



Minutes of the VSS Board Meeting No 38
Tuesday, 14 March 2017, 9.30am
Grosvenor House, Belfast

Board Members Present:

Séamus Magee (SM)	Board Member (Chair)
Patricia Haren (PH)	Board Member
Richard Solomon (RS)	Board Member
Beverley Clarke (BC)	Board Member
Bertha McDougall (BMcD)	Board Member

VSS Officers in Attendance:

Margaret Bateson (MB)	Accounting Officer and CEO
Brendan Smith (BS)	Head of Corporate Services
Geraldine Hamilton (GS)	Head of Health and Wellbeing
Maria McKeown (MMcK)	Business Support Officer (Minutes)

A Apologies

A1 Apologies were received from SMcI and OW.

B Minutes of Previous Meetings

B1 17 February 2017. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

C Action Points

The Board asked the Head of Corporate Services to provide an update in relation to the outstanding action points.

- 16.2.16: AP4: This has been superseded by the development of Strategic Outcomes. This was received from CVS in March 2017 and is expected to be completed by the end of this month.
- 25.10.2016: AP2: The recent recruitment process did not result in the appointment of an Accountant to the ARC. This will be re-advertised. Deadline extended from March 2017 to June 2017.

- MSFM 4.4.3: The Board request to meet Ministers has been sent. Meeting was being scheduled. Now on hold.

The Board noted that all other action points are complete.

D Conflict of Interest

D1 The Board reviewed the Supplier List.

D2 No conflicts of interest were declared.

E Chairman's Report

SM presented the report in OW's absence providing an update on the events he attended. BMcD provided feedback in relation to the SEFF Seminar event on 3 March and 4 March "*Remembering the past, shaping the future*".

F CEO and Accounting Officer update

The Board asked the CEO to present this report.

MB reported on the following key points.

Political Context and Budget Position

- Following the election on 2nd March 2017, the political environment and budgetary position remains uncertain.
- A meeting of all ALB AO/CEO has been arranged with TEO on 14th March 2017. Any significant update will be sent to the Board following this meeting.
- The VSS is not expected to be advised of its budget position until the end of March 2017.

Individual needs programme

- At an operational level, all KPI are on track. The day to day focus for the team is on ensuring all individuals currently in receipt of support are able to utilize this (reminder letters to 1,241 clients with balances remaining), in addition to issuing any final award letters to victims and survivors prior to the financial year end.
- VSS has continued engagement with the Welfare Reform Team. This is working well. A total of 832 clients (out of 1,545 contacted) have returned signed Consent Forms to date. VSS maintains close contact with the team in DfC to ensure safe and secure transfer of client information between our organisations, in line with our obligations under the Data Protection Act.

Victims Support Programme

- The sole focus on this team has been on the assessment of applications effective April 2017 and beyond.

Corporate Services

- Maximisation of budget prior to the year end.
- Resolution of Governance issues raised by NIAO to ensure VSS accounts for 2016/17 are not qualified and that internal controls for INP 2017/18 are both victims centred and robust.

F1 Progress against Budget

The Board asked CEO to present this paper. Progress to date was noted.

F2 Strategic Risk Register

The Board noted the revised register with two new risks identified.

G Future Service Delivery Update

G1 VSP

The Board asked the Head of Health and Wellbeing to present this paper.

GH recapped on the progress to date and provided a breakdown of the overall position following the assessment of the VSP/ Peace IV applications.

GH provided an update on the allocation of Peace IV Posts and specific detail on Health and Wellbeing Caseworkers and Advocacy Support Programme.

G2 INP

The Board asked the Head of Health and Wellbeing to present this paper.

GH provided an overview of the Individual Needs Programme 2017 -2018. The Board suggested some minor changes to be implemented to the Individual Needs programme letter templates.

G3 PEACE IV

The Board asked the Head of Health and Wellbeing to present this paper.

GH provided an update on the progress to date highlighting the following key points.

- Scoring of all applications complete. Organisations notified of outcome 27th February 2017.
- Peace IV posts recruitment process nearing completion. All interviews completed by end of March 17.

- Meeting with SEUPB held on 7 March 2017 in relation to the letter of offer ‘Permission to Start’ requirements.

H Board Sub-Committees

VSS Audit and Risk Committee is meeting on 15 March 2017. An update will be provided at the May Board meeting.

Policy and Resources Committee. It was agreed that further discussions are to take place regarding these meetings at the Board strategic planning day on 27 April 2017.

I Standing Agenda Items

I1 Compliance Update

The Board asked Head of Corporate services to present this paper.

BS provided an update on suspected Fraud cases:

- 1 case awaiting a CCNI final report.
- 3 cases closed by the VSS in May 2014, however still under FIOG consideration.
- 4 cases awaiting authorisation from TEO/FIOG to apply sanctions.
- 5 cases awaiting outcome from GFIS referral.
- 2 cases awaiting outcome from PSNI referral.

BS also provided an update on each of the Debt Recovery matters.

There were no new whistleblowing reports made in January 2017 and February 2017.

There were no new ombudsman complaints in February 2017.

There was one FOI request made in February 2017 which remains ongoing.

I2 Complaints and Appeals

MB and RS stepped out of the meeting.

BS tabled a complaint received by VSS on 2 March 2017. The Board assigned two Board members to investigate this complaint which is to be completed within 14 working days.

MB and RS re-joined the meeting.

I3 Client risk update

The Board noted this update. There are currently no clients on the risk register.

I4 Board Training Update and Questionnaire

The Board noted this update.

I5 Board Self-Assessment Update

The Board noted the update provided and the progress against the outstanding actions.

I6 Board Attendance Update

The Board noted this update. BMcD requested a check by Finance on 15/16 days paid.

J Any other Business

J1 Business Case - Public Relations

The Board approved this business case.

K Date of Next meeting

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 11 April 2017 at 9.30am in Seatem House.