

REVIEW OF GMB NATIONAL EQUALITY FORUM (NEF)

STRUCTURE 2009 / 10

Summary

Motion 14 to Congress 2009 from Midland & East Coast Region called for a review of the selection process and a revision of the National Equality Forum (NEF) structure to ensure fair representation from all regions and equality strands. The National Equality Conference in May 2009 had also debated this matter and agreed to initiate a review of the work and structure of the Forum. At Congress 2009, the Region agreed to refer the motion to allow consultation and consideration of a revised NEF structure. This report proposes the way forward to progress these decisions.

Background

The CEC report of the Review of Equality structures “Progressing Equality Issues in the GMB” was adopted at Congress 2007. This proposed a National Equality Forum of twelve members comprising of representation Race, Gender, Sexuality, Youth, Migrant and disabled workers.

Selection for the NEF was based on skills, experience & commitment. This included a national advert in the GMB magazine and selection by a panel consisting of the National Equality Officer, the previous Equality Officer, a Regional Secretary and independent interviewer external to the GMB. The resulting NEF did not have representation from all the Regions and as an interim measure observers were nominated from those Regions not represented. It had always been the intention that the structure of the NEF should be reassessed after an interim period of operation.

Issues

The issues to be addressed included:

1. Representation from
 - all the Regions (motion 14)
 - the six Equality strands (Progressing Equality Issues in the GMB Congress 07).
 - the Retired Members Association (RMA)
2. Constitution
 - NEF membership tenure
 - Number of meetings
 - Annual Conference
3. Linkage between Regional Equality Forums (REF) and NEF

Following Congress 09, a presentation was made by the National Equality Officer to the July meeting of the CEC Organisation Sub committee on the process and timetable for the review.

A number of options for the revised structure were discussed at the July 09, October 09 and December 09 meeting of the NEF. Six options were put forward for consideration to the November 2009 meeting of the Senior Management Team (SMT).

The Senior Management Team considered the options put forward and asked the National Officer for Equality to prepare a discussion paper for ratification prior to submitting to the March 2010 CEC meeting.

A proposal paper was presented to the March 2010 CEC. The CEC requested clarification on the appointment process for representation from the equality strands, and agreed the principle of representation from the Irish area of the North West and Irish region. The proposals have been amended in the light of these discussions and Congress is asked to approve the following structure:

Proposal

It is proposed that:-

- Each region will have a representative on the NEF. There will be an additional reserved place for the Irish area of the North West and Irish region (see below *).
- The composition of the NEF will include representatives from each of the six equality strands as set out in the CEC Report to Congress 2007 "Progressing Equality Issues in the GMB"
- The central focus of the Forum's Work will be the integration of GMB@Work across the equality strands
- GMB Officers will not be included on the NEF but co-opted if required

Specifically:-

- The NEF will consist of a maximum of 17 members comprising of:-
 - **1 representative from each region** - nominated by the Regional Equality Conference and endorsed by the Regional Committee. (9)
 - **1 representative of the six equality strands** (gender, race, disability, sexuality, migrant and youth.) – nominated through their Region and selected by a national panel based on skills, experience and commitment. (6)
 - **1 nomination from the retired members.** (1)
 - *In recognition of the North West & Irish region's historic position the North West & Irish Regional Committee will be entitled to nominate an additional member to a reserved seat on the National Equality Forum if no person from the Irish area within the region, equality strands or retired members is appointed to the National Equality Forum(1)

Further the NEF will:-

- have a membership tenure of 2 years
- meet quarterly
- arrange an Annual GMB National Equality Conference

Timetable

Action	Date
Presentation to CEC Organisation sub committee on process and timetable for the review.	July 09
Discussion on options for revised structure	July 09
Discussion on options for revised structure	Oct 09
Discussion on options for revised structure	Dec 09
Presentation on options to SMT	Nov 09
Revised Report to SMT	Feb 10
Report tabled at CEC	March 10
Revised recommendations to CEC	April 2010
Report to Congress	June 2010
Regional Equality Conference and Endorsement Regional Committee of Regional Representative	Sept / Oct 2010
Selection of Strand Representatives	Sept / Oct 2010
GMB@Work Briefing for new NEF	Nov / Dec 2010

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Questions & Answers

Who can apply to be a member of the NEF?

- Membership of the NEF is open to all lay members.

Can officers be NEF members?

- No. An officer will only be co opted to the NEF, if and when a specific project requires their input and expertise to deliver the particular project.

What is the selection process for the six representatives of the equality strands?

- An advert will be placed in the GMB Magazines and the website, setting out the process and deadlines for the return of applications. The selection will be based on skills, experience and commitment to equality matters.
- Purpose of the role and a role description will be provided. A selection panel will short list the applications and interviews will be held nationally.

Who will be on the selection panel for the six equality strands?

- The selection panel will consist of the National Equality Officer, a Regional Secretary and an independent external interviewer.

Why is gender, race, disability, sexuality, migrant and youth the only equality strands?

- These were the strands defined in the CEC report of the Review of Equality structures "Progressing Equality Issues in the GMB" that was adopted at Congress 2007.

Why two years tenure for the NEF, when the CEC is elected for a period of four years?

- The NEF is an evolving structure and a two year time frame will allow for response to any new changes that may arise in the future?