

## Minutes of the Board meeting of 29 October 2014

The meeting started at 13.32.

### Present:

Garry Coutts, Chair

John Anderson, Board member

Linda Watt, Board member

Alastair Hamilton, Deputy Chair

Marian Martin, Board member

### Also present:

Boyd McAdam, National Convener/Chief Executive (NC/CEO), CHS

Joe Campbell, Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Services (IDoFCS), CHS

Franck David, Executive Assistant (minute taker), CHS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Brian Baverstock, Board member and Andrew Thin, Board member.

Items		Actions / owner	Time-scales
1	<b>Declaration of interests</b>		
	None.	N/A	N/A
2	<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>		
	The Board agreed to approve the minutes of its meeting on 26 August 2014.	N/A	N/A
3	<b>Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) report</b>		
	<p><b>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair of the committee had circulated an update report to the Chair following the last ARMC meeting on 19 August: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Committee was content with the decision by the Scottish Government to increase CHS' delegated authority.</li> <li>○ The committee had received delegation from the Board on 26 August 2014 to make decisions in relation to Information Governance matters including the approval of policies.</li> <li>○ The committee, although content with the overall approach taken by the executive team on risk management process, would continue to seek assurance that the processes used were adequate and also focused on the identification and mitigating</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	N/A	N/A

<p>controls of operational risks.</p> <p><b>2) Decision—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Board agreed to note the update.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>4 Remuneration and Appointments Committee (RAC) reports</b></p>		
<p><b>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair of the committee reported that, at the last meeting on 19 August, there had been a discussion as part of the volunteering policy on how to encourage employers to release their staff for panel duties. The benefit to employers was seen as real in terms of having staff well trained on specific topics thanks to the Hearings System as well as in terms of increased reputation.</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Decision—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Board agreed to note the update and the minutes of the Remuneration and Appointments committee meeting of 19 August 2014.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>5 Matters arising</b></p>		
<p>None discussed.</p>		
<p><b>6 Action log</b></p>		
<p><b>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Item 1 – strengthening the Children’s Hearings System. All activities to be included in the corporate plan 2015/18.</li> <li>Item 2 – employer support for the Children’s Panel. A number of priorities were now superseded by the work on the retention strategy and as part of the workplan on employer’s engagement.</li> <li>Item 3 – the action under employer support for panel and AST members would be reviewed in the context of SCDI membership.</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Decision—</b></p> <p>The Board agreed to note the action log.</p>		

7	<b>Chair update</b>		
<p><b>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since the last meeting, the Chair met with panel and AST members throughout the country and observed training on contact and permanence. The Chair had been particularly impressed by the detailed work that panel members were doing on this. The Chair also met with Scottish Government officials and co-chaired a briefing session to MSPs on the Hearings System. The latter had been very well received by all participants and it was envisaged to reiterate that exercise on a two years basis.</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Decision—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board agreed to note the Chair’s update.</li> </ul>			
8	<b>Chief Executive update</b>		
<p><b>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NC/CEO reported that the draft written report by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) had been received following an information risk audit. There were some variations with the verbal debrief given. Officers were currently reviewing the written report and it was hoped that the finalised report would be presented to the ARMC meeting in November.</li> <li>• The interim report on progress on the Action Plan had yet to be completed. Much of the Action Plan activity was now included in the Business Plan for 2014/15.</li> <li>• The Board recognised that prolonged staff absence and leave at CHS had caused unavoidable delays.</li> <li>• Re. Feedback Loop, the Minister for Children and Young People, Aileen Campbell MSP, had responded on 1 October to the NC/CEO’s letter of 19 August on how CHS intended to take forward data collection to inform next year’s report. A number of challenges existed e.g. some local authorities were facing a challenge to keep the Feedback Loop as a priority. As such, it was particularly important for CHS to continue to focus on the relationship with local authorities to ensure they committed to implement the Feedback Loop. Further, the Scottish Government had informed CHS that it was no longer in a position to capture some of the data this year as it had expected to and some local authorities had reported they did not record information. It was reiterated that local authority representatives at AST level had an important role in progressing this matter by usefully engaging with their Local Authority as</li> </ul>			

	<p>had the appropriate CoSLA committees. The Board was further reminded that the NC/CEO's report would identify those local authorities that will have reported, and not reported, on the Feedback Loop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re. recruitment of panel members, 1,400 applications had been received against a target of 1,500. 97% of the applications had been received online which was an important step in the right direction to encourage existing and prospective panel members to use electronic communication. Although an effort had been made to target male applicants, the proportion of men applying had remained below what was desirable. This had an adverse impact on the panel composition to have gender balance. The Board discussed how the use of a particular wording in adverts could encourage a specific audience to apply. Re. identifying conflicts of interest, much was done at the local level with issues explored with candidates at interviews.</li> <li>• Training – there was constant dialogue with West Lothian College (WLC). The latter was in the process of reviewing and analysing all feedback received which will be used to produce an evidence-based annual report measured against KPIs. It was confirmed that the number of pre-service training days would increase from 6 to 7. Further, the autumn schedule of pre-service training for the recruits who had been unable to take up the spring training was now underway, as was the mandatory training on permanence and contact. Of the recruits trained in spring 2014, 8 had been followed up over their PDA papers which had appeared not to have been submitted: a deadline of 26 September had been set after which they would have been deemed to have withdrawn their application to become panel members. 2 people had now submitted their PDA work and had passed with a further person likely to pass; 1 applicant had not submitted and had requested a FOISA on the background to the PDA.</li> <li>• AST Forum – the last Forum took place in Edinburgh on 26 September. The afternoon session focused on the purpose of the Forum and a broad range of topics and issues were discussed.</li> </ul> <p><b>2) Decisions—</b></p> <p>The Board agreed—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the NC/CEO should investigate how to target recruiting male panel members to those ASTs who have shortages.</li> <li>• To note the update.</li> </ul>		
9	<b>Business Plan – Q 2 update</b>		
	<p><b>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52 planned activities were recorded in the Business Plan 2014/15 out of which 27 had a green status, 16 were amber and 9 were red. Staff</li> </ul>		

	<p>absences as well as staff leaving explained the delays in progressing the 9 milestones which had a red status and without extra resources being found were unlikely to be now progressed before the 31 March 2015 deadline. This situation had been discussed with Scottish Government officials at the accountability meeting the previous day. The consensus amongst the Board was to accept that the delays had been unavoidable and , prioritisation should be applied as part of as recovery plan as soon as resources were available.</p> <p><b>2) Decision—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board agreed to note the update</li> </ul>		
<b>10</b>	<b>Finance report – 6 months to 30 September 2014</b>		
	<p><b>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was reported that the grant-in-aid allocation for 2015/16 was likely to remain identical to 2014/15. The actual spend to date was £1,571,000 which represented a favourable variance of £248,000 against budget. The variance was mainly timing due to the September invoices incurred with the recruitment campaign not being paid until October.</li> <li>• The projected net saving was £43,000.</li> <li>• The closing bank balance was £592,967 and the cumulative grant-in-aid drawn down from the Scottish Government was £1,549,000.</li> <li>• The Board had been advised at the August Board meeting of the unbudgeted cost of £64,000 for PVGs following Disclosure Scotland’s decision that CHS had to undertake retrospective checking for AST and panel members who transferred to CHS on 24th June 2013. The Board had approved the recommendation that the unbudgeted cost would be phased over 2014/15 and 2015/16, £32,000 provision in each financial year. Furthermore, if slippage monies could be found towards the end of 2014/15, it would be prudent to undertake more scheme updates to reduce the commitment carried over into 2015/16.</li> <li>• Expense claims reimbursed to local authorities as at 30th September 2014 amounted to £233,000. Similar to last year it was expected that claims submitted by Panel and AST members would pick up significantly in Quarters 3 and 4. However, there was a recognition that expenses were difficult to predict due to their demand-led nature. An accrual of £123,597 was made in the 2013/14 Accounts for 2013/14 due to the uncertainty of the first year of claims. To date, less than £20,000 had been claimed against this accrual and, as a prudent measure, it was advised to release £40,000 as a projected saving.</li> <li>• In addition to the national campaign, £45,000 had been incurred on AST recruitment. The reforecast at period 4 assumed a £19,000 overspend however, it was now possible to reduce the projected overspend to</li> </ul>		

<p>£9,000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a result of a number of TUPE staff who had transferred to West Lothian College leaving before the end of the TUPE protection period i.e. March 2015, the interim DoFCS had negotiated a reduction of £6,627 per month effective from 1st August 2014 that would result in a saving in this budget year of £46,389.</li> <li>Due to the significant level of staff recruitment in 2014/15 which was not anticipated at the time of approving the 2014/15 budget, an overspend of £21,000 was projected.</li> <li>Due to lower activity this year and more competitive sourcing of venues for AST Forums, a saving of £39,000 was projected.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Chair advised that the Board had met earlier in the day in private session to discuss staffing matters.</b></p> <p><b>2) Decisions—</b></p> <p>The Board agreed—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the release of £40k as part of the accrual made for panel members expenses</li> <li>to consider a proposal at the next Board meeting from the NC/CEO on how to use the projected £43k savings</li> <li>to note the report.</li> </ul>	<p><b>IDoFCS</b></p> <p><b>NC/CEO</b></p>	<p><b>16.12.14</b></p>
<p>The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution.</p> <p>The next Board meeting will be on 16 December 2014, Edinburgh.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 14.15.</p>		