PRISON SERVICE MANAGEMENT BOARD

Note of meeting held on Thursday 7 November 2024

Time:	9.30am	
Venue:	NIPS Headquarters, Castle Buildings	
In Attendance:	Beverley Wall	Director General / Chairperson
	Sarah Wakfer	Non-Executive Member
	Edgar Jardine	Non-Executive Member
	David Kennedy	Director of Prisons
	Maria Watson	Acting Director of Reducing Offending
	Brendan Giffen	Deputy Director of Corporate Services
	Louise Blair	Finance
	Teresa Hewitt	NICS HR
Attendees:	Karen Crilly	NIPS Health and Safety
	Katrina Mitchell	NIPS Senior Principle Legal Advisor
Apologies:	Lorraine Montgomery	Acting Director of Corporate Services
Minutes:	Secretary	Strategy and Governance

REF	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
1.	**Welcome and Apologies**	
	The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting held at NIPS Headquarters, Castle Buildings. Apologies were noted from Lorraine Montgomery.	
2.	**Declarations of Interest**	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	**Minutes of Previous Meeting and Actions**	

	The Board approved the minute of the meeting held on 24 September 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 a new recruitment campaign for Custody Prison Officers launched on Monday 28 October. Initial uptake is positive with 300 applications downloaded or completed in the first week. Prisons week was held 13-19 October with highlights including Minister Long's visit to Maghaberry Prison & the Sycamore Tree Project, the Annual Prisons Week Prayer Service, NIPS staff joining the careers fair at Queens University, staff attendance at two seminars with Queens University Criminology students to help their learning and share their experiences of working in prisons, and the Secretary of State (NI) and the Justice Committee visiting Maghaberry on 17 October. The Chair noted her thanks to all staff and Board members who attended and/or contributed to Prisons Week. NIPS Annual Memorial Service will take place at Hydebank Wood on Friday 8th November. The Chair informed the Board that the Minister was hopeful that decisions on NIPS Pay award could be made in the next few weeks. The draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most', is expected to be tabled at the Executive for approval at end of January or early February. The Transformation Board are due to provide their final recommendations to the Executive including a decision on the Bail and Support scheme pilot application. Public Accounts Committee have identified that they wish to hold a hearing into the NI Audit Office report on Reducing Reoffending.	

	Edgar Jardine (EJ) enquired if analytical capacity is still an issue. Maria Watson (MW) confirmed that funding to support the recruitment of two data analysts has been included in the Transformation bid.	
5.	**HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**	
	Karen Crilly (KC) provided the Board with an update on the current work priorities and developments in respect of Health and Safety. KC highlighted that a Health & Safety Review was initiated by the Director General in September 2024. The objective of this review is to ensure that best practice, a standardised approach, and common reporting mechanisms are in place and embedded across all three prison establishments. Draft findings and recommendations are expected to be presented to PSMB by end of March 2025. A new HSENI Principal Inspector has been assigned to NIPS and completed a familiarisation visit to all 3 establishments with the NIPS H&S Advisor. NIPS H&S Assurance Report: COVID Pandemic Risk was also discussed at the October ARC meeting. On 9 September 2024, the DOJ received a UK COVID Inquiry, Module 8: Children and Young People, Rule 9 request. Stephen Martin, YJA is leading this Module on behalf of the DOJ with NIPS inputting into the relevant sections. Sarah Wakfer (SW) enquired about Court Custody Suites and how much risk falls to NIPS. KC confirmed that NICTS are working hard to trying to resolve NIPS staff concerns but the risk will ultimately fall to NIPS for our staff. The Chair indicated she has raised the issue with the Lady Chief Justice and inquired if some RCJ trials could be held via sight link. Governor Ferguson is also in discussion with NICTS on this issue. SW suggested that Risk 1: Safety and Security should be updated to reflect Court Custody concerns. The Board agreed that Risk 1 should be updated. **Action Point 2** – Risk 1: Safety and Security to be updated with Court Custody concerns.	**AP2**
6	**CJINI DASH BOARD**	
	CJINI Dashboard was presented to the board providing an update on progress on recommendations contained in all relevant CJINI	

	inspection reports. The update detailed the RAG status of each recommendation as at 30 October 2024. The Chair indicated that she had concerns around the quantum and quality of information presented and suggested that leads would be add to split each inspection update into two sections, i.e. completed and ongoing actions. Following discussion it was agreed that recommendation leads would be asked to: <u>For completed actions</u> – Identify what action was taken, when it was taken and what assurance there is around implementation e.g. link to relevant files or revised policy or procedures. <u>For ongoing actions</u> – Clearly and concisely state what action is planned and when it will be implemented. Update should also reflect if the recommendation is linked to any other inspection or NIAO recommendations to avoid duplication of effort. Revised updates will then be tabled at ARC and considered at a rate of 3 reports per meeting. A meeting will then be tabled with CJINI to confirm they are content with proposed approach. **Action Point 3** – CJINI recommendation updates to be revised and presented to ARC for consideration prior to discussion with CJNI on revised approach.	**AP 3**
7	**Risk Register – Risk 4 Estate**	
	KC provided the Board with an update on Risk 4 and outlined that the inherent / residual scores remain the same and that key controls are in place. KC highlighted OBC1's for a new kitchen and café has received significant media attention. The OBC1 to be submitted for new kitchen and café mixed use development by 30 Nov 2024. COVID Inquiry: Mod 8 Rule 9 received for DOJ and NIPS - COVID team in place and draft statement due on 20th December 2024. Three further Rule 9 requests are expected. SW suggested that the H&S Assurance report and Minor Reports Steering Group should be included in Key Controls and the Board agreed. **Action Point 4** – Update Key Controls and Actions Planned for Risk 4 including key projects / target dates.	**AP 4**

	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. The female population is on an upward trajectory / trend.	
8	**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 a meeting of the Voluntary and Community Sector and Social Enterprise Forum was held on 26th September 2024 and featured presentations on the role of Peer Mentors and how they could be utilised by VCS partners. Work is being finalised on an implementation plan to take forward the Substantive Learning and Skills Curriculum Review, which will provide a pathway for education provision for the next 5 years. The plan will be considered at the Learning & Skills Strategic Management Board in early November. The latest NISRA Adult and Youth Reoffending in Northern Ireland (2021/22 cohort) statistics were published on 17 October. Most notably for the Prison Service, there has been a 3.6% decrease in the reoffending rate for adult custodial releases, which is now at 45.3%. The publication is available at: *https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-and-youth-reoffending-northern-ireland-202122-cohort* The Chair enquired about the issues with tutor recruitment within Learning and Skills and MW confirmed that securing qualified staff for specific vocational roles is proving challenging. Succession planning is a priority and MW is seeking to address this issue through engagement with DfE and Belfast Met.	

9	**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 advised the Board that the prison 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 remaining months of 2024 will be crucial in understanding the pressures facing the Service. There were further increases during the month and on 22 October the total population was 1,952. If this trend continues, at an approximate population of 2,000, NIPS will be actively considering opening Lagan House. DK provided the Board with an update around the recent Deaths in Custody that were mentioned in recent media reports and confirmed that they had been discussed at the recent OMB meeting. Katrina Mitchell joined the meeting to provide the Board with a verbal update on ongoing legal cases. The Board agreed that KM should attend future meetings to provide updates. **Action Point 5** – Katrina Mitchell to attend future PSMB meetings to provide update on legal cases.	**AP5**
10	**Corporate Services Report**	
	Brendan Giffen (BG) presented a report to the Board outlining the work being progressed by the Corporate Services Division including Machinery of Government, NIPS People Survey, Pay, Accommodation, Conferences, Records and Information Team and Equality and Diversity. BG highlighted that the Senior Leaders' Forum considered the findings of the staff survey at its meeting on 23 July. Working groups were established to consider 4 thematic areas with a view to determining what proposed solutions would be most impactful in response. Invites have been issued to all 71 staff who declared an interest in volunteering to attend a staff forum on one of the four themes identified after the survey results were analysed.	

	ASG (PR Company with the NICS contract) has now completed its work to redevelop the brand and this was launched as part of the recruitment campaign on 28 October. This will be rolled out across NI through a number of media channels: ➢ Video – cinema and on demand television ➢ Commercial radio stations. ➢ Social media, including YouTube. ➢ Adshels – 125 different locations across NI. ➢ PECCS fleet. The new video can be viewed at NIPS Youre Not Everyone 40s on Vimeo. Work to install a NIPS history display at Mossley Mill is ongoing and the exhibition is expected to open in early January 2025. Material has been received from Museums NI and the Public Records Office along with donations from retired officers. NIPS Well Programme is being rolled out across Prison Officers following a successful pilot programme.	
11	**Finance update**	
	Louise Blair (LB) provided a paper to the Board outlining NIPS financial position at 30 September 2024. NIPS forecast Resource Outturn is £138,418k reflecting transfers of budget to be actioned in the October Monitoring Round and a Resource DEL easement of £3500k identified for the January Monitoring Round. NIPS had previously forecast a Capital pressure of £1,000k to cover essential work to the building infrastructure. Easements from Transport and IT projects have been reallocated to cover this pressure. NIPS forecast AME is an easement of £1,214k after a reduction in the valuation of provisions by the Financial Accounts Branch by £500k and a pressure of £714k in the cash payment of provisions. EJ enquired about Injury on Duty (IOD) pressures and LB confirmed that the pressures have been planned. The Chair indicated that she	

	has written to DoF to raise concerns around the IOD pressure that is increasing each year.	
12	**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 28 October 2024), 349 individuals had been recruited to NIPS operational roles. TH highlighted that between 1 September and 30 September 2024, 82.2% 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. TH provided the Board an update on feedback from NIPS Exit questionnaires.	
13	**Information Assurance Update**	
	Paper on Information Assurance was noted by the Board.	
14	**ARC Update**	
	Paper providing an update on the recent NIPS ARC meeting 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 the 19 December 2024 at NIPS Headquarters**.**	