

PRISON SERVICE MANAGEMENT BOARD
23 FEBRUARY 2017

In attendance: Ronnie Armour (Director ROD / Chair)
Phil Wragg (Director of Prisons)
Louise Blair (FSD)
Brendan Giffen (Head of Strategy & Governance)
Louise Cooper (Director of Rehabilitation)
Paul Leighton (Non-Executive Director)
Richard Stewart (Press Office)
Board Secretary

Apologies: None.

Minutes of previous meeting and action points

The Chair welcomed the Board and thanked everyone for their support and encouragement since he took up the Director Reducing Offending post. He also welcomed Richard Stewart to the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting in December were agreed by the Board as an accurate record of proceedings. The Non-Executive Director declared that he is a member of the Police Pay Review Body. There were no other Declarations of Interest.

2. In considering the outstanding actions from the December meeting the Head of Strategy & Governance provided an update on the Memorial Garden.
3. The Director of Prisons provided an update on the development of procedures to investigate major incidents in order to ensure lessons are learnt quickly Governor grades will be trained to investigate incidents and keep on top of any training or emerging learning.
4. Outstanding issues in relation to C&R training have been addressed and trainers are now delivering training in each of the establishments. The establishments must now ensure individuals are released to attend the training.

5. The Director of Rehabilitation confirmed that the progress of former prisoners who worked in the Cabin will be via community based probation officers. Paul Leighton asked that any future initiatives of this kind have built in measures to determine and evaluate the project from the outset.

6. The meeting discussed the importance of seeking to reach agreement with the Trade Union side in relation to Operational Staffing Level. The Director of Prisons agreed to take this matter forward.

Finance Report

7. The Board received an update on the financial position. All of the January Monitoring Round easements were accepted, and NIPS are planning to breakeven by year end. Capital spend is on track and it is anticipated that the budget will be fully spent by the year end.

8. The Board noted the update on the in-cell sanitation cases and the Cost Per Prisoner Place figures.

9. Members welcomed the table showing overtime expenditure as a very useful tool but expressed concern at the impact night shifts and particularly bed watches are having. The lack of domiciliary care in the prisons necessitates bed watches and ambulance calls put further pressure and create risks given the available resource. Ronnie asked that Phil examine this whole issue as a matter of urgency.

ACTION 1 – The Director of Prisons and the Head of Strategy & Governance to discuss the issue of night detail resourcing and bed watches.

ACTION 2 – Figures for night time overtime and a breakdown of incidents per hour to be brought before the Board.

10. The Non-Executive Director queried whether NIPS could recoup any money from the apprenticeship levy.

ACTION 3 – The Head of Strategy & Governance to enquire into the possibility of recouping money from the apprenticeship levy.

11. Members noted the paper tabled which provided an update on planning for the 2017-18 financial year.

Director's Monthly Updates

Operations

11. The Board received an update from the Director of Prisons The Drugs and Alcohol Monitoring and Information Service (DAMIS) is an early warning system designed to identify emerging trends in drug and alcohol misuse in the community so that bodies such as NIPS can act quickly to prevent substance misuse spilling over into the prisons. Since January DAMIS have been sharing information with NIPS in order to keep prisoners safe and assist in policy development. NIPS can also provide feedback on emerging trends or issues.

12. Terms of reference for the review of the Listeners Scheme have been determined and short term resource allocated to allow the review to proceed. The listeners are trained by the Samaritans. The CJINI had requested a review and asked for particular attention to the situation at night in Hydebank Wood College. The review is expected to report by the end of March and PSMB will be updated.

13 The Operational Management Board has been reconfigured and will meet for a full day each month. The Board will focus on operational strategy, delivery, business performance with inputs as appropriate from HR, Finance, Estates, Training and Litigation.

14. NIPS have been in contact with the Prison Service Pay Review Body to explore their potential re-engagement in respect of operational pay. The Minister is supportive of this approach. Familiarisation visits will begin in March to be followed by the gathering of evidence. The Board noted the Quantitative Comparison data.

15. The Board were provided with an update on the Magilligan Action Plan.

Director's Monthly Updates

Rehabilitation

16. The Director of Rehabilitation provided an update on Rehabilitation. The uncertainty around the budget going forward presents a number of challenges and has made the voluntary sector organisations understandably nervous. Bids have been made for future resources from Fresh Start funds.

17. The most recent Resettlement inspection was published at the same time as the Owers Report (October 2011), hence the inspection recommendations were superseded by the implementation of prison reform. The Prisoner Development Model does not just assess risks, it also sets out a range of services and pathways for every prisoner with an individual resettlement programme and plan. The Non-Executive Director stated that the focus on desistance is most welcome and noted that the voluntary sector is so aligned with the outcomes they have a crucial role to play. Members confirmed this to be the case and added that the dependence is such that lack of funding within the voluntary sector would be a concern given the long term benefits to society which resettlement and rehabilitation can bring. The Board noted the Resettlement Pathways paper. The paper will be circulated to staff.

18. The Board noted the progress made in the Outsourcing of Learning & Skills paper. A pilot outsourcing of Learning & Skills to Belfast Metropolitan College and North West Regional College commenced in May 2015 with delivery in place from August 2015. The pilot ends in May 2017. A business case has been submitted to FSD for full outsourcing of Learning & Skills to the Colleges from April 2017 which will include the transfer of 14 NIPS teachers under TUPE regulations. Service provision will be managed through a Service Level Agreement that will deliver Learning & Skills to people in custody within the 3 establishments until August 2020.

19. The Non-Executive Director asked if there was scope for businesses to take apprentices from within the prisons and if the prisons could provide training towards a career in the construction industry by way of example.

ACTION 4 – The Governor of Magilligan to explore the possibility for businesses to take apprentices from within the prisons and to examine whether the prisons could provide training for instance for a career in the construction industry amongst others.

Sick Absence Update

20. The sick absence update was noted with disappointment by all members. It was noted that NIPS is about to become a customer of the HR Shared Service and members asked that Mark Goodfellow attend the next Board meeting to explain how Sick Absence Management will operate in the new Service and to attend future Board Meetings periodically thereafter. HR Shared Service representatives will be attending OMB meetings going forward.

ACTION 5 – Mark Goodfellow to be invited to the next Board meeting to explain how Sick Absence Management will operate in the new Service and attend future Board Meetings periodically thereafter.

Any Other Business

21. The Non-Executive Director noted the position and recent unrest in a number of English prisons. The Director of Prisons offered the view that the issues were caused by stagnant staff numbers at a time when alcohol and drug misuse among the prison population was growing combined with difficulties in recruiting new staff into NOMS.

22. The Head of Strategy & Governance provided an update on documentary which has been made by Doubleband. PBNI and the victim support groups have all been engaged to identify and support the victims of any of the prisoners included in

the documentary. Pre screenings will be offered along with a range of other support mechanisms. Further updates will be provided to the Board.

Date of next meeting

23. The next meeting of the Prison Service Management Board will be held in Dundonald House on 25 May at 9.30am.