers to new employers, privatisation, worsening of pay and terms and conditions, and in unreasonable relocation.

The parties to this protocol agree that these concerns can be addressed through an undertaking that:

- 1) Where services are reconfigured involving more than one public service employer a partnership approach will be preferred. In all such cases the existing employees of the public sector/publicly funded service provider bodies within the GM 'family' of employers involved should remain in the employ of that particular employer unless there is a clear service benefit rationale and/or legal basis not to do so.
 - 2) Every effort will be made to ensure wherever possible there will be no worsening of the pay arrangements, terms and conditions or pensions of staff during or following a change of employer arising from service reconfiguration or new partnership arrangements.
 - 3) It is understood that future developments may involve direct partnership or framework partnership arrangements with private sector and voluntary sector employers. As a starting position, the existing employees of any public sector/publicly funded service provider bodies within the GM 'family' of employers involved will not have their employment transferred to the private sector or voluntary sector employer(s) as part of any such arrangement unless there was a clear service benefit rationale and/or legal basis to do so.
 - 4) Positive employee engagement will be integral to the successful achievement of GM ambitions therefore;
- # There will be a properly constituted strategic Workforce Engagement Board comprising senior managers, political leaders and trade union representatives. This board will meet on at least a quarterly basis to exchange ideas and proposals, discuss relevant issues of joint concern and seek to reach agreements as appropriate on matters of workforce implications and workforce skills and development arising from or resulting from the early policy formulation, planning and implementation of GM devolution, decentralisation and public service redesign initiatives.
- # There will be a Health and Social Care Engagement Forum comprising trade union and employer representatives which will feed into the strategic Workforce Engagement Board and report to the Health and Social Care Engagement partnership board.
- # There will be a nominated GM trade union representative and a nominated GM employer 'family' representative who shall jointly and severally act as

central contacts to support the strategic Workforce Engagement Board and facilitate clear communication and co-ordination between the GM trades unions and the GM ‘family’ of employers.

These points should guide practice in all shared service initiatives involving Greater Manchester public bodies, and by the new city-region and local level commissioning bodies developed in integration of health and social care.

Consultation Arrangements

The treatment of staff is a key component in delivering change and staff engagement via the union’s consultation processes is essential. Trade union involvement is central to the success of devolution. This has been evidenced nationally in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Greater Manchester will seek to build upon these models of partnership working.

In order to ensure maximum staff engagement any proposals which will impact on staff must be the subject of early consultation. This requires meaningful engagement by employers before any major decision is confirmed or agreed.

Where two or more Greater Manchester public bodies propose to deliver a service across geographical and/ or service boundaries, the Greater Manchester trade unions will create Workforce Project Leads to facilitate full consultation and staff engagement with all affected employers. The best means of supporting this work is through joint employer facility release. This approach has been successful in recent years in the implementation of Single Status and Job Evaluation in Local Government and Agenda for Change in Health. Any joint employer facility release would require clarity of outcomes and activity from such release and require agreement with the relevant employers.

Significant proposals such as large scale reorganisation or workforce reconfiguration will be subject to consideration at the Greater Manchester Workforce Engagement Board as detailed below but all negotiation and collective bargaining remain within the exiting local employer arrangements.

A Greater Manchester Workforce Engagement Board (WEB) will oversee workforce change in the city-region and the application, continuous review and interpretation of this workforce protocol.

The parties to this protocol agree that a commitment to Greater Manchester-wide principles, overseen by the new WEB, combined with robust arrangements for meaningful local consultation, will together help facilitate consensual change in workforce matters that will best ensure that the potential gains from devolution are realised for Greater Manchester.

The co-ordination of union representatives on the WEB will be overseen by the Public Services Committee of the North West TUC.

It is proposed that these Terms of Reference are agreed as part of the development of the GM Workforce Engagement Board and are submitted to all parties on that basis for consideration.