PRISON SERVICE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday 24 September 2024

Time: 9.30am

Venue: Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre

In Attendance:	Beverley Wall	Director General / Chairperson
	Claire Keatinge	Non-Executive Member
	Sarah Wakfer	Non-Executive Member
	Edgar Jardine	Non-Executive Member
	David Kennedy	Director of Prisons
	Lorraine Montgomery	Acting Director of Corporate Services
	Maria Watson	Acting Director of Reducing Offending
	Louise Blair	Finance
	Teresa Hewitt	NICS HR
Attendees:	Mary Aughey	Director of Youth Justice Services
	Veronica Holland	Restorative Justice
	Robbie Burrows	Head of ITC
	John Marrion	NIPS ICT
	Julie Anderson	Head of Prisoner Wellbeing

Apologies: None

Minutes: Secretary Strategy and Governance

REF	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
1.	**Welcome and Apologies**	
	The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting held at Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre and thanked Mary Aughey, Director of Youth Justice Services, for hosting. The Chair welcomed Edgar Jardine (EJ) to his first PSMB since his appointment as NIPS Non-Executive member. There were no apologies.	

2.	**Declarations of Interest**	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	**Minutes of Previous Meeting and Actions**	
	The Board approved minutes from the meeting of 4 July 2024. **Action Point 1** - Minutes to be updated and published on DOJ website. Actions Points were reviewed and updated.	**AP 1**
4.	**Briefing from Chair**	
	The Chair outlined that written evidence was submitted to the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB). As the pay proposals had been agreed with Trade Unions, PSPRB have advised that they will not require an oral evidence session. The PSRB report is likely to be received within a few weeks. Next stage will be to seek DoJ and DoF approvals. Hydebank Wood CJINI report is scheduled for publication in next few weeks. The inspection findings are extremely positive and have already generated requests from HMPPS, SPS and DfE teams. Prisoner population leveled off over the summer period but has started to increase again and sits at 1,906 prisoners with 36% of the population on remand, which continues to present significant challenges to both operational delivery and rehabilitation work. There is a continued need to focus on delivery of key actions of Prisons 25by25. (Item 8 on today's agenda). The Chair advised the Board that today's meeting is Claire Keatinge's (CK) final PSMB and on behalf of the Board thanked her for the valuable input and constructive challenge she has provided and the passion that she has shown for NIPS work.	
5.	**YJA Overview**	
	Mary Aughey (MA), Director of Youth Justice Services welcomed members to Woodlands Juvenile Centre and provided an overview of its role and responsibilities.	

	YJA work with around 3,000 young people in the community but very few end up in Woodlands with 10 currently in the centre, which is a very positive reflection of the work carried out. Numbers tend to fluctuate with 78% on remand and 14% committed. Woodlands have an experienced and committed workforce however recruitment and retention of staff is proving a challenge for YJA given the differential in salaries offered compared to Health and Private Sectors. CK enquired if YJA are able to facilitate staff gaining a degree in social work and MA confirmed that they currently have 4 staff studying through OU to secure a social work qualification. Edgar Jardine (EJ) enquired about the length of time spent on remand for children and the age profile. MA confirmed that the length of remand would depend on the situation and the age profile is around 16-18 years of age.	
6	**NIPS Cyber Risk**	
	Robbie Burrows (RB) provided the Board with a paper on Information Assurance of ICT Systems and Services outlining Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) has a complex ICT operational environment with critical ICT systems that underpin and support NIPS frontline operations, including ICT Systems, Prisoner Records and Information System (PRISM) and Computerised Personnel and Salary System (COMPASS). Internally NIPS ICT Management Board manages all ICT / IA security (Including Cyber) risks, related to ICT systems / services. This Board manages an agreed work plan, which includes ICT Security tasks, and the management of a Risk Register. NIPS ICT Services and as a result NIPS, follow best practice in relation to assessing the risk posed by ICT systems. They manage the accreditation process for all NIPS systems, and ensure that IT Health Checks are performed. Externally, the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) also perform a role overseeing our branch and system / service ICT Security and IA controls.	

	Over the last year Cyber Security has become a major issue for the NICS, and as the Departmental representative on the Northern Ireland Public Sector Working Group, RB has worked with the DOJ CTO to provide a departmental return to Department of Finance (DoF). RB informed the Board that John Marrion will take over as Head of NIPS ICT in April 2025. SW thanked RB for the very helpful update and enquired if the paper could be updated and shared at the next NIPS ARC meeting in October, which the Board agreed would be helpful. **Action Point 2** - NIPS Cyber Risk paper to be added to NIPS ARC agenda. CK enquired what the biggest threats to NIPS ICT are and RB confirmed that internal risks are the main concern, with cyber risks a close second. EJ enquired if there was any learning from the recent PSNI data breach for NIPS. RB confirmed that NIPS conducted a review of our systems and procedures on foot of the PSNI data breach and put in place a number of additional measures to manage internal risks, including further controls in respect of access to COMPASS. Access is also now subject to regular review. CK enquired if there is any issue with staff using their personal phones for NIPS work and RB confirmed that all work is done using NIPS work phones. Personal phones cannot be used to access the DOJ network.	**AP2**
7	**Restorative Justice Presentation**	
	Maria Watson (MW) provided the Board a paper outlining that there has been significant growth in the use of restorative justice practices in Northern Ireland, both within the criminal justice system and beyond it. Veronica Holland (VH) presented the Board an overview on Restorative Justice outlining the background including the first Adult Restorative Justice Strategy from March 2022. Year Two Progress Report has been published and Year Three Action Plan was	

	developed along with commitments in Prisons 25by25, plus 2022 Strategy, to develop a restorative approach within establishments. Interim Protocol Lead appointed February 2024, which is a critical role in new arrangements and expansion of restorative justice approach and the key programme of work currently being progressed. VH outlined key work-streams that include, the design of a new accreditation process and application form, the preparation of guidance and awareness training; the development of a communications plan, and the establishment of a Restorative Practice Steering Group with the first meeting to be held later this year. Challenges include uncertainty around future funding, need for increased representation of accredited organisations and individuals, ensuring a robust and fair referrals process, competing priorities in a custodial environment & buy in to the process. Next steps include engagement on guidance, consideration of proposals paper by Restorative Justice Working Group and consideration of how best to implement new approach. VH indicated that Interim Protocol Lead, Martina Jordan, would be happy to provide a deep dive session on Restorative Justice and the Board agreed would be helpful for a future PSMB meeting. **Action Point 3** – Martina Jordan to attend future PSMB and provide deep dive on Restorative Justice. CK enquired about what accreditation will be required for practitioners and VH confirmed that the Lead would have to make sure the practitioner has the right profile / qualifications and build into the framework an accreditation review. EJ commented that the case study provided is very resource heavy and enquired about scalability. MW confirmed that a phased approach will help to build up scalability but resources will depend on funding availability.	**AP3**

8	**Prisons 25 by 25 Year 3 Update**	
	Directors presented a paper to the Board providing members with a Year 3 In Year Progress Report as at 1 September 2024. The paper outlined that Prisons 25by25 contained 118 actions in support of its 25 strategic aims. The Chair indicated to the Board that she remains optimistic around progress against Year 3 Delivery Plan but challenges with outside organisations may impact the speed of delivery and this is out with the control of NIPS. The Board drilled down into the delivery plan, and action owners provided an update on aims/actions where progress was slower than planned or not achieved. The Board suggested a number of amendments to the delivery plan that should be considered by action owners. **Action Point 4** –Directors / action owners to make suggested changes to Prisons 25 by 25 delivery plan by way of follow up to PSMB. CK indicated that the delay in the Conduct and Discipline review was concerning. The Chair confirmed that this matter will be considered in the months ahead. EJ enquired about succession planning and age profile of staff and the Chair confirmed that recent recruitment has lowered the overall age profile and actions within this year's plan are focused on developing current and future leaders. The Chair indicated that the delay in establishing a NIPS policy register is a matter of concern but limited staffing resources has impacted action in this area. SW suggested that the policy register should be added to the next ARC agenda to consider additional actions that could be taken to mitigate this risk, which the Board agreed would be helpful. **Action Point 5** – Policy Register to be added to NIPS ARC agenda.	**AP4** **AP5**
9	**Risk Register – Risk 3 Health and Social Care**	
	Julie Anderson (JA) provided the Board with an update on Risk 3 and outlined that the inherent / residual score remained the same	

	and that key controls are in place. Controls include: agreed NIPS/SEHSCT governance structure in place, PHA leading on Health Needs Assessment for people in prison, local multidisciplinary Safer Custody Forum (monthly), supported by robust management information and safer custody multidisciplinary caseload structure, joint NIPS/SEHSCT Medicines Management Forum, NIPS represented at PHA led Avian Flu and Measles forums and SPAR Evolution external review report published on 23 May 2024 SW commented that prescription medication being passed on isn't mentioned as a risk and we should consider what we can control / is out of NIPS control. **Action Point 6** – Consider whether prescription medication should be incorporated within the risk register.	**AP6**
	Risk Register – Risk 6 Ability to Deliver Outcomes	
	The Chair informed the Board that the senior team continue to closely monitor and manage the Prison Population and key controls are in place. The Prisoner Population is still increasing but the rate of growth has slowed. NIPS will launch a new Officer recruitment scheme in October 2024 to bring CPO staffing levels up to the new OSL by April 2025. This will alleviate pressure on operational delivery within establishments. In tandem recruitment is ongoing to fill vacancies at NCO and PCO grades.	
	Risk Register – All other Risks	
	LM noted that Risk 2 had been updated to include risks associated with the delivery of the PRVIS scheme and that Risk 5 had been amalgamated into Risk 2 in line with prior agreement. The Board considered the updated Risk Register following the overall review and were content.	
10	**Rehabilitation / ROD Directorate Report**	
	Maria Watson (MW) provided a paper updating the Board on areas within ROD directorate including Resettlement; Learning and Skills; Accommodation; Employability; Psychology Services; Reducing	

	Reoffending; Remand; Women and Girls Strategy; PBNI Service Level Agreement and Restorative Justice. MW highlighted funding had been secured to offer two Snakes and Ladders programmes in Magilligan and an additional programme in Maghaberry. Funding has also been secured to work with Start360 to deliver their Trauma Talks programme. Following an initial three-month "bedding in" period, NIHE Housing Advisors are now fully operational in the custodial setting in Maghaberry. Work has commenced to consider how we measure the impact of the intervention in addressing accommodation needs of those approaching release from prison. ROD are currently engaging with a small number of companies from the IT and Technology sector on the feasibility of a custodial based Digital Skills Academy. Work has now commenced on developing a modular foundation programme, which will used to assess the engagement and appetite of the population for this model of intervention. The Working Group on Remand (WGR), Bail Support Pilot Task and Finish Group held its inaugural meeting on 13 August 2024. The group has been established to develop a Bail Support Scheme in NI, with a view to this being implemented in 2025/26, funding permitted. MW informed the Board that the proposed Bail Support Pilot is one of nine bids across NICS to successfully move to the final stage of the Transformation Programme assessment. The Board welcomed this positive news.	
11	**Director of Prisons OMB Report**	
	David Kennedy (DK) presented a paper providing an update from the meetings of OMB on 16 May and 11 June 2024 which included, Prison Population, X-Ray Body Scanners and CSU, Review of Body Worn Camera Policy, updates from each establishment, update on Policy and Legislation, Operational updates and a Legal Update. DK highlighted the trajectory of the population was a significant uncertainty for NIPS coming into the summer period. It was undoubtedly helpful that the population reduced slightly between 1 June and 1 September (from 1,910 to 1,888 overall, and from 1,269	

	to 1,226 at Maghaberry. The period between now and the end of 2024 will be crucial to the Service in understanding what the prevailing pressures will be. Operational Support had completed a review of the Body Worn Video Camera Policy. This was a scheduled review and NIPS had engaged Legal Counsel during this review, who had confirmed that they are content with the draft, and that it takes account of recent case law in this area. The Justice Committee visit to Maghaberry in early June went well and provided an important opportunity for them to see the work of staff at first hand, and the issues a rising population presents. The Chair enquired about the legal written update, which was missing from the paper and asked that it be emailed to members with meeting minutes. **Action Point 7** – Secretary to email members legal update. The Chair enquired about KPIs and number of Deaths in Custody, which seemed incorrect. DK confirmed that he would check the KPIs. **Action Point 8** – DK to check Death in Custody KPIs.	**AP 7** **AP8**
12	**Corporate Services Report**	
	Lorraine Montgomery presented a report to the Board outlining the work being progressed by the Corporate Services Division including the draft Programme for Government, Governance, Our People, Records and Information Team and Equality and Diversity. She noted that the Executive had launched an 8-week public consultation on its draft Programme for Government. The draft Programme sets out three missions - People, Planet and Prosperity, together with a crosscutting commitment to Peace. Considerable engagement was undertaken by the Department of Justice prior to Executive Consideration. The Senior Leaders' Forum considered the findings of the staff survey at its meeting on 23 July. Working groups were established to consider thematic areas of feedback with a view to determining	

	what proposed solutions would be most impactful in response. Directors and the Deputy Director of Corporate Services are currently facilitating further engagement of the working groups to finalise their recommendations. Pay arrears for 23/24 were successfully implemented in salaries at the end of April. The next pay round process has commenced and initial negotiations for 2025/26 pay have commenced with both the POA and PGA. ASG has now completed its research, which included a public survey and discussions with staff focus groups. Following that engagement, options for a new brand were developed, and approved by the Executive Forum in June. Filming has now been undertaken, with plans in place for the new brand to be in place for launch of the recruitment for new CPOs, in October. The NIPS Headquarters relocation to Castle Buildings Block A has been completed. Staff responses to the new accommodation has been extremely positive. The new NIPS file store in Castle Buildings remains scheduled to be available for use by February 2025.	
13	**Finance update**	
	Louise Blair (LB) provided a paper to the Board outlining NIPS financial position on 31 July 2024. NIPS forecast Resource Outturn is £141,978k reflecting transfers of budget to be actioned in the October Monitoring Round**.** NIPS forecast Capital shows a pressure of £1m to cover essential work to the building infrastructure to ensure the prison estate remains operational and able to deliver a safe, decent and secure environment for the rehabilitation of prisoners. NIPS forecast AME shows a pressure of £1,852k following a review of provisions by the Financial Accounts Team & NIPS Claims Branch. NIPS pressures were fully funded in the June Monitoring Round and a breakeven position is currently being forecast.	

14	**NICS HR Update**	
	Teresa Hewitt (TH) provided the Board with a paper covering the strategic HR areas for reporting within NIPS including Prison Grade and Non-Operational Grade staff and a detailed breakdown on the levels of sickness absence across the organisation. TH provided an update on resourcing, vacancy management and recruitment for Operational and General Service grades. Since June 2021 (to 26 September 2024), 349 individuals had been recruited to NIPS operational roles. TH highlighted that between 1 August 2024 and 31 August 2024, 83.3% of Operational (Prison Grade) staff did not report any sickness absence. Long-term sickness absence cases are managed according to policy and staff are being made aware all support available to them. EJ commented that there seems to be an overall sickness issue across the NICS and TH confirmed that sickness is a concern NICS wide.	
15	**Mother and Baby Policy**	
	DK indicated that OMB fully endorsed the new policy and procedures brought to PSMB for approval. SW enquired about a cover sheet including Equality Screening and LM confirmed that going forward all policies coming to PSMB for approval would have a cover sheet providing relevant overarching policy information going forward. **Action Point 9** - All policies coming to PSMB for approval will have a cover sheet providing relevant policy information going forward, e.g. date for review and parties consulted in development of the policy. CK commented that there was a typo on page 5 of the policy. DK confirmed this would be corrected. The Board approved the policy, subject to necessary amends and provision of a cover sheet. This will now be communicated to NIPS staff.	**AP9**

	Action Point 10 – Update wording / coversheet and communicate policy to staff.	**AP10**
16	**Body Worn Video Camera Policy**	
	DK indicated that OMB fully endorsed the revised policy brought to PSMB for approval. The Chair suggested that there should be discipline sanctions for staff not wearing / turning on their BWVC. DK confirmed that he will consider wording for discipline sanctions. The Chair suggested that five years was too long for a review period and the Board agreed that the policy review date should be two years. **Action Point 11** – BWVC policy to be updated and brought back to PSMB.	**AP11**
17	**Update on the Travelling Community in NIPS**	
	Paper providing an update on the Travelling Community in NIPS was noted by the Board.	
18	**Historical Abuse Cases**	
	Paper providing an update on Historical Abuse cases was noted by the Board.	
	AOB	
	There was no further business and the meeting was closed. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 7 November 2024 at NIPS Headquarters**.**	