

PPS Management Board

10.00am Thursday 6 December 2018

Board Room, Belfast Chambers

Members: Stephen Herron (Chair)
Michael Agnew
Christopher Welford
Ian Hearst
Roger Davison

In Attendance: Libby Kinney
Tom Murphy

Secretariat: Policy and Information Unit

1. Apologies

2. Welcome

The Director welcomed members to the December 2018 Management Board.

3. Declaration of Board Members' Interests

None.

4. Management Board Minutes

The previous minutes were agreed.

5. Actions from the Management Board meeting of 18 October 2018

AP 8-18/19 - The Director to consider the potential of delegated authority for counsel and advise the Board accordingly

Cleared. The Director advised that he had sought views on this and a number of issues had been highlighted. Following discussion and consideration the Board agreed that this may be a potential option for the PPS to consider in the future. However, on reflection it was agreed that the priority should be in resourcing the prosecutor capacity to full complement.

AP 9-18/19 IH to provide the Board with details of the support available to managers and staff dealing with mental health issues.

Cleared – See Item 11.

6. Reports from Management Board Committees

Senior Management Group – 3 December 2018

Mr Agnew provided a verbal update on matters discussed at the Senior Management Group meeting of 3 December 2018.

People & Resources Committee – 22 November 2018

The minutes and actions from the People and Resources Committee meeting of 22 November 2018 were reviewed and noted by members. Key issues discussed included the PPS People Strategy, the MFD pilot, staff vacancies, absence levels and the ongoing management of reviews.

Performance & Delivery Committee – 19 October 2018

The Performance and Delivery Committee minutes and actions from the meeting of 19 October 2018 were reviewed and noted by members.

Extraordinary Policy & Quality Committee – 19 November 2018

Members were updated on the current position of the draft Road Traffic Policy and preparations for the issue of the consultation document.

It was also noted that the PPS's Guidelines for Diversion had recently been issued for public consultation.

Board members discussed the importance of maintaining a focus on quality and the need to capture, review and assess all data relating to quality standards. To progress this matter, Mr Agnew agreed to commission a briefing paper on the scope of existing quality assurance mechanisms from the Head of Policy and Information and to submit a report to the PQC.

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

7. Change Management Board

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 10 December 2018

8. Performance Issues

Performance Summary

Members reviewed and discussed the caseload figures and noted that in comparison with the last 12 months caseloads have remained at a similar level. Caseload figures for the last three months have increased by 2.3% from the previous three month period. There has been an increase in CW Categories 1-4 in each of the regional offices, ranging from 3.9% in Western to 15.9% in Southern.

The overall work queue (unallocated files) has decreased by 11.2% on the previous month. The number of decisions issued during the last 12 months is slightly lower than the previous period and of the ten regional timeliness targets, nine are being met over the financial year to date. Performance against the 80% indictable target is below the required level at 72.5%.

Members discussed the current performance, targets, quality and the resourcing of the respective business areas across the organisation. It is acknowledged that resourcing in Belfast and Eastern Region has been affected by the transfer of staff to SCU, with Western and Southern also experiencing resourcing pressures. The Board considered ways of supporting staff and identifying methods to ease workload pressures, including overtime working and the use of temporary staff.

Members were updated on the ongoing plans to fill vacancies and it is anticipated this will assist in addressing resourcing pressures. It was agreed that a briefing paper should be circulated in early January outlining a strategy for vacancy management.

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

9. Finance

Finance Update

Board members reviewed the paper outlining the key financial issues managed by the Finance Team. Members discussed the financial outturn figures as of 31 October 2018 and noted the cumulative underspend of £477k.

The budget for counsel fees was weighted towards the end of the year to account for legacy work and peaks in the courts. Spend is lower than had been anticipated and this represents the majority of the increase in the underspend.

The current forecast of outturn for the year, anticipates a projected easement of some £273k for the year. Members noted budget pressures in respect of the 2018-19 settlement, the in-year monitoring arrangements and the management of the Incentivisation Funds.

Briefing of Counsel October 2018.

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

Procurement Report

Members noted the key issues in the October 2018 Procurement Report, in particular procurement activity in respect of the CMS contract.

10. People Issues

NICSHR Update November 2018

Members reviewed and discussed the NICS Information and Analysis Update Report for November 2018. Members noted information on the resourcing/recruitment and promotion updates, management of attendance, employee relations and learning and development.

Members discussed the latest performance management figures. There has been a small increase in compliance since last month with the PPS completion rate for end year appraisals now being 80% against the overall NICS figure of 91.5%. Mr Davison advised that the leads appointed in each region to monitor and promote completion has assisted with the increased compliance.

Members discussed and reviewed the latest managing attendance figures and noted all cases are being managed robustly in accordance with inefficiency sickness absence policy.

RMT Update November 2018

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

IIP Update

Members noted that successful achievement of Investors in People Standard under their new sixth generation evaluation model. The reaccreditation lasts for three years and, in line with IIP's recommendations, there will be ongoing efforts to make improvements in people management throughout the organisation. As

part of this continued assessment the PPS will undertake 12 and 24 month reviews.

The Board offered their congratulations and requested that Mr Hearst's passed the Board's thanks to everyone involved in the process.

People Plan

Mr Hearst outlined proposals for the PPS People's Forum which would be a working group to consider changes and solutions to issues being taken forward under the PPS People Plan. He went on to advise that the Terms of Reference for the new Forum are being finalised. The Forum will be made up of representatives from across all areas of the PPS.

Absence in the PPS due to Mental Health

Mr Hearst advised that NICS is fully signed up to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Mental Health Charter to promote mental wellbeing in the workplace. Staff in the PPS are included in the services provided by this Charter and members noted the training and support available to managers and staff.

Members reviewed the figures and increased trends in staff reporting with mental health issues. In 2017/18 mental health related illness accounted for 28.7% of working days lost and 11.3% of absence spells, however in recent months these figures have risen to 52.4% and 37.7% respectively.

Members further discussed interventions available and feedback from staff following recent office visits by the Senior Management Team (SMT). The Board agreed that recent trends should be flagged to NICSHR with a request to demonstrate how they intend to take this matter forward. Members also agreed to obtain an update on mental fitness/health issues every 6 months.

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

Members briefly discussed the organisation's risk appetite and the general handling of risk within the PPS and agreed it would be beneficial to review the

handling of these issues at the Board's planning day, including the issue of reputational risk on a number of linked matters over the last year.

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.

Complaints Report

Members noted the complaints and reviews quarterly update.

Members discussed requests for disclosure of material held on PPS case files that originate from police and it was agreed that further clarification may be required for staff on this matter.

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

Cyber Security Reporting

Members discussed the Cyber Security Risk paper and noted that this matter is scheduled for consideration by the Audit and Risk Committee.

12. Criminal Justice Inspection

The Director advised that in response to the CJINI Report an Action Plan has been drafted in conjunction with DOJ and PSNI.

He also advised that Sir John Gillen's emerging findings report on serious sexual offences is being considered and would be reported to the Board in due course.

13. Any Other Business

SCU Monitoring Report October 2018

Mr Davison updated members on progress made in respect of decisions taken, unallocated/allocated work queues, productivity and resourcing.

Members discussed the options for moving forward - a meeting is to be convened next week to scope options, and a further update will be provided for the next Board meeting.

Update on Communications Strategy and Website/Intranet development.

Mr Hearst updated the Board on progress to complete the website/intranet refresh.

Communications Update

Members noted the Communication Update paper.

Committal Reform Update

Mr Hearst provided an update in respect of the Committal Reform Project. Whilst excellent progress has been made on the technical side, further work is needed on several issues including the procedures to be adopted in the Crown Court and the revised Court Rules. An implementation has still be confirmed by the DOJ.

Business Case – Multi Functional Print Device

Members discussed the need, benefits, risks and costs associated with the Multifunctional printing devices and accordingly approved the business case.

Summary Advice regarding Rent Review.

The Board discussed the challenges and negotiations contained in the summary advice on the rent review provisions for Belfast Chambers and agreed the report and options proposed were within the delegated authority and delivered value for money. The increase in rent was approved by the Board based on the papers provided.

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 Planning Day and Board meeting will take place on the 24 and 25 January 2018 in Belfast Chambers.

Summary of Action Points arising from Management Board

Meeting of 6 December 2018

AP 10-18/19	Mr Agnew to commission a briefing paper on quality assurance mechanisms and submit a report to the PQC.
AP 11-18/19	IH to circulate a briefing paper detailing a strategy for vacancy management.
AP 12-18/19	IH to raise increase in trends in PPS staff reporting with mental health issues with NICSHR.
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.
AP 14-18/19	IH to obtain clarification on the ownership of police material.