

PRISON SERVICE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY 29TH AUGUST 2019

DUNDONALD HOUSE

In Attendance:	Ronnie Armour	Director General/Chairperson
	Paul Doran	Director of Rehabilitation
	Austin Treacy	Director of Prisons
	Claire Keatinge	Non-Executive Director
	Sarah Wakfer	Non-Executive Director
	Louise Blair	Finance Business Partner
	Jacqui Wallace	HR Business Partner
	Brendan Giffen	Head of Strategy & Governance
	Press Officer	DOJ Press Office
Minutes:	Secretary	Strategy & Governance

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, Claire Keatinge requested amendments to previous minutes at paras 5 and 9. There were no declarations of interest. **AP1: Amendments to be made to minutes from July meeting**

2. **Strategic Overview**

There remains no change to the current political status. Brexit contingency plans remain in place for NIPS.

The Board were informed of a recent death in custody at Magilligan as a result of health issues, condolences were offered by the board to the family. The Board were also informed of the passing of NICS HR Senior Member of Staff, Tommy Breslin again condolences to the family.

A new playpark was recently opened at Magilligan Prison, the park was built by prisoners and will be a shared space between fathers and children that can be used during family visits. The new Learning and Skills complex at Hydebank Wood College has now reached completion with the official opening due to take place over the coming weeks.

The Board were told that prison population has been increasing recently across all areas which have resulted in the opening of additional accommodation. Governing Governors continue to manage this skilfully to ensure needs are met of both prisoners and staff. Claire Keatinge asked if the population increasing was raising any issues for staff/security an assurance was provided by the Chair that NIPS Management is doing everything they can to mitigate against this.

3. Prison Fellowship

Robin Scott, Chief Executive of Prison Fellowship Northern Ireland attended the meeting and provided an overview of the valuable work that his organisation carries out within each of the establishments. As well as working with prisoners on landings, Prison Fellowship work with families and also offer aftercare workshops and services to prisoners following release including the resources of a drop in centre. The Chair thanks Prison Fellowship for its ongoing partnership working and support to the NI Prison Service.

4. GDPR Update

The Head of Records and Information Management provided the Board with an update on GDPR compliance in NI Prison Service. The NIPS work plan which was previously agreed, to make improvements in GDPR compliance was discussed and an overview provided on progress to date and areas for future work. Claire Keatinge noted the substantial progress that has been made in this area.

5. Injury on Duty Update

Finance Partner introduced this paper to the Board highlight to the Board the increasing costs of the Injury on Duty provision which has more than tripled since March 2016. Claire Keatinge asked about the payment being lifetime if the injury was related to injury on duty and how payments continue if recovery. NI Audit Office plan a review of the scheme and the Board will be kept updated on this.

6. Finance Update

The Finance paper was introduced by the Finance Business Paper and was noted by the Board.

Expenditure against budget was outlined and in particular budget pressures due to injury at work were highlighted to the Board.

7. Smoking Cessation

Director of Prisons provided an update on the Smoking Cessation project.

NI Prison Service has established a working group to oversee the proposed introduction of smoke free prisons across the establishments by September 2020. Northern Ireland is the only jurisdiction in the UK, not have smoke free prisons. The Board were informed that NIPS intend to work with a number of partner agencies including the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and also the Public Health Agency exploring different initiatives.

A draft consultation document was shared with the Board on “Creating a Smoke Free Prison Environment” this paper once finalised will be distributed for public consultation. Sarah Wakfer asked how many smokers we would have in custody, and it was confirmed that percentages of smokers across all of our establishments is very high. Claire Keatinge asked about the risks to staff in developing smoking related diseases and HR Partner confirmed there had been one case settled of this nature.

8. Prisons 2020

The Prisons 2020 Year 2 Delivery Plan was introduced to the Board by the Head of Strategy & Governance. This has been developed through a series of strategic planning workshops with senior management which set the high level priorities for 2019/20. This also formed the basis of NIPS contribution to the DOJ Business Plan aligning commitments in the Programme for Government.

Claire Keatinge asked about Prisoner Safety and Wellbeing and that consideration be given to including; reduction to zero suicide and committal period gap in health provision. Claire also suggested that Drugs and Alcohol Strategy was included in the delivery plan with reference to the smoking cessation project. **AP2: Delivery Plan to consider comments**

Sarah Wakfer advised the Board that she had met with Head of Prisons 2020 project to learn about the work and wanted to acknowledge her commitment to this piece of work.

9. Remand Update

Director of Rehabilitation introduced a paper on Remand for information purposes only to the Board. This paper outlined a review of the use of bail hostels, tagging and other alternatives in other jurisdictions to identify practical proposals for re-balancing our use of remand.

The paper concluded that the Department should carry out further reviews to monitor recommendations, Director General also taking this paper to the Criminal Justice Board.

10. Holiday Pay

Head of Pay & Grading provided the Board with a paper on the current position within NIPS on the recent court cases in respect of holiday pay. NIPS is represented in central NICS HR negotiations to arrive at a temporary agreement in respect of current payments.

Directors Update

11. Operations

The Director of Prisons provided the Board with an update on operations across each of the establishments including PECCS.

The Board were given an update on a number of projects that are ongoing including; staff training, digitalisation, incident planning, SPAR EVO, visitors centre contract. The Board were briefed on the proposed handover of Davis House and the indicative timings for this to happen.

Following on from an action point that was raised at the previous meeting a snapshot of assaults was given to the board which showed a positive change. Claire Keatinge asked if this was prisoners or staff based. **AP3: To clarify if the positive change is prisoner or staff based.**

12. Director of Rehabilitation

The Board were briefed on developments in the Rehabilitation Directorate and informed of meetings that had taken place with Governors and all staff in the directorate took place. An update was given on recent engagements with PBNI regarding PDU, allocation of additional Probation Officers and CJINI recommendations on Psychology.

Maghaberry hosted a meeting of PBNI where members were also given a tour of Davis House. A special performance of the play Blackout will be hosted at the Lyric Theatre at the end of September with an invited audience of stakeholders and partners. A progress update was also provided on the Learning & Skills 2020 Project Board. The board were told about recent awards ceremonies that took place in relation to academic achievements gained by those in our custody.

Psychology services within prisons were discussed and the board were informed of work that is currently being undertaken to review the structures in this area within prisons.

The board were given an update on the internal recruitment of a Women's Safety Officer the person once appointed will be based in Ash House at

Hydebank but will also provide support and information to partners/ex-partners of men in our custody. Claire Keatinge highlighted to the board that same sex domestic violence is also an issue and no programme currently exists.

13. **Strategy, Governance and Communications**

The board were given an update on the department's staff recognition awards 'Valuing Our People Awards' with NIPS making a very strong representation in the nominations.

Recent media activities were highlighted with the board also informed of upcoming planned media events. Prisons Week will take place From 13th to 19th October, we are currently working with chaplaincy to plan events and media activities during this time.

The board were also given an update on the pay remit.

14. **HR Update**

The board were informed that there was a new management information project currently underway in NICS HR and therefore no written report was available this month.

An update was given on the plan for recruitment of staff with an overview given of the new recruitment campaign that will be launched shortly.

The Chair advised the board on senior staff moves that would be taking place and also noted that Louise Cooper Deputy Director of Rehabilitation would be shortly leaving to take up a new post, he paid tribute to the work that she has done for NIPS in her time here.

15. **Risk Register**

NIPS Risk Register was included in board papers for information, it was noted that the issues around holiday pay should be included in this. **AP4: Holiday pay to be included in Risk Register**