



Minutes of the VSS Board Meeting No 39
Tuesday, 11 April 2017, 9.30am
Premier Business Centre, Belfast

Board Members Present:

Oliver Wilkinson	Board Member (Chair)
Séamus Magee (SM)	Board Member
Patricia Haren (PH)	Board Member
Richard Solomon (RS)	Board Member
Beverley Clarke (BC)	Board Member
Bertha McDougall (BMcD)	Board Member
Stephen McIlveen (SMcI)	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 None

B Minutes of Previous Meetings

B1 14 March 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: The Tri-lateral meetings re-convened on 29 March 2017 and it was agreed the MoU will be reviewed in light of the new CVS Standards and operational focus of the Tri-lateral. CVS to forward revised draft to VSS for review.

- 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 for closure of action point extended from March 2017 to June 2017.
- 13.12.2016: AP1: VSS to Schedule next Policy and Resource Sub-Committee. To be discussed at Board Strategic planning day on 27 April 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 Each Board member updated and completed the declaration of conflict of interest form for their annual update 17/18.

E Chairman's Report

The Chair presented his update report, noting the activities undertaken.

F CEO and Accounting Officer update

The Board asked the CEO to present this report.

MB reported on the following key points and priorities:

Political Context and Budget Position

- The political environment remains uncertain. Budgetary position tentatively positive.
- A meeting of all ALB AO/CEO took place with TEO on 14th March 2017. TEO continues to prioritise the needs of victims and survivors in recognition of the significant progress made in the co-design programme and the importance of the new service delivery models.
- While a budget allocation for 2017/18 cannot be confirmed, permission to issue letters of offer to VSP/PEACE IV funded organizations and to proceed with the implementation of the INP has been received from the TEO AO and SEUPB respectively.
- The VSS is prepared and has a contingency plan in place should there be a budget reduction.

Individual needs programme

- At an operational level, all KPI's are on broadly on track. There is a slight increase in missed calls (6%) in line with an increase in activity due to the year end deadlines for claims submission.
- Calls relating to the opening of the new schemes from April 2017 continue to be managed. NI Direct will support handling of incoming calls from 11.04.17 onwards, provisionally until 31.07.17. This service is under preparation, with VSS participating in training for the call handlers to be delivered on 06.04.17.
- Outside of normal business, the key areas for this team are:
 1. The launch of the INP 2017/18.
 2. Continued engagement with the Welfare Reform Team. This is working well. A total of 902 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 remains on the assessment of applications effective April 2017 and beyond alongside planning for the implementation of the VSP 2017/18.

Corporate Services

- Maximisation of budget prior to the year end. Significant progress has been made and the risk of underspend has been reduced to a maximum of £100K with further accruals expected.
- Completion of all verification and preparation for the Year End Annual Report and Accounts.
- Preparation of Year End Outcomes Based Monitoring and Evaluation report for VSP.
- Phase 1 now live. Progression of MIS project plan to ensure Phase 2 live by June 2017.

The Board sought clarity on the number of audit recommendations being carried forward into 17/18. MB advised there are currently 10 open audit recommendations all of which are being carried forward into 17/18. MB provided detail on the 10 recommendations.

F1 Progress against Budget

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

F2 Quarterly Assurance Report

The Board noted this paper.

F3 Quarterly ALB Report

The Board noted this paper.

F4 Strategic Risk Register

The Board noted this paper.

G 2017/18 Update and beyond

G1 Victims Co Design Programme

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

GH provided a summary on the Co-Design workshop that took place on 21 March 2017.

The key points highlighted were:

Post 2019 Strategy - Defining a period of strategy beyond 2019 e.g 5 year exit strategy with the ultimate objective to achieve no further need for VSS, CVS and VSU.

Research Framework – CVS implementing Peace IV Research. Key focus being

- Mental Health
- Advocacy
- Transgenerational
-

Key Themes Going Forward – Support and services needed and how these are delivered to be considered for:

- Transgenerational
- Addiction Services
- Older Population

The CEO/AO advised that these strategic priorities would be the basis of Board reporting going forward, to replace the previous focus on the detail of service delivery models.

G2 INP

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

GH reported on the following key points.

- All KPI are on broadly on track. No further update to previous CEO/AO discussion.
- Pending approval of Spot Check outcome, HWB Programme Manager will continue to work closely with MIS Manager on technical aspect of allocating awards to existing clients and preparing mailout of same, due to commence w/c 24.04.17 and conclude by 28.04.17.
- All information material's for 17/18 are currently being proof read and finalised to go to print.

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.

- The open call process for VSP/PEACE IV and the subsequent assessment of applications has now been completed.
- Of the 86 applications submitted in January 2017, 55 applications were successful, 26 applications unsuccessful and 5 applications deemed ineligible.
- All successful organisations have met with VSS to discuss their indicative budgets and the delivery of their work plans prior to a final Letter of Offer being issued.
- As of 31st March 2017 a total of 42 Letters of Offer for VSP and PEACE IV have been issued.
- 13 Letters of Offer are still to be issued.
- 11 of these are VSP Small Grants. Meetings with these organisations took place week beginning 4th April 2017 with a commitment to issue a Letter of Offer within 5 working days of receipt of their revised budgets and work plans.
- 2 Letters of Offer under VSP/PEACE IV have not yet been issued.
- It is anticipated that all remaining Letters of Offer will be issued by 14th April 2017.

H Board Sub-Committees

VSS Audit and Risk Committee met on 15 March 2017. A Chairman's Report will be provided at the May Board meeting.

I Standing Agenda Items

I1 Compliance Update

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

BS provided an update on current suspected fraud cases.

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

AP1 In relation to the outstanding insolvency, VSS to make a written formal complaint to the Registered Body due to their lack of response.

There were no new whistleblowing reports made in January to March 2017.

There were no new ombudsman complaints in January to March 2017.

There was one FOI request made in February 2017 which was closed in March 2017.

I2 Complaints and Appeals

There were no complaints or appeals for the Board to consider.

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.

J Any other Business

J1 Business Case – IT Systems

The Board approved this business case.

K Date of Next meeting

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 16 May 2017 at 9.30am in Seatem House.