

Minutes of Youth Justice Agency Management Board Meeting

Wednesday 22 April 2026

YJA Offices, Banbridge

Board present: Stephen Martin

Mary Aughey*

Paul Gibson

Colleen Heaney

Richard Horton

Thomas Moore

In attendance: Nicola Mullan*

Geoffrey Troughton

Angela Gregg

Michael Heaney

*Attended online

Valuing Our People

As part of the Valuing Our People Session held prior to the Board meeting, Michael Heaney and his staff from the Southern Area Team provided a presentation on how they have dealt with a recent case of extremism. The team gave an insight in to one particular young person and how this case was approached, including the partners engaged with and lessons learned.

The Board thanked the Southern Area Team for their presentation and noted that extremism is a new challenge. A discussion took place around the Southport Inquiry and lessons learned. The Board acknowledged the valuable staff experience that was called upon in this case study and that it reflected much of the good practice which the Inquiry was recommending.

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 4 March 2026 were agreed. All actions were noted as complete.

ITEM 3: UPDATE ON STRATEGIC MATTERS

The Board noted the CEO's strategic report. Stephen added that the latest meeting of the North-South Youth Justice project advisory group took place the day before in Dublin and it was productive. Colleagues in the Irish Department of Justice are developing a toolkit around extremism and the YJA are participating on the working group. Stephen also referred to training YJA is delivering to Probation Ireland staff next month.

Stephen provided an update on the Children's Strategic Social Care Reform Programme, led by Health, and YJA's role in it.

Richard and Thomas recorded their thanks to Austin Treacy and welcome the opportunity to meet his replacement as JJC Independent Monitor.

ITEM 4: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

The Board noted the report provided by Mary which included an update on work to replace legacy security systems in the JJC. Mary noted that at some point she will be bringing a paper to the Board to present future needs in this area.

As noted in the paper, Michelle McIlveen MLA has submitted a high volume of Assembly questions related to JJC. Richard queried the nature of the questions and Mary confirmed they were statistics enquiries. Stephen has invited Miss McIlveen to visit the JJC but has received no response as yet.

Stephen noted that the visit to JJC by Doug Beattie MLA went well.

ITEM 5: YJA DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2026-27

The Board confirmed they are content to approve the Business Plan. The plan will now go to Beverley Wall and then the Minister. Board members noted their thanks to those involved in producing the plan.

ITEM 6: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

(a) HR REPORT

The Board noted the report provided by the HR Business Partner, Nicola Mullan. Nicola highlighted that interviews for Youth Conference Co-ordinators have taken place and 7 pre-placement letters were issuing to successful candidates on the day of the Board meeting.

Nicola stated that the Night Support Worker and EO2 Residential Careworker competitions are progressing and further updates will be available regarding CIM's in the next week.

Nicola provided an update on external recruitment. A new AO Belfast competition has launched, delivered through Talent Dog, the provider who delivered the successful pilot in the Northwest. Interviews are due to take place in May with start dates anticipated at the end of June.

Allocations from the EO2 competition is at an advanced stage and Nicola will keep management updated regarding timeframes for offers / start dates.

Nicola noted the levels of long-term sickness absence across the Agency was reducing and that NICSHR will continue working closely with Directors on this.

Thomas clarified that the headcount ceiling of 251 had been temporarily lowered to 208. Stephen confirmed this and that ideal staff headcount to deliver on the YJA corporate and business plans is 225.

Stephen acknowledged the work put into the Youth Conference Co-ordinator competition and thanked those involved, including panel members and those who worked on the videos to promote the competition. This was one of our most successful competitions and there was an increased number of applications. Stephen thanked Nicola for her part in this.

Stephen noted that Nicola will be moving on to help with work on the Integr8 project and thanked her for her contribution to YJA and the Board. Rodney Gilmour will take over the role of HR business partner for YJA and will accompany Nicola to the next Board meeting.

(b) FINANCE REPORT

The Board noted the report provided by Geoffrey which provided details on the budget position. He noted that the budget for 2026-27 has not yet been agreed by The Executive and that we currently have authority to spend 45% of last year's budget. Geoffrey highlighted KPIs and that he continues to work with business areas to ensure compliance.

(c) GOVERNANCE REPORT

The Board noted the report with no further comment. Paul noted that the audit plan for next year has been agreed.

(d) COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The Board noted the contents of the report. Angela highlighted charity events coming up and that she will provide the new Communications Strategy and plan to the Board in June.

Richard commented that it would be helpful for the Board to receive an update on YJA's partnership and stakeholder working. Stephen noted that Sharon updates a list quarterly and this could form the basis of an annual update to the Board.

Stephen noted that his strategic update for each Board meeting has a stakeholder section and he suggested that each Director update also contain a paragraph on stakeholders.

It was also suggested that a list of stakeholder meetings and engagement is put to the Board once a year.

Action: BST/ Sharon to provide a list of YJA stakeholder and partnership working for discussion at a future Board meeting.

(e) IA/NIAO RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE

The Board noted the update with no further comments.

(f) YJA RISK REGISTER

The action under Risk 2 related to MMPR coordinators training has been completed and will be moved to key controls.

The Board looked at risk 4 – Information and Security. A discussion took place around this risk and the Board are content that the risk, cause and impact are still valid. There are no changes to key controls and they are content with the total risk score.

Another eLearning on cyber security is planned. Paul noted that nothing has changed with this risk. It was suggested that the Board run through this risk again at the next meeting as Graeme Cumming is due to attend. A deep dive into risk 5 will also take place.

(g) STEWARDSHIP STATEMENTS

The Board noted the contents of the statements. Paul highlighted that this has been signed off and no further action is needed.

Thomas clarified the closing statement and the process of Stephen signing the declaration.

The Board were happy to note this and Stephen commented that the system of governance here is fit for purpose.

(h) GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY REGISTER

The Board noted the paper with no further comments.

(i) JJC ESTATE MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

It was noted that JJC facilities manager Connor Black meets regularly with Geoffrey around finance matters. Mary noted Connor's excellent work and forward thinking

ITEM 7: AOB

Attendees noted the good quality of reports and thanks to those who prepared the papers. Stephen thanked Michael for the hospitality provided by the team and their presentation under Valuing Our People.

BOARD EVALUATION

All members of the Board were content.

Thomas asked if there was a formal effectiveness review or a form of self-assessment that the Board can complete.

Action: BST to arrange a Board evaluation survey.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

YJA Offices, Newtownards, Wednesday 20 May 2026 at 10.00am.

TABLE OF ACTION POINTS CONTAINED IN BOARD MINUTES 22 April 2026

Page	Action	Lead	Status
5	BST/ Sharon to provide a list of YJA stakeholder and partnership working for discussion at a future Board meeting.	A. Gregg	
6	BST to arrange a Board evaluation survey.	A. Gregg	Complete