



**Minutes of the VSS Board Meeting No 61**  
**Seatem House, Alfred Street, Belfast**  
**Board Meeting Type: Quarter End Meeting**  
**Tuesday 30 July 2019 at 10:00am**

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**Board Members Present:**

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

**VSS Officers in Attendance:**

Margaret Bateson (MB)	CEO
Andrew Walker (AW)	Head of Corporate Services
Jacqueline Blain	Business Support Officer (minutes)

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**Apologies**

**A1** No Apologies.

**B Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**B1** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 were approved.

**C Action Points**

The Board noted three open action points without resolve.

1. Invitation to go to the Commissioner to attend the VSS Board. It was agreed that this would be scheduled for the next meeting 10<sup>th</sup> of September.

2. The Chair to complete all members' appraisals and forward completed appraisal documentation to Head of Corporate Services.
3. The request to meet Ministers remains on hold pending return of NI Assembly.

**D1 Suppliers list**

The board reviewed the suppliers list and no conflicts identified.

**D2 Conflict of Interest**

No conflicts of interest for matters arising on the meeting agenda were declared.

**E Chair's Report**

The Chair provided the Board with details of events he had attended during the quarter.

**F Quarter End June**

**F CEO/AO Exception Report**

**The Board asked the CEO to present this report**

MB provided an update on future funding. A three year Corporate Plan for the period 2019/20 – 2021/22 was accepted by TEO on the 11 June 2019. The focus within Q1 was primarily on launch of the INP Self Directed Assistance Schemes (cash payments). Additionally VSS submitted a bid for additional PEACE IV funding in November 2018, but due to timing of the approval process was not able to include additional activities in the 2019/20 Delivery Plan. Once approval is received, VSS will prepare internal targets and outcomes to monitor during 2019/20 in respect of these new activities.

Following the termination of funding in respect of one funded organisation on 16 May 2019. The completion of an independent corporate governance review, confirmed serious concerns across a range of areas including safeguarding, financial management and committee governance. It was noted that the appeal period has now expired and no appeal was raised. Focus is now on ensuring continued service provision in the area. It was confirmed that the two advocacy support workers from the funded organisation have successfully transferred under TUPE and they commenced in post on 30 July 2019. The funded organisation agreed to conclude current business effective from the 31 July 2019.

The Board were pleased with the high percentage response in relation to the client survey to monitor outcomes with respect to cash-based frameworks.

MB confirmed that the Head of HWB resigned with effect from the 1 July 2019. This led to a discussion on current structure with MB explaining that the 5 Case Managers were clinical specialists and therefore the Head of HWB's position has a focus on strategic direction and management.

MB confirmed a bid to SEUPB for an additional £1.6 M made on the 26 November 2018 would not be decided until October 2019. In anticipation of a positive outcome the VSS have prepared a plan of action.

In addition, the revision to the Home Heat Scheme within Persistent Pain Framework was discussed.

The Board discussed the reason for closure.

MB explained that the scheme was only closing for new applicants for the remainder of 2019/20 due to budgetary constraints. In addition alternative funding is open under the Social Isolation Framework. This in turn frees up HWB caseworkers to focus on available frameworks.

The Board discussed the ongoing corporate governance review. An update was provided on review of one organisation at last board meeting in relation to monitoring & evaluation records. VSS has again engaged an independent specialist to undertake a review of corporate governance, and will consider the appropriate actions following completion. Funding has been restricted to salaries and overheads in Q1 2019/20 pending outcomes of the GIAFIS and independent reviews.

MB discussed her key engagements this quarter including the launch of Brooke House Health and Wellbeing Centre in Fermanagh. In addition there was a meeting with 5 main groups and Political parties regarding Regional Trauma Network at Stormont Hotel.

#### **Quarterly ALB Performance Report**

Accepted

#### **Quarterly Assurance Statement**

Accepted

#### **Quarterly Outcomes Based M&E**

Accepted

### **G Audit and Risk Committee update**

Due to holidays ARC could not meet until the 6 August 2019, therefore nothing new to report.

#### **Health and Wellbeing Committee Update**

Most recent Committee Minutes 14 May 2019 noted

## **H Board attendance/Work Plan**

Accepted

### **Board Training Update and Questionnaire**

Accepted

### **Board Self-Assessment Update**

Accepted

## **I1 Standing Agenda Items**

### **Compliance update (Inc. Complaints & Appeals) (tabled)**

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

The Board noted the 5 cases of suspected fraud as at the 30 June 2019. This included 1 case awaiting a CCNI Final Report with the remaining other 4 with investigations ongoing. The VSS continues to pursue the 4 debtor balances and are managed in accordance with the VSS Debt Recovery and Write Off Procedures.

There have been no new instances of whistleblowing in the quarter ended 30 June 2019. The current case which emerged in the quarter ended 31 March 2019, remains open and refers to VSS/FR/37. The whistle-blower will be informed of the outcome raised upon conclusion of the suspected fraud investigation if considered appropriate, in line with policy.

### **Complaints & Appeals (As at 30 June 2019)**

There were no new Ombudsman cases made in the period to 30 June 2019 and no open cases carried forward.

There were four complaints received in respect of VSS Funded groups in the quarter. One complaint about VSS in the quarter ended 30 June 2019. The complaint was received 2 April 2019 and closed on 11 May 2019. The complaint was then appealed by complainant was passed to the Board for review, and the Board declined the appeal. Out of the remaining three, one was resolved informally by Programme Officer and closed on the same day, one is awaiting the outcome of an investigation and the other is ongoing.

## **I2 Client Risk Update**

During this period, no new members of the public were listed on the Unacceptable Behaviour Register. In addition there is currently no member of the public listed on the Unacceptable Behaviour Register. The last member of the public listed was removed from the register in May 2018 in line with the Policy.

During this period 2 clients were added to the Client Risk Register. The total number of individuals that VSS has listed on the register from April 2019 to date is 2. All cases to date are closed. 0 incidents relate to the same client.

### **I3 Data Protection Update**

GDPR Update (As at 30 June 2019)

It was noted that one Data Sharing Agreement is still outstanding from a VSP funded group. Following active chasing by staff this group has sought legal advice. This has been passed to the DPO for resolution (legal advice to be sought if necessary).

The Board noted that there have been no data breaches during this the period.

In addition, it was recorded that the DPO has been liaising with internal auditors in preparation for GDPR audit in September. DPO and MIS Manager have been working on a number of areas in preparation of this.

### **J Communications**

The Board noted the new standing agenda item and VSS Communication Plan to be provided at next quarter-end Board meeting.

### **AOB**

### **K Draft Partnership Agreement**

The Board discussed the draft Partnership Agreement for use between VSS and TEO. It was noted that VSS are providing comments on draft document to TEO.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Tuesday 10 September 2019 at 10.00 am at Seatem House.