



Minutes of the VSS Board Meeting No 56
VSS, Seatem House, Belfast
Board Meeting Type: Strategic Meeting
19th February 2019

Board Members Present:

Oliver Wilkinson (OW)	Board Member (Chair)
Patricia Haren (PH)	Board Member
Bertha McDougall (BMcD)	Board Member
Richard Solomon (RS)	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
Joanne McConville (JMcC)	Head of Health & Wellbeing

Apologies

Stephen McIlveen sent apologies.

B Minutes of Previous Meeting

22 January 2019. The minutes of this meeting were agreed.

C CEO Reporting by Exception

The CEO advised that there were no issues to report by exception since the last Board Meeting with the exception of CVS Pension Advice and CVS Policy Advice of Legacy matter.

The Board discussed arrangements for the remaining Board meetings in the 18/19 (Strategic Sessions, Annual Reviews and Board appraisals).

At 10:20am, Judith Thompson (JT) and Andrew Sloan (AS) of the Commission for Victims & Survivors entered the meeting.

A VSS Board Engagement with Commissioner for Victims & Survivors

The Commissioner provided an update on the Commission's plans and strategic direction for the coming year, focusing on two main areas:

- Policy Advice re: Legacy
- Pension for the Severely Injured

The Commissioner, Board and Senior Management discussed these issues, and exchanged views on the approach undertaken to date. VSS requested a co-design approach to be adopted going forward in conjunction with VSS funded community organisations.

The Commissioner advised the Board that CVS would be publishing and launching its policy advice following the NIO legacy consultation on 12th March 2019 at Westminster.

Timeframes for any possible legislation (and subsequent lead-in time for establishment of institutions etc) were discussed. The potential growth in advocacy and health & wellbeing support around any institutions established was also discussed.

VSS Board advised they were unable to comment in any detail without having sight of the advice and requested a copy. CVS advised this would be shared in advance of the event.

CVS confirmed that they had provided policy advice to NIO on a pension for the seriously injured and outlined that this is in line with the definition of a victim under the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. The Commissioner advised that some figures included in that advice have been updated with the assistance of VSS.

JT also provided information on the proposed use of a group of psychiatrists and psychologists to advise on a possible model for assessing the psychological aspect for possible eligibility for such a pension.

MB raised a concern that the CVS paper had not yet been shared with VSS (whilst it is understood to have been shared with TEO and NIO). From the brief sight of the opening paragraphs of the paper in hard copy, MB noted significant concern that figures provided by VSS have been used incorrectly, resulting in significant factual inaccuracy within the paper.

MB also noted a concern with regard to the approach to considering the eligibility for a pension for psychologically injured. VSS had not been aware of this approach until the VSS Board meeting and MB stressed the importance of 'co-design' in respect of this matter.

The Board discussed this issue in some detail, and JT confirmed that the concerns raised would be considered.

In respect of the PEACE IV Research projects, JT advised that these remain on track.

The Chair thanked JT and AS for providing the update to the Board, and it was agreed that this was a useful exercise, which should be repeated at least twice per annum.

D Strategic Session – Review of Year 1 Delivery Model

MB presented to the Board on the current Service Delivery Model, including the status/progress at the Strategic, Management and Operational levels.

Key data on client feedback, corporate & clinical governance, casework, client demographics and outcome measures were presented and discussed.

The Board reviewed progress on the provision of training to the sector, noting the significant scale of provision already achieved.

A discussion was held on the gaps identified in services and challenges to be addressed in going forward, including:

- Social Isolation
- Support for bereaved/elderly
- Home Heating pressures to be addressed through new eligibility criteria
- Legacy
- Awareness of VSS
- Eligibility

The Board thanked MB for the useful presentation, and acknowledged the significant progress to date.

E AOB

- The Board approved the renewal of the VSS bank mandate with updates for new staff, and authorised AW to countersign the bank request forms to enact this update.
- The Board noted the request for them to attend three further meetings with the Victims Forum over 2019/20 – AW to circulate dates.

Date of next meeting Wednesday 19th March 2019 in Seatem House.