

FOI –Public Service Users Network (PUSN)

Meeting 04 December 2015

B13 - The Billets: 11.00am – 12.30

Draft Minutes

Attendance: See Appendix 1

Chair: Evelyn O Connor, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and adopted. There were no matters arising.

Decision Making Schedule template

There was discussion around the model template schedule. Feedback from members was very positive. It was agreed that the revised model template would be available electronically.

True Cost of FOI template

The Chair pointed out that for policy making needs to be evidenced based and moving forward it is important that the true cost of FOI processing is captured. There was a discussion on the template issued by the CPU to members for observation and it was agreed that the CPU would review the template with a view to minimising further any administrative burden on FOI Bodies.

The Chair thanked everyone for their feedback.

Update

Records management

Ms Ashe informed members that meeting took place between the National Archives and the CPU. She informed members that a working group will be formed and records management for the development of a Records Management Framework. Ms Ashe also advised that a seminar on electronic records management will be held in Q2 or Q3 of 2016, this was welcomed by all members present. John Mc Donough from the National Archives will be invited at the next Network meeting in March 2016 about this initiative.

FAQ's

Ms Ashe referred to the IWG meeting in September where members were asked to submit questions to CPU on fees. These questions are now up in the members' area of the CPU website. She said a similar exercise will take place in relation to personal information and asked that members to submit questions on that topic to the CPU.

Irish Language

The Chair pointed out to members that the Model Publication Scheme has been translated into Irish and is on the CPU website, she also said that each organisation will have their own policy on the Irish language Scheme.

Ms Ashe told members that there is 25% static content of the information on the website also translated in to Irish.

Model publication Scheme

The chair pointed out that all bodies will have to have it published by April 2016,

Members said that due to work commitments a lot of bodies have yet to finalise their scheme.

Trinity College, has their scheme published and is on their website it can be viewed at www.tcd.ie . Another member said that her organisation's publication scheme can be viewed by making direct contact with her at Lorraine.Sibley@ntma.ie

FOI Request Form

The Chair pointed out that although the request form is used a lot by members of the public mainly for personal information but that requesters can submit requests by e-mail also.

Website

The Chair stated that every member should have access to the member's area on the website, and if a member is having difficulty to contact Ms Reddy in the CPU.

Training Framework

The Chair said that there has been very positive feedback about the FOI training provided by the panel of trainers and repeated that FOI bodies should ensure that each of its decision makers has the relevant training [66 Contracts awarded and circa 1,285 persons trained in the advanced sessions]. She pointed out that if possible small organisations should pool together to avail of the training.

Statistics

Ms Ashe asked to FOI bodies to make statistical returns to the CPU for year-end by January 12th to fulfil the statistical requirements of the Office of the Information Commissioner.

A member advised that members of the Commercial Bodies Network have not yet received the statistical template as they are not linked to Government Departments. In addition there was a discussion among members that additional time would be required to collect data and date of the 15 January was suggested.

It was agreed that CPU would review the timeline and advise members of date.

Guidance Notes

Ms Ashe stated that a Guidance note will be issued in relation to non-work email accounts for official functions and/or business activities on the CPU website and will also be emailed to members.

The chair said that a more comprehensive Guidance Note on fees will be issued by CPU in due course and that CPU were also working on Regulations regarding records of deceased persons.

Feedback from members

Publication Scheme

A discussion took place in relation to the publication scheme and members were advised that CPU will give assistance where needed to any organisation having difficulty with the scheme.

Networks

The Chair stated that that there are a number of Networks up and running and details can be found on the CPU website. She also suggested that small organisations should try and get together and form a Network which would then feedback to the parent Department. She asked that organisations guide the smaller bodies in this regard.

The Chair asked for feedback from members on their individual Networks.

Following discussions it was agreed that being part of a Network was useful to members and provided a forum to discuss common FOI issues and that such Networks are especially beneficial to new members. One member stated that her Network organises workshops twice a year to discuss specific topics on FOI.

The Chair thanked members for their feedback and asked members to encourage others in the sector to become part of a Network.

Issues Arising

Review Terms of Reference

The terms of reference were discussed .The following was agreed;

It was agreed that the Network meetings would take place 4 times a year.

The Chair said to contact CPU if any other issues arise in relation to the terms of reference.

Terms of reference are to be agreed for 2016

AOB

A member outlined that they attended an AIE Conference and the issue of receiving of AIE Requests via twitter was discussed as being acceptable in the context AIE and the question was posed if it would be equally acceptable for FOI. It was concluded that FOI requests via twitter may not be valid requests.

Network meetings in 2016

Members asked for dates for 2016 and it was agreed that the CPU would send out an e-mail with proposed dates of the Network meetings for 2016

In conclusion the chair then thanked everyone for coming.

Next Network Meeting

DPER, 09 March 2015, The Billets: 11.00am – 12.30

Post meeting output actions

Item	Description	Assigned to	Deadline
1	Review method for capturing the real cost of FOI	CPU	January 2016
2	Provide CPU with FAQ's on Personal Information for members area of website	CPU	January 2016
3	Invite John Mc Donough from the National Archives to speak at the next Network meeting	CPU	March 2016
4	Issue date for statistical returns for 2015	CPU	December 2015
5	It was agreed that CPU will issue Guidance on the charging of fees.	CPU	December 2015
6	It was agreed that CPU will issue Guidance on the use of non-work email accounts for official functions and/or business activities of a public body	CPU	December 2015
7	Issue updated Terms of Reference for Network	CPU	January 2016
8	Issue dates for 2016 PSUN Network Meetings	CPU	December 2015

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Appendix 1 – Attendance

NAME	ORGANISATION
1 Evelyn O’ Connor (Chair)	CPU
2 Meiread Ashe	CPU
3 Jacinta O’ Meara	CPU
4 Pierce Dillon	An Bord Pleanala
5 Donal Devery	HSE
6 Lorraine Sibley	NTMA
7 Marie Kelly	EPA
8 Brian Duffy	Roscommon Co. Co.
9 Sinead Mc Bride	Trinity College
10 Shirley Carter	IDA
11 Mary Duffy	AIT
12 Orlaith Ní Bhroin	Central Bank
13 Brian Showers	D/AHG
14 Marie Cussen	Comreg
15 Deborah Molloy	BAI
16 Paul McGuire	CIB
17 Michael Walsh	Courts service
18 Rosalie Smith Lynch	HSE
19 John Conway	LGMA
20 Miriam O’ Flanagan	Courts Service

Apologies

NAME	ORGANISATION
1 Ciara Reddy	CPU
2 Eileen Lippert	FSAI
3 Anna Mooney	Rotunda
4 Karen Vaughey	EPA
5 Eileen Fallon	Beaumont Hospital
6 Siobhan Lyons	Coombe
7 Brendan Ruddy	DIT