

Minutes of Youth Justice Agency Management Board Meeting

Wednesday 4 March 2026

YJA Offices, Foyle

Board present: Stephen Martin

Mary Aughey

Paul Gibson

Colleen Heaney

Richard Horton

Thomas Moore

In attendance: Sinead Dolan

Nicola Mullan*

Geoffrey Troughton*

Elaine McConnell

*Attended online

Valuing Our People

As part of the Valuing Our People Session held prior to the Board meeting, Sinead Dolan, her staff, and student placements from the Western Area Team provided a presentation on the systemic approach used by staff when dealing with cases involving harmful sexual behaviour. The team also provided an update on developments in how the Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was operating in the Western Area Team.

The Board thanked the Western Area Team for their presentation and noted the level of expertise which the team had developed in dealing with complex cases and the collaborative approach they had adopted to help address underlying vulnerabilities and related risks and harms.

APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

None.

ITEM 1: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No conflicts of interest were declared.

ITEM 2: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous Board meeting on 28 January 2026 were agreed. All actions were noted as complete or were scheduled for consideration at future meetings.

ITEM 3: UPDATE ON STRATEGIC MATTERS

The Board noted the CEO's strategic report which included confirmation that safeguarding training had been delivered to all staff in the Agency by Children in Northern Ireland and a programme of Child Rights training was being rolled out by the YJA senior practitioner for participation to Agency staff and partner organisations.

Stephen advised the Board that an official opening of the YJA Art Exhibition, at the Public Records Office Northern exhibition space in the Titanic Quarter, Belfast would be held on 20 May 2026. Invitations would be issued to guests in due course for the opening event. He also provided an outline of the key outcomes from the Mental

Health Champion Conference – Building Wellbeing in Young People he attended on 25 February 2026.

ITEM 4: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

The Board noted the report provided by Colleen which included an update on staff moves which had taken place in the YJS senior management team in February. Colleen confirmed after 25 years of exemplary service, Grainne Keane, Assistant Director for the Northern Area was retiring, and Julie Harkness had moved from the Assistant Director post in the Western Area to replace her. Sinead Dolan had been appointed from a YJA merit list to replace Julie in the Western Team. The Board noted their thanks to Grainne for all her work and noted their congratulations to Sinead on her promotion.

ITEM 5: FINDINGS FROM STAFF EXIT SURVEYS

The Board noted the primary reasons staff cited for leaving the Agency were better salary and benefits, career progression, and health reasons.

ITEM 6: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

(a) HR REPORT

The Board noted the report provided by the NICS HR Business Partner, Nicola Mullan. Her report provided an update on recruitment plans to fill vacancies for Youth Conferencing Co-Ordinator, Night Support Worker, Care Workers, and Catering Manager.

In terms of general service, Nicola confirmed the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) had launched a general service competition for Deputy Principal grade, the results from the recent EO2 competition had been notified to candidates, and the process of filling EO2 vacancies would commence shortly. She also confirmed the process of elective transfers to fill internal vacancies. Nicola concluded her report with an update on the management of sickness absences.

(b) FINANCE REPORT

The Board noted the report provided by Geoffrey which provided details on the year-to-date expenditure against budget and proposed draft budget for 2026/27. He also provided an update on the future years exercise to identify budgetary pressures and easements and weekly returns to manage the 2025/26 year-end position.

(c) GOVERNANCE REPORT

The Board noted the detail in the report including the current position on business continuity exercises.

(d) COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The Board noted the contents of the report without further comment.

(e) PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUSINESS PLAN

The Board noted the status of each business activities and noted since the report had been produced, progress had been made in terms of referrals to the pilot scheme to test a new diversionary disposal.

Stephen also confirmed an Agency business planning day was scheduled to take place on 9 March 2026 to develop a business plan for 2026-27. A draft plan would be provided to the Board at their meeting on 27 April 2026 for consideration. Following Board approval, the draft plan would then be submitted to the Minister for approval and publication.

(f) CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTORATE NORTHERN IRELAND (CJINI) RECOMMENDATIONS – Progress against Action Plans

The Board noted that there were no outstanding recommendations arising from CJINI reports for which YJA is the lead.

(g) RISK REGISTER

Following consideration, the Board agreed minor amendments to the key controls and actions planned for Risk 3.

Action: Maria to amend Risk Register.

(h) REGISTER OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Following consideration, the Board noted amendment were required for the entries for Richard and Thomas. Richard's entry should read Partner a member of the NI Judiciary and Member of the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining. Thomas's entry should read Chair of Board of Governors, Southern Regional College, and Lay Member to the Law Society Northern Ireland - Solicitors Complaints Committee; and Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal. Maria to amend Register of Members Interests.

Action: Maria to amend the Register of Members Interests.

(i) TRAINING PLAN UPDATE

The Board noted the detail in the report and the proposal for a new draft three-year Learning and Development Plan to be presented to them for consideration at their meeting in June 2026.

(j) HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The Board noted the annual report on accidents and assaults which had occurred in the JJC for during 2025-26. They also noted no incidents had been reported during 2025-26 for Youth Justice Services or YJA Headquarters.

ITEM 7: BOARD EVALUATION

Attendees noted the agenda was managed very efficiently, attendees were respective and courteous, and differing views were considered prior to agreement being reached.

ITEM 8: AOB

Following Stephen's suggestion, it was agreed the schedule of Board meetings for 2027 should include the Enniskillen Area Office as a venue for a meeting.

Action: Sharon schedule of Board meetings for 2027 should include the Enniskillen Area Office as a venue for a meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

YJA Offices, Banbridge Wednesday 22 April 2026 at 10.00am.

TABLE OF ACTION POINTS CONTAINED IN BOARD MINUTES 4 MARCH 2026

Page	Action	Lead	Status
4	Amend Risk Register.	M. Gourley	Actioned
5	Amend the Register of Members Interests.	M. Gourley	Actioned
5	Schedule of Board meetings for 2027 should include the Enniskillen Area Office as a venue for a meeting.	S. Hetherington	Actioned