

# Children's Hearings Scotland

## Minutes of the Board meeting held on Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> March at 3 pm At Ladywell House, Edinburgh

**Present:** Alastair Hamilton, Board member  
Brian Baverstock, Board member  
Andrew Thin, Board member  
Linda Watt, Board member

**In attendance:** Bernadette Monaghan, National Convener & Chief Executive  
Kit Wyeth, Project Manager CHS  
Fiona Greig, Director of Finance & Corporate Services, CHS  
Franck David, Administrative Support, CHS  
Shyamali Das, Executive Assistant, CHS [minute taker]

The meeting started at 3 pm.

### 1.1 Welcome

As the Chair had tendered his apologies for the meeting, in keeping with Para 7(5) of Schedule 1 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act of 2011, a procedure to elect a temporary chair for the meeting was adopted by voting for the most senior (age) member of the Board. All the Board members unanimously elected Alastair Hamilton to Chair the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

Mr Hamilton welcomed the panel members and all present.

### 1.2 Apologies

Craig Spence, the Chair tendered his apologies for the meeting due to a family matter.

### 1.3 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared in relation to agenda items.

### 1.4 Minute of previous meeting held on

Papers CHS-1112-047a and CHS-1112-047b, minutes of the meeting from 6<sup>th</sup> December and 24<sup>th</sup> February respectively were perused and found to be accurate except for one minor change on page 2 of 24<sup>th</sup> February – to change Risk and Audit Management to Audit and Risk Management Committee.

**Minutes of both 6<sup>th</sup> December and 24<sup>th</sup> February approved**

**Action: Executive Assistant to make the change and publish both sets of minutes on the CHS website**

## 1.5 Matters arising

No matters arising.

## 1.6 Action Log – CHS-1112-048

The Action log was perused and the Board inquired about Item 039 in relation to the feedback loop. The CHS Performance and Research Officer was carrying out a scoping exercise around gathering and transfer of this information. A meeting with partners to gather further information was being scheduled during April.

## 1.7 Project Manager Update

The Project Manager said that a full discussion on ASTs and go-live would follow under Items 3.1 and 3.2. Other issues that the Board should note:

- **Engagement** with the panel community to develop the Corporate Identity for CHS was well advanced. A number of consultations had been held with panel members and children and young people and a final survey was being conducted through Survey Monkey; 500 responses had already been received. The final branding would be incorporated in the Corporate Plan before the launch.
- **Corporate Governance:** CHS's internal auditors, Scott-Moncrieff were analysing the shared services strategy with SCRA.
- **Staffing:** Recruitment for the 3 Panel and Area Support posts was now complete and preferred candidates for each post had been identified. It was hoped that all would be in post by May.

## 1.8 Chair update

As the Chair had sent apologies, no update was available.

Mr Hamilton took the opportunity to welcome the National Convener back to her role. The National Convener expressed her pleasure in being back and thanked CHS staff for their hard work over the last 3 months towards the goal of 'Go-Live'.

## 2.1 Corporate Plan – CHS-1112-049

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the Corporate Plan to the Board for approval.

A detailed discussion had already taken place at the last Board meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February and the comments and suggestions had been incorporated in this final plan. A similar process of approval had been undergone with the Scottish Government and CHS was waiting for approval from the Minister by 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Once approved the CHS branding will be applied to the Corporate Plan which will be distributed to all concerned electronically and published on the CHS website.

In discussion, Board members stated:

- A thorough process had been followed
- The plan was well laid out and easy to read. A Board Member observed that not all panel members would be able to access the plan electronically. The Director of Finance stated that different formats would be made available on request.
- Measures and indicators would remain work-in-progress

Mr Hamilton thanked the Director of Finance & Corporate Services and team for doing a good job. The Plan was moving forward in the direction required for reforms in the system. The consistency expected by the panel members is required to be put in place.

### **The Corporate Plan was approved**

## **2.2 Financial Position 2011-12 – CHS-1112-050**

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the financial report for the year to end February to the Board for noting.

The key points from the financial report were noted:

- Forecast spend to the end of March is £735k against grant in aid of £750k
- Staff costs are subject to change due to uncertainty around the precise employer contribution rates as CHS staff have not yet been admitted to the Lothian Pension Fund
- Operating costs form a high proportion of spending in March 2012 as a result of delays in procuring IT, furniture, etc.
- Provision for audit fees has been made in 2011/12
- An estimate of £26k was made for National Standards workshops and events. Spend is likely to be higher than forecast due to higher attendance and more workshops being organised.

## **2.3 Budget 2012-13 – CHS-1112-051**

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the Budget 2012-13 paper to the Board for approval.

This paper had been brought to the Board at the February meeting for noting. During that discussion, the Board had indicated that there should be maximum flexibility on fixed costs and that expenditure on corporate services should be minimised to ensure maximum resources are allocated to supporting panel members.

Key areas of spend in the 2012/13 budget:

- 2012-13 pay remit for 14 posts
- Staff Training Budget
- Board Fees
- IT/ICT to be developed to look at viz. Panel Pal, CHS website, e-papers, etc.
- Shared Services with SCRA for HR, Finance and Payroll
- Scottish Government IT Support
- Panel member support – independent legal advice – this is a National Convener

- function for resourcing and work scoping
- AST expenses from 'Go-live' date
- Panel member training – CHS retains the full budget for this
- Support for Hearings
- A small provision has been made to fund priority research areas

In the roll-forward 3 year financial position, indicative grant in aid is expected to reduce by 5% in 2013-14 and 6% in 2014-15. CHS need to ensure tight control over costs moving forward and ensure expenditure on corporate services is kept at an absolute minimum.

In discussion, the Board:

- Indicated support for the proposed budget, although concerns were raised as to whether the 5% and 6% reductions were practical given that it is hard to forecast expenses like travel, mileage, etc?

### **The Board approved the Budget for 2012-13**

## **2.4 Performance Management Framework – CHS-1112-052**

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented this paper to the Board for noting.

She assured the board that progress had been made with regard to KPIs and PIs for CHS. Discussion with other service organisations underway. The emphasis for 2012/13 would be to acquire baseline data. The Appendix to the paper outlined the KPIs and PIs, description, rationale and how the data would be gathered. Some of the data would be gathered jointly with SCRA and other partners.

The first Balanced Scorecard report for the Board covering the first quarter of 2012-13 would be brought to the Board meeting in July 2012.

### **Action: Balanced Scorecard Report to Board in July 2012 meeting**

In discussion, Board members inquired whether performance management was in place for CHS staff? The Director of Finance & Corporate Services stated that a performance management framework was being developed with support from SCRA HR under the shared service arrangement. In the meantime, interim supervision arrangements are in place. Individual objectives would be aligned to corporate and business plan objectives.

## **3.1 Short-term AST Plans – CHS-1112-053**

The Project Manager presented the paper on Short-term AST plans to the Board for noting.

He said that since the last Board meeting, key updates to note were that:

- With David Hume, he had met and communicated via email with nearly all local authorities, with the final 3 meetings scheduled for the following week. These meetings had been generally positive with authorities showing a clear

commitment to supporting ASTs and the children's panel. The focus of discussion was on the Partnership Agreements which are to be agreed between CHS and local authorities. It was hoped that the fit Partnership Agreements could be signed-off shortly. The upcoming Council elections in May, might delay some of these arrangements being put in place.

- The National Convener would consider how Area Conveners for ASTs would be appointed. She would also be looking to finalise the draft AST roles and responsibilities.
- Initial discussions had been held with the Children's Hearings Training Units about the development and delivery of AST member training.
- In discussion, Board members stated that in their discussions with Panel members, varying opinions with regards to roles and responsibilities and the process involved in finalising them had been expressed. The Project Manager acknowledged this. A further meeting was being held with Panel Chairs on 30<sup>th</sup> March to seek agreement around the role of panel representatives.

### 3.2 Activity to 'Go-Live' – CHS-1112-054

The Project Manager presented an update on CHS activity until 'Go-Live'. As requested at the February Board meeting, this included an assessment of whether planned activity was critical for go-live.

- **National Standards:** 17 out of 18 workshops have taken place with the last one scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> April at Dumfries. The consultation closes on 10<sup>th</sup> April. The report will be published by the end of May and the finalised Standards by the end of June. The National Standards are integral to 'Go-Live'.
- **National Children's Panel:** The Children's Panel needs to be in place for go-live. Key areas of activity here are the development of a nationally consistent expenses scheme for panel members and a complaints system. The timing and context of the letter inviting panel members to join the national panel also needs to be agreed.
- **Training:** A detailed options appraisal has been commissioned from the Scottish Social Services Council and is due with CHS by the end of May. The National Convener will not take responsibility for training until after go-live but planning has to begin now – for example if it is decided to put in place a contractor to provide the training, a full public procurement exercise will be needed.
- **Advice to Hearings:** A number of meetings have been conducted with key partners and proposals are being developed. Arrangements for providing advice to hearings must be in place for go-live.
- **Feedback Loop:** This is not an absolute necessity for 'Go-Live', but it is highly desirable. The feedback loop was widely supported during the passage of the 2011 Act as a crucial element of the new arrangements.
- **Enforcement:** The National Convener has a role under the 2011 Act to take enforcement action when a local authority does not implement supervision orders. Having the necessary arrangements in place is not a necessity for go-live but it is regarded as a positive change that strengthens the place of the Tribunal and should be in place as soon as possible.
- **Migration of Sponsor Team functions:** CHS will take over from the Scottish Government's Children's Hearings team. CHS Staff must be in a position to take over these roles from go-live.
- **Communications & Engagement:** Building the CHS Brand and credibility in

advance of it assuming its responsibilities was crucial.

- **Corporate Governance:** The Director of Finance & Corporate Services has done an excellent job to ensure governance requirements are in place.
- **ASTs:** Having ASTs in place and able to take up their functions is critical for go-live. The National Convener added that the small working group of CPAG could be used as a starting point for the operating manual for ASTs and identification of detailed AST processes.

In discussion, the Board members:

- reiterated an earlier suggestion that the National Convener and senior staff give thought to bringing in an experienced project manager to oversee all the work that was needed to delivery 'Go-Live'. The National Convener said that more clarity was needed about what was envisaged for such a post and how it would add value to the work already ongoing by the team. Her concern was that it might simply be another layer of accountability for the senior management team, on top of the monthly cycle of Board meetings and the SG Programme Board reporting mechanism. Bringing such a post holder up to speed would take time and resource, which could outweigh any benefits. It might therefore be more effective to bring in additional resource for specific pieces of work, if the need emerges".
- said that this was a comprehensive update. However, the Board queried whether the 'Go-Live' date was practical and would be achievable. CHS was not currently meeting all the target dates. The Project Manager said that the SG Programme Board was responsible for the real delivery of the go-live date. CHS was committed to working towards the 'Go-Live' date of 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012.
- Requested an updated position at the next meeting including an assessment of whether it was possible to meet key deliverables. It was also suggested that a more robust project management process was needed within CHS to keep a check on whether the 'Go-live' date was achievable.

**Action: Present a RAG project status report to May Board meeting**

### 3.3 Recruitment Campaign

The Project manager informed the Board that the Recruitment Campaign had been a huge success with about 10,600 expressions of interest. This was higher by 33% compared to the last campaign. A key objective for the campaign was to recruit more male panel members and there was a 30% increase in male responses as compared to 2009 due to targeted advertising e.g. on sports pages of newspapers, TV, radio, etc. There had been 36,000 hits to the website.

A Board member inquired about the cost of the campaign and when members would be recruited. The Project Manager informed that the Scottish Government had spent £420k on the campaign. Recruitment was already underway in some areas and would conclude after the local elections.

### 3.4 AOCB

None

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at **4:25 pm**