

PPS Management Board

10.00 Thursday 20 June 2019

Board Room, Belfast Chambers

Members:

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

In Attendance:

**Tom Murphy
Libby Kinney**

Secretariat:

Policy and Information Unit

1. Apologies

Michael Agnew.

2. Welcome

The Director welcomed members to the June 2019 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 30 May 2019

AP 2-19/20 Mr Hearst to provide an outline implementation plan for the introduction of ERDMS.

Mr Hearst advised that plans are progressing and a project initiation document will be available for the September Board.

AP 3-19/20 Ms O’Kane to provide a progress report including trend analysis and breakdown of the stage of each category of the cases and estimated clearance timescales.

See item 8.

AP 4-19/20 Mr Hearst to provide bi annual reports on the briefing of counsel.

Cleared.

6. Reports from Management Board Committee

Senior Management Group – 13 June 2019

Members noted the Senior Management Group minutes and actions arising from the meeting of 13 June 2019.

Mr Hearst advised that matters discussed included case management of the outlying cases from the 80/40 day report, SCU and implementation of the new model.

People & Resources Committee 11 June 2019

The People and Resources Committee minutes and actions arising from the meeting of 11 June 2019 were noted by members.

Mr Hearst provided an update on the overview provided by NICSHR on the new draft NICS Talent Management Toolkit and Guidance on Holding Career Development Discussions.

Mr Hearst advised that the Head of Property Management is currently in discussions to arrange targeted risk assessments of dealing with traumatic events at work.

Performance & Delivery Committee 3 June 2019

Members noted the minutes and actions from Performance and Delivery Committee meeting of 13 June 2019.

Ms O’Kane provided an update on ICP performance advising of a slight deterioration in the compliance figures, which has been flagged up with the Assistant Directors. Awareness sessions have also been held with the defence and Judiciary and meetings held with Case Progression Officers to ensure they assist counsel in bringing these to the attention of the judiciary. There have been improvements in flagging of cases by PSNI. Members noted the internal process

to review cases which have not been identified as ICP and mechanisms to highlight to both the prosecutors and ADs.

Policy and Quality Committee 14 June 2019

An update will be provided at the next Board.

7. Strategic Improvement Board

Mr Hearst provided an update on plans for the new SIIT team which starts its programme of work from 1 August 2019.

8. Performance Issues

Performance Summary

Members reviewed and noted the figures in June Performance Summary.

The Director outlined that the focus has been on the ten timeliness targets and raised the differences between PPS and DOJ reporting data and the requirement for consistency. Members reviewed the Guideline Time Limit Report (Indicator 38) which measures in five stages and noted improvements in performance in the early and latter stages. It was agreed that focus should be concentrated on statistics relating to the key performance indicators and consideration should be given to moving to median targets.

The Director outlined trends in performance and expressed concern at delay and the increase in timescales for indictable decision making. Members discussed the potential issues that may be attributed to delay, including file quality and the number of DIRs issued. Ms O’Kane advised that there have discussions held with police in respect of collaborative working to improve quality and timeliness.

Members further discussed the need for proportionality and considered the capacity currently expended on file building and ‘lower level’ offending. The Director requested the Board look at analysis behind performance and consider alignment with the performance data reported by Criminal Justice partners. In addition, consideration should be given to alternative ways to deal with certain less serious offence types, such as the introduction of Prosecutorial Fines. It was also agreed that there should be more analysis of the underlying performance trends and the development of communications that allows the organisation to respond effectively to the published Statistical Bulletin, providing reasons for time taken to process cases and explaining the work ongoing to address the issues.

Overview of Old Cases.

Ms O’Kane provided an update on the latest figures and progress on clearing the outlying cases identified from the 80/40 day report. Members were briefed on the breakdown and analysis for both indictable and summary cases in each of the respective business areas and noted progress made on reducing the figures.

AP 05 19/20 - A further update on the outlying cases will be provided for the September Board.

Ms O’Kane also highlighted that the May Performance Report has identified an increase in the summary decision time, which has arisen from a technical issue in respect of clearance dates. It has been agreed that ICT will take the necessary steps to rectify the data.

SCU Monitoring Report

Ms O’Kane provided an update on the figures for the unallocated queue and the overall number of cases pending decision. Figures are maintaining a steady level with no significant deterioration or increase.

Allocation timeliness have been impacted by ongoing capacity issues and focused efforts on clearing older cases.

The Director outlined priorities are for offences against children/vulnerable victims, and custody charge/remand cases. Members were briefed on Judge Smyth’s initiative and commitments made by the CJS to fast track a range of sex cases involving children under 13 years. The Board requested assurances and evidence that these priorities are being adhered to.

AP 06 19/20 - Ms O’Kane to provide assurances that offences against children/ vulnerable victims, and custody charge/remand case are being prioritised.

Members were updated on current capacity and imminent staff changes and noted the additional challenge in recent weeks of a sharp increase on file submissions.

Members were updated on working practices including file building, the Clinic+ model which is trialling approximately 40 cases, and a more robust, risk based approach to decisions.

There has been extensive engagement with the SCU team regarding the new model and it was noted the cultural change will be a key managerial challenge. Plans are ongoing to recruit staff to fill positions for both Casework and the Gateway teams. Ms O’Kane provided an update on the meeting held with CPS

to provide an overview of their approach and working practices and in particular their approach to poor quality investigation files.

Ms O’Kane outlined plans for the reallocation of older ring-fenced cases to other operational areas, which in turn will lead to a reduction in SCU work queues. It was agreed to invite the Assistant Director of SCU to the next Board for a progress update.

AP 07 19/20 - Ms O’Kane to invite the Assistant Director of SCU to attend the September Board

9. Finance

Finance Update April 2019

Board members reviewed and noted the paper outlining the key financial issues as of 30 April 2019, including the key financial outturn figures, financial impact of the use of counsel and management and use of incentivisation fund.

Members discussed the 2019/20 funding position and budget pressures. Mr Hearst updated members on the in-year monitoring arrangements, with the next opportunity for reallocation of resources now put back to October 2019.

Annual Report 2019/20.

Members reviewed and noted the PPS Annual Report.

The Board wished to formally note and record their thanks to the Finance Team for their work in producing the report.

Procurement Report May 2019

Members noted the key issues in the May 2019 Procurement Report. The CMS contract has been awarded and a cooling off period is in place. Members also noted the updated position on the contracts for Interpreting Services, Digital Media Sharing and Security and Ancillary Services.

10. People Issues

NICSHR Quadrant Report June 2019

Mr Hearst provided an overview of the new NICSHR Quadrant Report for PPS. Members noted the latest capacity figures, vacancy management and managing attendance figures.

Members noted with concern the latest figures for sickness absence. NICSHR to provide an action plan to show robust management of sick absences. Members queried whether there were any underlying trends and the potential impact long term sickness may have on the figures. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have comparative figures for short term absences and fuller analysis for the September Board meeting.

AP 08 19/20 - Mr Hearst to provide comparative figures and analysis of long and short term absences.

Members noted the figures for compliance in respect of for performance reports and agreed that the completion rate was encouraging. Discussion ensued regarding encouragement of positive behaviours and it was agreed that this should be linked to the performance cycle.

RMT Update June 2019

Board Members noted and discussed the RMT report, including current staffing levels as of May 2019, management of vacancies, the health and well-being initiatives, corporate social responsibility, training analysis and PPS People Agenda.

Corporate Training Priorities 2019/20

Members reviewed and discussed the wide range of corporate training priorities for 2019/20.

11. Governance Issues

Corporate Risk Registers 2019/20

Members discussed and reviewed the 2019/20 Corporate Risk Register and noted the status and planned actions to mitigate all associated risks.

PPS Purpose Priorities & Corporate Risks

Members noted and discussed the paper on Purpose Priorities & Corporate Risks.

12. Criminal Justice Reports Update

An update will be provided at the next Board meeting

13. Any Other Business

Website Project Update

Members noted the website project update and anticipated go live date of 31 July 2019.

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 next Management Board will take place on the 5 September 2019 in Belfast Chambers.

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Summary of Action Points arising from Management Board

Meeting of 20 June 2019

AP 05 19/20	<i>A further update on the outlying cases will be provided for the September Board.</i>
AP 06 19/20	<i>Ms O’Kane to provide assurances that offences against children/ vulnerable victims, and custody charge/remand case are being prioritised.</i>
AP 07 19/20	<i>Ms O’Kane to invite the Assistant Director of SCU to attend the September Board</i>
AP 08 19/20 -	<i>Mr Hearst to provide comparative figures and analysis of long and short term absences.</i>

Action Points carried over from previous meetings.

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