

POA
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016



CONFERENCE PAPER THREE

Restructuring Update



Shaping
OUR FUTURE

CONFERENCE PAPER THREE – ACM/54/2016 UPDATE ON RESTRUCTURING UNDER ACM 61/2011

The POA National Executive Committee brought ACM 61/2011 before Conference who are the ruling body of the POA. The motion was passed and over the last five years various different teams have worked on the restructuring of the POA with 10 Conference papers being brought back to Conference in 2013 after Conference had concerns with a report back in 2012.

All 10 Conference papers were accepted in 2013 with a variety of changes taking place in the last 3 years. The restructuring of the Union has been a complex piece of work which has not actually been completed in its entirety not because the NEC do not wish to have further changes but simply because the Political landscape keeps altering and does not give the Executive time to finalise details that can be taken back to Conference with any confidence.

For example, Conference paper 10 gave examples of areas still to be looked at and some of those areas have been looked at and dealt with in a structured manner and indeed through Conference. For example, it was accepted by Conference that we would take Eurofedop out of our Rules and Constitution and determine what is in the best interest of the union pertaining to European and International links. This work is progressing through the European Public Services Unions (EPSU) and its International arm where we will monitor to ensure the POA is getting value for money.

The POA NEC will continue to look at our office's, expanded use of technologies, communications and how it organises to ensure that our members receive the very best of representation. Some of this will be achieved by realising further savings but some of the restructuring may actually cost us money to secure our future for the next generation.

The restructuring of the POA was never intended to be about cutting costs because sometimes when that occurs you create a worse service rather than improving the trade union. We only have to look at the cuts that all public services have had to endure since 2010 and I think Conference would agree that there has been very little improvement to our front line services. But it was also essential to see where savings could be made in fairness to our membership. It would have been far easier just to come and build a case for increased subscription rates. The Executive did not think that was appropriate.

Putting that into perspective is essential that the end product of restructuring is balanced and provides us the correct resources to allow the POA to continue as a fighting union that is at the forefront of campaigning on behalf of all our members irrespective of where they work. The theme of our Conference is "Shaping our Future" and we must shape our union for future generations. We need to make up our mind if we are a servicing union or a campaigning union as there is a distinct difference.

One of the main obstacles to completing the restructuring totally is the dilemma of whether to have a regional structure or continue with the national structure that we have at present. With Scotland and Northern Ireland currently excluded from the restructuring exercise it is essential to get England and Wales correct as that is where the bulk of membership comes from and it is right and proper that we get that correct and we do so with an evidence based approach rather than being panicked into completing the work.

The Executive believe that until such time as we fully understand what autonomy looks like after the Prime Minister's announcement on the 8th February 2016 and indeed what the Prison estate looks like after the Prison Bill moves through the Parliamentary process then it would be foolhardy to determine a Regional or indeed a National Structure. Only once we know what the landscape looks like in the future can those issues be determined with confidence.

WHAT HAS RESTRUCTURING ACHIEVED IN THE POA

It is vital that Conference have the full picture of what has been achieved within the trade union in respect of planning and restructuring to ensure we have a strong foundation for moving forward. In fact, the planning began out of necessity well before the restructuring motion in 2011 and difficult decisions have had to be made. The Executive believe it is essential that we refresh on some of the issues that have taken place. Since 2010 the POA have lost approximately 7000 to 8000 members through VEDS, Recruitment restriction in the public sector for 3 years and in some cases individuals choosing not to be in this trade union. That was a financial hit of more than £1million pounds per year. Remedial action had been taken prior to ACM 61/2011 for example moving from our previous lawyers to Thompsons' trade union lawyers.

If you look back at previous finance reports you will see our total legal bill for Scotland, Northern Ireland along with England and Wales was in 2008 £1.9 million pounds, 2009 £1.6 million and 2010 £1.6 million. By 2014 our legal bill was £1.3 million and at the end of our financial year 2015 our legal fees were £1.1 million. That is a significant reduction in legal fees and our legal services have improved dramatically even with the restrictions and changes of the Jackson Review which was outlined in Conference paper 8 in 2013. We now have a National Executive Committee that costs £209,133 at year- end 2015 compared to figures of £261,378 year-end 2006 and £274,324 in 2007.

So in effect nearly 10 years later we have substantially reduced the cost of how much the Executive cost in representing the membership to a very high standard on reduced facility time which was imposed by Government. The pension contributions for employees year-end 2008 was £250,195. In the year-end 2009 it was £274,222 and in year-end 2015 it is £195,366 another significant saving for the membership but at the same time being fair and affordable to the membership with never ever having to make up black holes in pension contributions since wholesale changes were brought in back in 2009. Protocols in our legal system with NOMS and Treasury solicitors has also realised significant savings when a conflict of interest is identified in a Death in Custody. Prior to the protocol the union picked up the costs. Costs have also fallen in relation to the magazine. Salaries and Superannuation have fallen by £100,000 since last year £1.5 million to £1.4million year-end 2015. The NEC, Finance Committee and Legal Aid Committee will continue and look at ways of reducing costs without affecting the delivery of representation and campaigning to our members if possible.

Since 2010 the POA have conducted internal reviews and the General Secretary has not asked the NEC to recruit any additional support staff as the work has been assessed internally and re-distributed by the Senior Office Administrator with significant savings being realized. The same applied to replacing Assistant General Secretaries. A negotiation took place that increased the hours for existing full time officers' including the Deputy General Secretary and General Secretary which meant when the last Assistant Secretary retired the position was not filled. This situation will be assessed and any additions of employees will be done on a needs basis with a clear business case.

Conference the NEC as per ACM 61/11 have made significant progress as outlined in Conference papers 1-10 and have put a foundation in place that places us on a reasonable financial footing against all the odds that are continually facing the POA. The future will be challenging not just for this trade union but all trade unions.

The NEC do not believe we can take restructuring any further until such times as we know what the future holds and this will only come to fruition once there is a detailed negotiation on the outcome of autonomy within the Prison setting. Further the POA need to fully understand the scoping and impact of the Prison Bill and indeed the Trade Union Bill which has now been challenged in the House of Lords. This delay to the Trade Union Bill could have a significant outcome for facility time, political funds and ballots. The POA are pleased that our campaigning along with other trade unions within the TUC has seen the Government defeated in the House of Lords on 3 key issues.

The Executive recommend this update report to Conference.

