

Minutes of Youth Justice Agency Management Board Meeting

Wednesday, 24 January 2024

Woodlands JJC, Bangor

Board present: Stephen Martin, Chief Executive (Chair)
Mary Aughey, Director, Custodial Services
Paul Gibson, Director, Corporate Services
Colleen Heaney, Director, Youth Justice Services
Richard Horton, Non-Executive Board Member
Thomas Moore, Non-Executive Board Member

In attendance: Claire Taylor, FSD
Nicola Mullan, NICS HR Business Partner
Maxene Adams, Corporate Services

Welcome and Apologies

No apologies were noted. Stephen welcomed the Board to the first meeting of 2024.

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 29 November 2023 were agreed. All action points were confirmed as being complete. Richard asked for an update on some of the actions which Stephen provided:-

Workforce Plan: delivery dates were considered and some were brought forward. Stephen advised there would be a further update on the Workforce Plan at June's Board meeting.

Action: Update on the Workforce Plan to be scheduled for the June Board meeting.

ESD funding: Stephen advised CJI were currently looking at this and Colleen was liaising with the various teams, particularly Southern and Eastern teams, to encourage use of Strand 1 funding where appropriate.

Tollymore outdoor activity centre: Colleen advised she spoke with M Heaney, Southern team, and he advised this resource was expensive and generally cost prohibitive for them to use other than occasionally. Richard said he was disappointed the activity centre was not being used more, he'd been on a number of occasions and it appeared to be under-utilized. He suggested he might make some enquiries with Sport NI.

Stephen advised the information security presentation had issued to Board members following November's Board meeting and that the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and Risk Register would be discussed further at today's meeting.

ITEM 3: UPDATE ON STRATEGIC MATTERS

Stephen provided an update on the recent visit by the Children's Commissioner to the Juvenile Justice Centre. This was his first visit and he appeared impressed with the Centre and staff.

Stephen advised a draft report from the recent Criminal Justice Inspection of Youth Justice Services was expected by the end of February 2024, with the final report available around May. Following a verbal update from CJI, he said he was expecting a broadly positive report.

The Board were briefed on a meeting Stephen had in December with the new CEO of Start360. Some potential joint work on employability was being considered and Colleen and Grainne Keane are due to meet with their co-ordinator within the next couple of weeks. It was planned the CEO of Start360 would be invited to one of the YJA 'Thinking Time' meetings.

There was a brief discussion around finance available going forward in the absence of a functioning Assembly and Stephen advised they had been engaged in some scenario planning with the Department to consider this. Should additional funds be made available the Department would prioritise need.

Stephen provided an update on Professor Ray Jones' report into Children's Social Care Services. The Department of Health had launched a consultation following publication of the report which closed at Christmas. There was a large response to the consultation and the DoH are currently considering these.

Stephen discussed his meeting with Dr Colm Walsh earlier in the month. Colleen advised she was planning to engage with colleagues from the Republic of Ireland at their next cross-border meeting to discuss the possibility of carrying out some research which may involve Colm.

ITEM 4: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Mary provided the Board with an update on activity and forthcoming plans for the JJC. There had been a number of visits to Woodlands recently and the children were well settled. A planned maintenance contract was discussed, with the specification having been agreed and documents drafted. Tender documents should issue shortly. Options were also being explored with NIPS in relation to joining their capital works programme.

A couple of recruitment exercises currently with NICS HR were discussed and Nicola advised she would speak with her HR colleagues to discuss progress with the exercises.

ITEM 5: JJC MONITORING REPORT

The Board noted the contents of the report provided by Austin Treacy following his visit on 29 December 2023 and Stephen noted that the report was very good. The report raised a query in relation to the possibility of children being able to access

material other than that which they are authorised to access. Mary advised that access to material was restricted and that she was engaging with YJA Records Management Team to ensure unauthorised access was prohibited.

Richard asked for details of the JJC's progressive regime for children relating to behaviour and Mary advised there were various levels ranging from bronze status to platinum plus. All children new to Woodlands started at 'silver' level and could move up or down the levels depending on their behaviour. The incentive based scheme was popular with the children and in addition they had introduced a Youth Forum.

Stephen advised he and Mary were in the process of arranging visits to Maghaberry and Hydebank establishments.

ITEM 6: HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACTION PLAN

Stephen expressed his thanks to Elaine for the Health & Wellbeing Plan and to Chest, Heart & Stroke for their assistance with a survey of YJA staff. Staff were currently partaking of lunchtime Yoga, Pilates and nutrition presentations as part of the Action Plan.

ITEM 7: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

(a) HR REPORT

The Board noted the report provided by NICS HR Business Partner, Nicola Mullan. NICS HR are currently developing a Health & Wellbeing framework document, which would build on current strengths and develop these going forward.

Action: Nicola to contact Elaine to discuss the NICS HR framework.

The Board were updated on the progress with the Youth Practitioner and Care Worker competitions.

Sick absence was discussed and remains a concern. There were a number of complex cases which HR would discuss separately with senior management. Levels of sickness more generally within DoJ were on the rise and this matter was being taken forward with the Director of HR and the Department.

The learning and development landing page on the intranet had been re-designed and Nicola asked that staff within YJA are reminded of the Leadership Development programmes available to them.

The impact of recent strike action on services was discussed.

(b) FINANCE REPORT

The Board discussed the finance report provided and were advised that at this stage no money had been provided for next year. A preliminary budget had been provided. It was noted YJA had failed two Account NI KPI's this quarter and the reasons for this were discussed.

Overtime procedures within YJA was currently being reviewed, with the CEO commenting he wanted greater visibility of projected and actual overtime spend.

The Board were updated on newly appointed external auditors and that a preliminary meeting was arranged between them and the finance team. Paul advised that work was due to commence next week on the Annual Report and Accounts for 2023/24.

(c) GOVERNANCE REPORT

The Governance report was noted by the Board. Paul advised formal approval had now been received from DoF and DoJ for the relocation of YJA HQ from Waring Street to Charles House. Once Heads of Terms agreed, it was planned that notice would be given to vacate Waring Street by the end of May 2024. The lease for Charles House was for 10 years, with a 5 year break point.

A number of other building leases were due for renewal this year and longer leases for these buildings was planned going forward.

(d) YJA RISK REGISTER

The Board reviewed the Risk Register, with a 'deep dive' on Risk 1. A number of actions were noted as complete and the Risk Register would be updated and shared with the Board in advance of the March Board meeting. Stephen advised that a 'deep dive' would be carried out on Risk 2 at the March Board meeting.

Action: Risk Register to be updated.

(e) COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Board noted the contents of the report which provided an update on the delivery of key activities within the Agency's Communication Strategy during December and January.

Stephen updated the Board on his attendance at Queens University Social Work Conference on 18 December, which the Agency participated in. A number of expressions of interest in working in the Agency had been received during the event and a mailing list created to notify the interested final year student social workers of recruitment competitions.

(f) PERIODIC UPDATE

- Estates, Procurement and IT
No further board discussion as the items had already been discussed as part of the governance update.
- Business Continuity Plan
Paul advised the Board that table-top exercises were being considered before the end of the financial year.
- Complaints and Compliments

The Board noted the report on Complaints and Compliments received during the period 1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023. Stephen advised an Internal Audit was currently on-going into Complaints Handling within YJA. He asked that managers be reminded to record compliments received within their business areas.

ITEM 8: AOB

There were no other items raised.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 6 March at 10.00am. YJA Office, Foyle.

TABLE OF ACTION POINTS CONTAINED IN BOARD MINUTES. 24 JANUARY 2024

Page No.	Action	Lead	Status
1.	Update on the Workforce Plan to be scheduled for June Board meeting.	CEO	Pending
3.	NICS HR Business partner to contact YJA Board Secretary to discuss NICS HR Health & Wellbeing framework.	Nicola Mullan	Actioned
4.	Risk Register to be updated in advance of March Board meeting.	Maxene Adams	Actioned