

PPS Management Board

11.30am Friday 25 January 2019

Board Room, Belfast Chambers

Members:

**Stephen Herron (Chair)
Michael Agnew
Ian Hearst
Marianne O’Kane
Christopher Welford
Glenn Houston
David Best**

In Attendance:

Libby Kinney

Secretariat:

Policy and Information Unit

1. Apologies

2. Welcome

The Director welcomed members to the January 2019 Management Board, in particular the new Non-Executive Directors, Mr Houston and Mr Best. Congratulations were extended to Ms O’Kane on her successful appointment as Senior Assistant Director.

3. Declaration of Board Members’ Interests

Interests will be declared in writing and maintained by the Secretariat. They will be recorded at the next Board meeting.

4. Management Board Minutes

The previous minutes were agreed.

5. Actions from the Management Board meeting of 6 December 2019

AP 10-18/19: Mr Agnew to commission a briefing paper on quality assurance mechanisms to submit a report to the PQC.

Mr Agnew advised that a paper has been drafted and will be submitted to the PQC and thereafter will be brought back to the Board for consideration.

AP 11-18/19: IH to circulate a briefing paper detailing a strategy for vacancy management.

Cleared - Mr Hearst provided an overview of the existing strategies in place for vacancy management. Members discussed at length working practices and resources/ capacity across the organisation. It was agreed that further consideration should be given to extending some successful initiatives across the organisation. Ms O’Kane will convene a meeting with ADs to scope existing initiatives and resources and discuss with RMT.

AP 15-18/19: Ms O’Kane to explore options in respect of extending working practice initiatives and potential redistribution of resources and discuss with RMT.

AP 12-18/19: IH to raise increase in trends in PPS staff reporting with mental health issues with NICSHR.

Cleared – See item 10. Mr Hearst updated members on discussions held with NICSHR and advised of available interventions held centrally.

AP 13-18/19: IH to provide the Board with a case study on the handling of the reputational risk on a number matters over the last year.

Cleared - Mr Hearst advised that this matter will be taken forward as part of the Communications Strategy.

AP 14-18/19: IH to obtain clarification on the ownership of police material.

Members noted that a paper has been drafted by the DPO and will be considered initially by DRIM before being brought to the Board.

6. Reports from Management Board Committees

Senior Management Group – 17 January 2019

Mr Agnew provided an overview of matters discussed and action points arising from the Senior Management Group meeting of 17 January 2019.

People & Resources Committee – 10 January 2019

The minutes and actions from the People and Resources Committee meeting of 10 January 2019 were reviewed and noted by members. Key issues discussed included the shortage of AAs in Foyle and issues entailed in recruiting for these vacancies, and the rise in use of Senior Counsel in the previous quarter.

Performance & Delivery Committee – 20 December 2018

The Performance and Delivery Committee minutes and actions from the meeting of 20 December 2018 were reviewed and noted by members.

Policy & Quality Committee –

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 12 February 2019

7. Change Management Board -10 December 2018.

Mr Hearst provided an overview of the progress of the various initiatives/projects discussed at the meeting.

8. Performance Issues

Performance Summary

Members reviewed and discussed the key points outlined in the Performance Summary. In comparison with the last 12 months the overall caseload has decreased by 0.5% to 43,046, however figures for the last three months have increased by 6.1% from the previous three month period. There has been an increase in CW Categories 1-4 in Belfast and Eastern of 13.3% with a decrease of 8.0% in SCU.

The overall work queue (unallocated files) has decreased by 19.7% on the previous month and now stands at 1.7 weeks. There has been an increase of 12.6% on the number of DIRs issued in the last three months compared to the previous three months.

The number of decisions issued during the last 12 months is slightly lower than the previous period down by 0.5% however the number of indictable decisions has risen by 12.4%. Of the ten regional timeliness targets, eight are being met over the financial year to date. Performance against the 80% indictable target is below the required level at 72.2%.

9. Finance

Finance Update November

Board members reviewed the paper outlining the key financial issues managed by the Finance Team as of 30 November 2018.

Members noted the key outturn figures, the financial impact of the use of counsel and budget pressures facing the PPS in respect of budget for 2019/20.

Briefing of Counsel December 2018.

Members discussed and noted the Briefing Report of the allocation of counsel to cases.

Procurement Report

Members noted the key issues in the November 2018 Procurement Report, in particular the PPS Contract Compliance for the year to date and the procurement activity in respect of the CMS contract which expires in March 2019.

10. People Issues

NICSHR Update January 2019

Board Members reviewed and discussed the NICS Information and Analysis Update Report for January 2019. Members noted information on the transformation/change projects across the NICS, PPS resourcing/ recruitment and promotion updates, employee relations and learning and development.

Members noted the latest managing attendance figures, with the projected outturn for working days lost in 2018/19 at 13.3 days. Members also reviewed the figures for long term sickness and subsequent management of same.

RMT Update January 2019

Board Members noted and discussed the RMT report, including current staffing levels as of December 2018, management of vacancies, the health and well-being update, corporate social responsibility and training analysis.

Members noted the approval of the change in the capacity model to reflect the re-grading of an administrative post in High Court and International.

IIP Update

Members noted the IIP Insights Assessment Report following the successful reaccreditation. A feedback meeting is planned for January 2019 with 12 and 24 month reviews scheduled for November 2019 and 2020 respectively. The accreditation will expire in August 2021.

People Plan

Mr Hearst provided an update on progress with the establishment of the People Forum and advised of the allocation of the five priorities to the appropriate sub-committees.

Absence in the PPS due to Mental Health

Members noted the paper previously provided on details of support available to managers and staff dealing with mental health issues. Mr Hearst advised that the increased trend in staff reporting with mental health issues has been flagged to NICSHR.

11. Governance Issues

Corporate Risk Register 2018/19

Members discussed and reviewed the 2018/19 Corporate Risk Register and noted the status and rating of all associated risks.

12. Criminal Justice Inspection

Ms O’Kane advised progress is ongoing in collating the PPS response to Sir John Gillen’s Preliminary Report into the law and procedures in serious sexual offences in NI.

The high level findings of the CJINI review on Domestic Violence have been received for factual accuracy check. The SAD will write to CJINI to seek further information and clarification on a number of points arising from the report.

13. Any Other Business

SCU Monitoring Report January 2019

Members discussed the rationale for change in the SCU figures and noted the figures for unallocated work. Files are triaged within 7 days of receipt with prioritisation given to charge cases. A significant number of DIRs are being issued. Ms O’Kane will raise with PSNI concerns regarding the standards/ quality of files forwarded to the PPS. Consideration is also being given to streamlining processes and a scoping exercise will be undertaken regarding the potential extension of the Clinic model approach to a wider range of sexual assault cases. Members were advised that the BCS SCU Review is ongoing and the preliminary findings will assist in informing future working arrangements.

AP16-18/19: Ms O’Kane to raise issues regarding standards and quality of files with PSNI.

Update on Communications Strategy and Website/Intranet development.

Mr Hearst updated the Board on progress to complete the website/intranet refresh. A website content team has been identified and appropriate training scheduled. Work on the journey maps and content and style is ongoing with the assistance of a creative agency and it is anticipated that this phase will be completed by 31 March 2019.

Communications Update

Members noted the update on the corporate communication activity conducted in the third quarter of 2018/19 business year.

Committal Reform Update

Mr Hearst advised that the Committal Reform Project will not go ahead in April 2019 and a new implementation date is to be agreed by the Criminal Justice Board. Work will continue in key areas to include relevant Crown Court procedures and Crown Court Rules.

14. Papers for noting

Six Week Forward Planner/ Communication Update

Board Members noted the six week forward planner and communication update.

15. Next Meeting

The Management Board meeting will take place on the 28 February 2019 in Belfast Chambers.

Summary of Action Points arising from Management Board

Meeting of 25 January 2019

AP 15-18/19	Ms O’Kane to explore options in respect of extending working practice initiatives and potential redistribution of resources and discuss with RMT.
AP 16-18/19	Ms O’Kane to raise issues regarding standards and quality of files with PSNI.

Action Points carried over from previous meetings.

AP 10-18/19	Mr Agnew to commission a briefing paper on quality assurance mechanisms to submit a report to the PQC.
AP 14-18/19	IH to obtain clarification on the ownership of police material.