

# ELECTORAL OFFICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND MANAGEMENT BOARD PAPER

Date of Meeting: 11 November 2010 Prepared by: Margaret J McMullen

## Automated Attendance Record System

The Management Board is asked to give consideration to the introduction of an automated attendance record system for the purposes of administrative efficiency. The system would be operational at Headquarters and at Area offices and utilised by all permanent and casual staff. Initially, the system would not be used for polling and count centre staff during an election.

## Current Manual Attendance Processes

### Flexi Records

EONI operate a Flexible Working Hours Scheme (FWH) which provides a flexible system of attendance for permanent staff. Every employee working FWH must maintain an electronic or manual record of their working hours on a record sheet. The operation and control of FWH rests with the supervisory staff who must make regular checks to ensure that records are being maintained as required and that they have been maintained accurately. The supervisor 'signs off' the records at the end of each period. The scheme is monitored by HR Section. Since abuse of FWH is a breach of the scheme, participation in the scheme may be suspended temporarily or indefinitely for persistent or serious abuse.

### Weekly Attendance Records

Weekly Attendance is recorded electronically or manually for permanent staff and are authorised by the Line Manager and submitted to HR Section. The data is processed for EONI's management information system for absence management.

### Overtime

Overtime is recorded electronically or manually by staff and approved by Line Managers.

### Timesheets

Casual staff are required to sign in and out each day on signing-in sheets. Details of the hours worked are transferred from the signing-in sheets onto a weekly timesheet for each employee by a permanent member of staff. The timesheet is electronically signed and dated by an authorised member of staff, reviewed and electronically countersigned by the Line Manager.

## **Benefits and Risks of automated Attendance Record System**

### Benefits

- Tighter control of employee attendance
- Time saved on administrating employee attendance and payroll administration
- No need to manually enter flexi, attendance records, overtime and timesheets which eliminates mistakes ensuring staff are paid for actual hours worked
- Automatic calculation of overtime and input of hours worked for casual staff guarantees accuracy
- Improved efficiency of absence management via automatic production of regular reports
- Managers can view employee status, who is in, who arrives late and who is currently working on a specific job
- Controls door access, ensuring only authorised employees are allowed into secure areas of building

### Risks

- Fraudulent use of Staff Pin Numbers/Password/Swipe Cards
- Loss / Theft of Swipe Card
- Effectiveness of Monitoring Processes
- Invasion of staff privacy
- System failure

Whilst the current manual attendance processes provides Management with adequate assurance in respect of attendance records the introduction of an automatic attendance record system would significantly reduce the administrative burden to EONI. However, the associated risks could hamper the effective operation of the system and increase the susceptibility of manipulation or fraud.

## **Cost**

Prices have been received and consideration given to automating EONI flexi system, weekly attendance records, overtime and timesheets for casual staff.

The initial cost is as follows:

£ 8,770 (excluding VAT) plus 17.5% annual maintenance costs for hardware and software.

The operational and monitoring processes would have to be analysed to ensure that they are fit for EONI's purpose.

## **Recommendations**

- At present EONI do not have the funding to purchase and implement an automated attendance record system. This may be revisited after review of the Office Estate.
- Fingerprint system may be better option.

	29 October 2010
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