



Minutes of the VSS Board Meeting No 47
Titanic Room, Clayton Hotel, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast
Board Meeting Type: Quarter End Review

Board Members Present:

Oliver Wilkinson (OW)	Board Member (Chair)
Patricia Haren (PH)	Board Member
Bertha McDougall (BMcD)	Board Member
Stephen McIlveen (SMcI)	Board Member
Beverley Clarke (BC)	Board Member

VSS Officers in Attendance:

Margaret Bateson (MB)	Accounting Officer and CEO
Andrew Walker (AW)	Head of Corporate Services
Caroline King (CK)	Acting Head of Health & Wellbeing
Maria Mckeown (MMcK)	Project Assistant (Minutes)

A Apologies

Richard Solomon

B Minutes of Previous Meetings

B1 30 January 2018. The minutes of this meeting were agreed.

B2 20 February 2018. The minutes of this meeting were agreed.

B3 13 March 2018. The minutes of this 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.

25.10.16: AP2: This position was publicly advertised for a third time in October 2017. One candidate interviewed but not appointed. A co-opt exercise was facilitated by TEO, however no applications were received. TEO to revert with feedback from this competition.

14.11.17: AP1: In absence of Ministers, TEO confirmed approval of VSS 2017-20 Corporate Plan in March 2018.

MSFM 4.4.3: Ministers to meet Board. This action point is now on hold.

D Conflict of Interest

D1 The Board reviewed the Supplier List.

D2 No conflicts of interest were declared.

E Chairman's Report

The Board noted the Chairman's Update Report.

F Quarter End March 2018

F1 CEO/AO Exception Report

The Board asked the CEO to present this report.

MB provided an update on the key strategic issues including:

Progress against Business Plan targets: 27 out of 30 targets achieved. The 3 targets that will remain outstanding relate to Disability Aids and 2 new schemes: Trauma-Focused Physical Activity, and Literacy and Numeracy. This is primarily due to the longer than expected establishment of new networks, structures and processes in 2017/18. This year is the first year of a 3 year (VSP) and 4 year (PEACE IV) programme. These will therefore form a particular focus in terms of proactive outreach in Year 2 -2018/19.

MB provided an update on the current risks and indicated that 2 new risks had been added at March 2018 month end with 1 risks closed.

VSS continue to prepare and provide the required information (under guidance of our solicitors) to defend an employment tribunal case which is scheduled for late August 2018.

MB provided an update on the Mental Health Trauma Service (Regional Trauma Network) The Board noted the recruitment process for a Regional Trauma Network Manager is currently underway.

CK provided details surrounding the unexpected death of a client and what actions VSS had taken.

The Board noted the actions taken and the support in place for staff within VSS in relation to this matter.

F2 Quarterly ALB Performance Report

The Board noted this paper.

F3 Quarterly Assurance Statement

The Board noted this paper.

F4 Quarterly Outcomes Based M&E

The Board noted this paper.

G Board Sub Committees

G1 Audit and Risk Committee – Chairman’s Report

The Board asked the Head of Corporate Services to present this update.

The Board noted the ARC Chairman’s Reports for 19 April.

- Attempts to appoint a qualified Accountant to the Committee have not been successful (3 external competitions and 1 NICS Co-opt). VSS/TEO will reflect on the outcome of the co-opt process and agree a way forward (it is understood that there is some interest at G7 and G5 levels with NICS).
- Budget position presented – with mitigating actions taken to address the potential underspend identified earlier in the year. Anticipated final position is within 1.5% tolerable limit.
- NIAO provided update on timeline for 17/18 audit (unchanged to 16/17)
- Committee reviewed all completed 17/18 Internal Reports, noting the positive outcomes. Also approved the audit plan for 2018/19 (requesting that GDPR be considered again in that year).

- Risks presented and assessed, including new risks in respect of PEACE IV Cashflow, and Staffing Resources. Committee considered management approach to mitigation of same.

G2 Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee

Next meeting is scheduled for 22 May 2018.

H Board Workplan and Development

H1 Board Attendance / Work Plan

The Board asked the Head of Corporate Services to provide an update on Board Attendance and Work Plan.

18/19 workplan was agreed. Board training to be included in workplan.

H2 Board Training Update and Questionnaire

The Board asked the Head of Corporate Services to present this report.

Objectives were reviewed and agreed.

GDPR - Information management to be added as standing agenda item going forward.

H3 Board Self-Assessment Update

The Board asked the Head of Corporate Services to present this update.

VSS engaged Supporting Justice in relation to a bespoke Quality Mark. The outcome is positive with the quality mark awarded. Further feedback on this to be provided in Quarter one 2018/19.

VSS to provide Board with feedback following outcome of Victims Choice Quality Mark process. Feedback to be scheduled into a Strategic Board Session in early 2018/19

I Standing Agenda Items

I1 Compliance Update (Tabled)

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

There are now 16 suspected Fraud cases which have been closed by GFIS, including 8 which have been reviewed by FIOG. In these 8 cases, VSS will now make a proposal on the approach to recovery/sanctions. FIOG has requested VSS responses to the recommendations raised in these cases.

The Board noted their disappointment with the length of time it has taken for FIOG to respond to VSS and with the quality of the reports they have provided.

There was one new whistle-blowing case in the period to 31 March 2018. This relates to a funded organisation. One older whistle-blowing report remains open at 31 March 2018 (VSS/FR/33). A GFIS report has been received in respect of this case, which makes some recommendations, however no financial penalty or recovery is required. This case will be considered closed following VSS confirmation of acceptance of the GFIS recommendation.

The Board noted that the NI Direct contract has been extended to the end of September.

The Board noted the update on the other compliance areas.

I2 Complaints and Appeals (Tabled)

The Board noted that there were no complaints to be considered at Board level.

I3 Client Risk Update

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

One client who was on the Client Risk Register for March 2018 died unexpectedly early April 2018. A full briefing was provided on this matter earlier in the meeting as part of the CEO update.

The Board noted that there is currently one member of the public on the Unacceptable Behaviour Register. The organisation continues to monitor this case and to liaise with the relevant authorities.

J Any Other Business

VSS Chair asked for an update on welfare reform and how it is having an impact on VSS clients. MB provided this update. It was noted that it is only when a client goes through the appeals process that the Department of Communities recognises the applicant as a VSS client and applies the additional 4 points.

J1 Approval of Policies (Adult Safeguarding and Child Safeguarding)

The board are happy with the content of the adult safeguarding policy as it stands with the addition of an extra paragraph. Once this has been added and the child safeguarding brought into line with the adult safeguarding the policies will be circulated by email to the Health and Wellbeing Sub Committee for approval.

J2 2018-21 Draft Corporate Plan (inc 2018/2019 Delivery plan)

The Board noted this paper.

K Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Tuesday 15 May 2018 at 10:00am in Clayton Hotel, Belfast.