



**JNC Meeting**  
 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024,  
 Trafford Park - Trafford Meeting Room  
 Time: 10am

Attendees	Role
Mark Eckersley (ME)	Account Director
Richard Chambers (RC)	HR Director
Rebecca Burt (RB)	Head of HR Operations
Eamon O’Hearn (EOH)	GMB National Officer
Jim Edgar (JE)	National Convener (GMB)
Martin Wright (MW)	GMB Representative (Pontefract and associated Courts)
Paul Williams (PW)	GMB Representative (North Wales)
David Newsham (DN)	GMB Representative (Manchester and associated Courts)
Gavin Redfern (GR)	GMB Representative (Birmingham and associated Courts)
Keith Smith (KS)	GMB Representative (Leicester and associated Courts)
Rachel Wood (RW)	GMB Representative (National ECO Rep)
Karen Robinson (KR)	GMB Representative (VBC and Managers Rep)
Andy Sharpe (AS)	GMB Representative (South Wales)

**Apologies**

Gemma Raine	(Spennymoor and associated Courts)
Iain Barnes	(Preston and associated Courts)

1	<p><b>Welcome and introductions</b></p> <p>ME apologised for not being able to attend in person due to an eye operation the previous day.</p>
2	<p><b>Minutes of meetings (JE)</b></p> <p>RB confirmed that she will take the minutes today and these will be taken in future meetings by other members of the HR team.</p>
3	<p><b>Account Director Business Update (ME)</b></p> <p>ME set the scene that 2024 had been a challenging year and he was proud how everyone, in particular our Officer community, had pulled together to work as one team. The response to the population pressures has been first class and he wanted to extend his thanks to everyone.</p> <p>The MOJ are appreciative of GEOAmeY colleagues for their hard work in the prisoner population challenges and he was expecting future issues with the Prisoner early release scheme.</p> <p>He referenced the Operational Risk Management training that was being rolled out, Body Worn Video Cameras (BWVC) and rigid bar handcuff training to help make our colleagues safer.</p> <p>ME and JE to decide whether H&amp;S should be invited at the next meeting (<b>ACTION</b>).</p> <p>Financially, the business is stable and performing in line with expectations and the Company continue to keep a close eye on costs such as hotel, fuel, consumables, overtime expenditure due to the population pressures etc.</p>

The number of serious incidents is a concern along with the number of RIE's this year.

Resource levels have been broadly in line with TOM and the new ATS system has supported this.

Non-effective resource remains too high with absence levels having been as high as 9/10%.

There has been a focus on reducing the number of, and duration of suspensions which has put additional pressure on Officer availability.

There are a number of projects being rolled out including:

- Introduction of rigid bar handcuffs and Body Worn Video Cameras
- Uniform ordering process / new provider
- ROSS replacement
- New telephony system, starting with Logistics Centre
- IT infrastructure improvements
- ORM Training (John Campbell to cover off in detail)
- FLM Development Programme commencing later this month
- Power BI investment improving our data and reporting
- Fleet configuration review

David Jones is heading up a 5-year business plan with the Senior Management Team completing a SWOT analysis of our business to support the design of the future strategy.

#### 4 HR Update (RC/RB)

RC provided an update in his first 3 months in the business and highlighted how hard working the Officers are and this was very much appreciated.

He updated the meeting that there was going to be First Line Manager Training including general management principles so that managers had the skills to do their job, and this was starting later in the month. This would help in ensuring there was consistency in applying policies and procedures across the Company.

AS raised the point that there were some grey areas in application of the policies which led to different interpretations.

KR said that there were variations on how Officers are being managed / operating.

RC recognised there was work to be done on this and there was a need for a solid foundation to be set to work upon.

He added that the HR team had been fractured and needed to be built up again and this included the appointment of two new HRBPs in PECS - 1 based in the North West and 1 based in the West Midlands. He added that HRSS and Payroll now reported into him, so there was a one stop shop for HR for the Company.

EOH asked if RC was confident that HR Shared Services are giving the correct advice to the managers.

RC explained the roles of HR Operations team and the Shared Services Team.

AS said that the reps don't see copies of contracts until they are required for a hearing.

RC said that the current contracts were being reviewed and that he would happily share them with JE when they were completed. (ACTION)

GR asked if the contracts could be explained in the ITCs to ensure the delegates fully understood their contract of employment.

RC said he would give this some consideration (ACTION)

JE asked what was happening to the mentoring scheme as it had been going on for some time.

RC said that he should be getting some feedback in November to track its progress / impact.

He informed the meeting that his team was developing HR KPIs that would measure the output of his team and he would share this at the next GMB meeting.

EOH asked if there would be a review of the policies?

RC said that all the HR policies are under review currently with 8 having gone live already, in which JE has been involved in that process.

EOH asked if he knew how much time was spent on ER activity.

RC said that he and RB were surprised on how much time was taken particularly on suspensions and this was monitored on a weekly basis.

EOH made the point that some of these delays was due to Reps availability.

RC concluded that he was very keen to work collaboratively and in partnership with the GMB JNCC and our colleagues are our key focus. He sought to work with mutual respect and transparency ensuring there were no surprises. He also wanted to draw a line in the sand and move forward in developing a closer and more harmonious relationship with the JNCC to the benefit of the colleagues across the Company.

EOH outlined that joint working doesn't always mean joint agreement. If the JNCC know the business interpretation, at least it allows for consistency.

RC restated that the Company was keen to work collaboratively with the GMB.

ME said that he saw this symbolising a reset.

RB shared her background and initial observations of the business / priorities in HR Operations. There had been good progress in the last 4-6 weeks on HR case work, with a significant reduction in aged cases (>100 days). Her team will continue to expand the way we are tracking HR data to give a more holistic view.

RB added that she was keen to work collaboratively with the GMB and it was evident that we all want the same thing.

KR acknowledged this and said it was the first time that HR and the JNCC had sat in the room and felt like they are on the same page.

#### 5 Matters arising from last meeting (JE)

JE said there were no minutes from the previous meeting and this will change moving forward.

#### Outstanding items

#### **MOJ badges**

It was raised that there were a few colleagues who did not have PCO badges despite being in the business for years.

RB requested that AS share any specific examples for her to investigate and chase up (ACTION).

	<p><b>Risk Assessments</b></p> <p>It was raised that a review of the red vests (Control Point Officer) be undertaken, and a meeting was agreed to be arranged with Ray Grace, Head of Safer Custody, Jason Hendy, Regional Manager - Wales, and Jim Edgar to move forward. (ACTION).</p>
6	<p><b>GMB Issues</b></p>
	<p><b>Internal Vacancies (MW)</b></p> <p>MW highlighted that not all Internal vacancies are not being advertised in the WOU.</p> <p>RC agreed that vacancies should be advertised, and will take this away and review current practice (ACTION).</p>
	<p><b>Uniform (RW)</b></p> <p>RW asked if it was possible to get a size guide for the uniform?</p> <p>RB said that the team were looking to put together sizing packs for each VB. She would also enquire whether the provider has a size guide which can be shared with colleagues (ACTION).</p>
	<p><b>Delays in Prisons / Police stations (MW/PW)</b></p> <p>MW raised this point that the time you get to the Prison dictates how long you'll be there. If it's close to their finish time, you're in and out in 20 minutes. If its midday, they may keep you waiting for hours.</p> <p>ME said he was having challenging conversations with the MOJ about this. He had sight of data relating to wait times within Prisons and assured the meeting that there is an external focus on this. There was also an internal focus by the Logistics Centre being led by Jamie Wakeman (Head of Logistics).</p> <p>EOH asked ME if he was happy with the expected timescales that HMPPS are setting?</p> <p>ME replied that if Prisons were meeting the expectations set by HMPPS, he didn't think this would have been raised in the meeting, but he was broadly happy with this.</p> <p>EOH asked if ME was considering approaching the prison minister on this topic?</p> <p>ME said that he was satisfied that relevant parties are taking things sufficiently seriously at this stage. Approaching the Government may come in the future but was not appropriate or necessary at this point.</p> <p>PW asked if the Company could make IPTs a priority for the Logistics Centre?</p> <p>ME replied that the Prison population pressures, and redirection volumes are a contributing factor to all these challenges and that we need to work on Officer availability as this also has an adverse impact.</p>
	<p><b>Safeguard / working hours (KR)</b></p> <p>KR said that Safeguarding is creating challenges in the NE. It has eased slightly, and Tracy Rutter has done some good work with the local Police. There have been occasions where colleagues have had to work excessive hours until early hours in the morning and if it continues, is there any support that other regions can provide?</p> <p>ME agreed with this and said that he was hoping that recent Government measures will reduce these occurrences and he will continue to challenge the customer on how their demands impact our colleagues. The Company will also continue to find ways to improve the way we deploy our resources across regions. Jamie Wakeman is reviewing how we can introduce a quality assurance mechanism in the Logistic Centre and will chase up progress</p>

	<p>on this (ACTION).</p>
	<p><b>OIC payments (RW)</b></p> <p>RW asked who gets the OIC (Supervising Officer) payment where there are 3x ECOs?</p> <p>ME replied that it was the responsibility of the Manager at the relevant VB to assign the OIC. He acknowledged that there may a need to review how this works in practice and he didn't know if there had been any criteria set for this.</p> <p>JE agreed that it would be helpful to have some criteria around it so that when they are allocated, there is some rationale to it.</p> <p>RW highlighted that this was causing issues where colleagues in probation are being given OIC responsibilities over others with more experience.</p> <p>ME said he would work collaboratively with the GMB to construct some reasonable criteria so there was no confusion. (ACTION).</p>
	<p><b>Use of Bus Lanes (RW)</b></p> <p>RW said that she was aware that there are arrangements in place in Manchester for GEOAmeY vehicles to use bus lanes and asked if this could be expanded for other cities?</p> <p>ME said that the Company had managed to get this agreement in Greater Manchester and Nottingham and that other cities had been approached without any traction. He agreed to approach cities where there are high volume areas (e.g. Birmingham)</p> <p>RW asked if vehicles coming into Manchester from other areas be added to the list to use the Manchester bus lanes?</p> <p>ME said he would take this away and discuss with Andy Barber, Regional Manager - North West and Kyle Hughes, Vehicle Base Manager - Manchester (ACTION).</p> <p>EOH offered the Company GMB's support in approaching other local authorities for assistance with this.</p>
	<p><b>Facility Time (AS)</b></p> <p>AS raised the point that there was no written agreement of facility time for the reps and asked if there is a chance for GMB reps to be released once a month to get out into the business and speak to our members?</p> <p>JE said there was a commitment in the Recognition Agreement to agree a formal approach to facility time, but this hadn't happened.</p> <p>RC agreed to take this away and review. (ACTION)</p>
	<p><b>Employee Forums (AS)</b></p> <p>AS said, he hadn't been invited to any forums and believed he should be and was unsure if they were taking place.</p> <p>JE added that when the forums were originally initiated, the GMB sat on them to ensure they weren't covering topics covered by the collective bargaining agreement such as pay, hours and holidays.</p> <p>RC asked what was the agreement at the beginning? Were TU reps on the agreed invite list?</p> <p>JE confirmed this was the case.</p>

	<p>ME said he could see the value in GMB reps attending but also want representation from other colleagues.</p> <p>RB said that there was a need to do a full review of the Employee Forums to ensure they are fit for purpose. It is easy for Engagement Forums to become negative and unproductive, and she was keen to avoid this and ensure tangible outcome (ACTION).</p> <p>KR said that there used to have CCM and VBC meetings etc. and this was good for sharing best practice and would they be reintroduced?</p> <p>RC said this would be taken away to look at communication channels and how information cascades through our business (ACTION).</p> <p>DN said that RC had spoken about raising the profile of HR and asked how this was going to be done?</p> <p>RB replied that a lot of this is about visibility and the plan is to expand the team’s skillset, so they aren’t viewed as the people in disciplinary hearings. Their roles are, and should be, much broader.</p>
	<p><b>Prisoner Delivery Times (AS)</b></p> <p>AS raised the point that Custody’s are arriving at Court early in the morning, but their hearing times aren’t until later in the day. He was not suggesting this was all down to GEOAmey as he appreciated the Courts list the hearings, however it creates welfare challenges for the custody.</p> <p>ME agreed that there are significant challenges in the system that compound this, and the Company are working in unprecedented circumstances. This is not entirely within GEOAmey’s gift, and the environment the Company is operating in is different to the one it anticipated when bidding for the contract. The sentiment behind previous commitments was right, but the current reality means it is not viable.</p>
	<p><b>D PER information (AS)</b></p> <p>AS said that information missing from the PERs completed by the Prison / Police Station had a knock-on effect on RIE and asked what the Company is doing about it?</p> <p>ME said that the liability had been pushed back to the Prison. We can only work with the information that we have and are able to submit mitigation for every RIE. This is regularly discussed this with the MOJ.</p>
7	<p><b>Guest Speaker - John Campbell (Head of Quality &amp; Compliance)</b></p> <p>John presented on the Operational Risk Management training and the roll out across PECs in the coming months. The Reps attendance was being planned for shortly after the beginning of the roll out and their support would be greatly appreciated with this.</p>
8	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>MW asked if the Trainers could do ‘back to the floor’ days as they are training new colleagues despite not having been operational themselves for some time.</p> <p>RC said he Will take this away to look at (ACTION).</p> <p>KR said there seemed to be a lot of training cancelled and would this improve?</p> <p>RW said that there are ECOs who have been qualified for a while but as they hadn’t received their MMPR training, they are still shadowing.</p> <p>RC said that Training sits in his area will review records of cancellations and see what we can do to improve this. (ACTION).</p>

	<p>KR said that she was receiving feedback that colleagues have only had part of their Hep B vaccination cycle.</p> <p>PW added that there were no local appointments in Wales.</p> <p>RB replied that she was currently in discussions with our provider to simplify the process and increase take up of the vaccines. She also committed to review the availability of clinics (<b>ACTION</b>)</p> <p>There was a discussion about uniform and appearance standards and that Managers need to manage this more consistently.</p> <p>RC asked for the agenda for the next meeting to be made available a month in advance so that work can be done in preparation to generate more meaningful discussions in the meeting.</p> <p>JE agreed.</p>
9	<p><b>Date for next meeting</b></p> <p>11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> December, although this may be subject to change.</p>