

Minutes of the Board meeting of 20 January 2015

The meeting started at 13.17

Present:

Garry Coutts, Chair
John Anderson
Marian Martin
Linda Watt

Alastair Hamilton, Deputy Chair
Brian Baverstock
Andrew Thin

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
Fraser Thompson, Performance and Research Officer, CHS
Robert Marshall, Deputy Director Care & Justice, The Scottish Government (SG)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Items	Actions / owner	Time-scales
1 Declaration of interests		
None.	N/A	N/A
2 Minutes of previous meeting		
The Board agreed to approve the minutes of its meeting on 16 December subject to amendments to paper CHS-1415-41 (Review of Expenses Policy and Rates for Panel and AST Members).	N/A	N/A
3 Matters arising – Scottish Government update on CHIP		
1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At its last meeting on 16 December 2014 the Board had invited the Deputy Director of Care & Justice at the Scottish Government to provide an update on the work of Children’s Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) at the January Board meeting. • The Deputy Director provided background information to CHIP and in particular: 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The rejuvenation of CHIP led to CHS being responsible for one of the three work streams – Generating Evidence and Promoting Improvements, led by Alyson Evans. ○ The other two workstreams were a) Integrating GIRFEC led by Malcolm Schaffer and b) Learning and Development initiated under the leadership of Alison Gough (CHS) and currently led by Joanne McMeeking. ○ CHIP was a truly multi-agency group which included among others SCRA, CoSLA, Chief Social Adviser, CELCIS, NHS, Social Work Scotland, COPFS and the Judicial Institute for Scotland. The input from the latter was particularly beneficial to understand what the Judiciary was trained on the Hearings System. ○ Through the three workstreams, CHIP’s overall aim was to improve the Hearing System itself so that children and young people could benefit from those improvements; raise awareness of the Hearing System; identify and plug gaps; utilise and share best practice through working across sectors. ○ The Group was aiming at signing up the Children Participation Charter in June 2015. ○ CHIP was a vehicle to understand the Kilbrandon principles. ○ Resources were shared between the organisations leading on the three workstreams rather than falling on one individual/organisation. ○ Agendas were focused, meaningful and flexible enough to capture specific items. Discussions allowed for positive challenges and were seen as a way to make CHIP’s dynamic work. ● The challenge for CHS was to ensure that any specific interest it had e.g. children and young people participation, were compatible with CHIP’s overall objectives. <p>2) Decisions—</p> <p>The Board agreed—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to thank the Deputy Director for Care & Justice for providing the update ● that a progress report on the three workstreams would be welcome in the future ● to note the update. 		
3	Matters arising		
	<p>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The NC/CEO reported that discussions with the SG had confirmed that the proposed arrangements for grant in aid for CHS - item 9 of the minutes of the previous board meeting – were compatible with the Framework Agreement. 		

	<p>2) Decision—</p> <p>The Board noted the update.</p>		
4	Action log		
	<p>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 1 - strengthening the Children’s Hearing System. Options were being looked at to ensure that the underlying themes would be part of ongoing activities. <p>2) Decision—</p> <p>The Board agreed to note the action log.</p>		
5	Chair update		
	<p>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the last meeting, the Chair had continued to keep up-to-date with the work of CHS and had been planning meetings with a range of stakeholders and partners. <p>2) Decision—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board agreed to note the Chair’s update. 		
6	Chief Executive update		
	<p>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</p> <p>The NC/CEO introduced the paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There had been a slight adjustment in numbers of new recruits and as of 20 January, 498 new recruits were undertaking training. CHS continued to liaise closely with the CHS Training Unit and sought to progress work on the issue – brought up at the last Board meeting – of how the organisation could support panel/AST members who may find themselves exposed on social media. The NC/CEO had issued a paper to Area Conveners to initiate a discussion on mandatory and core training and CHS was looking to ensure that local development, learning and recognition budgets were maximised by ASTs. Two members of staff remained on long term sick leave and some other staff had short term absence due to illness. The job descriptions for the 		

	<p>Panel and Area Support Officer posts had been advertised. CHS was delighted to welcome Sara Brodie back from maternity leave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NC/CEO confirmed that Andrew Fisk had taken up a three month post as Digital Programme Manager, jointly funded with SCRA. The work will look at establishing a blueprint for the use of digital technologies in the Children’s Hearings System over the next five years. • Initial responses from the stakeholder survey indicated that 93% of the people surveyed were “proud to tell others I am part of Children’s Hearings Scotland”. 91% said they “would recommend Children’s Hearings Scotland as a great way to volunteer”. More detailed analysis of the responses was being undertaken. <p>2) Decision—</p> <p>The Board agreed to note the NC/CEO update.</p>		
7	Draft Revenue Budget 2015/16		
	<p>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was a first draft budget to provide the Board with the opportunity to target financial resources to the priorities emerging from the Corporate Plan 2015-18. • The Scottish Government had advised verbally that CHS’ revenue grant-in-aid allocation for 2015/16 was likely to remain at £3.7m. • As the organisation was becoming more mature, the budget for staff costs was known more precisely and was based on 18 establishment posts. • The draft budget identified £238,700 available for reallocation to the CHS priorities emerging from the consultation feedback on the Corporate Plan 2015-18. • The draft proposed to retain the budget for 2015/16 for Information Communications Technology at the same level as 2014/15 i.e. £309,000. • The 2015/16 budget provision of £855,000 for panel and AST training had secured a 50% increase in the training capacity over what was tendered and the retention of the regional training offices. • Members advised caution in the use of language in the report and the risks associated with showing an unallocated sum. It was also important to state that it was the Board’s responsibility to decide how resources are allocated after taking into account the views expressed in the consultation exercise. There was an agreement on the importance of CHS aligning the budget to the corporate plan. • There was a discussion about property costs and potential options to relocate somewhere else. It was said that the National Records Office, for which CHS was a tenant at Ladywell House, was in the process of reviewing their properties. This may or may not lead to CHS having to relocate in future years. However, the process was at a very early stage. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board asked what thoughts had been given to capital funding opportunities; it was said that the business case to the Scottish Government for the digital strategy would be made on that basis. Further, both Panel Pal and CHIRP needed major capital investment that CHS was unable to fund through capital revenue hence the bid developed for capital funding application to the Scottish Government. <p>2) Decisions—</p> <p>The Board agreed—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the next Revenue Budget paper should include a section on the process to secure capital funding for the Digital Strategy. to note the Draft Revenue Budget 2015/16. 	<p>IDoFCS</p>	<p>24.03.15</p>
<p>8 Draft Corporate Plan 2015/18</p>		
<p>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft Plan showed high level outcomes from which the Business Plan 2015/16 would develop indicators from. Following consultation CHS had taken steps to address the feedback received e.g. change of language, reword of CHS’ Vision through the input of children and young people. The Board discussed whether the Plan lacked ambition e.g. although one specific outcome referred to “high quality decisions for children and young people” there was no explicit reference to improving outcomes for children. This had to be counterbalanced by what CHS could effectively deliver on the ground and based on what it was responsible for in the overall context of financial and human resources. For example, recruiting panel members who were well trained was a statutory obligation for CHS. Fulfilling this function by producing high calibre panel members would directly contribute to improve outcomes for children and young people. It was recognised that since the Corporate Plan had been drafted, there had been a subtle shift in policies coming from the Scottish Government and that those should be reflected in the Plan. There may be a need to revisit the Corporate Plan e.g. following the Scottish Parliament elections in 2016 As part of the meeting on 5 February between the NC/CEO and Area Conveners, there could be a discussion about how the national outcomes in the Corporate Plan can be translated at the local level. There was a sense that having a more ambitious Corporate Plan might be a source of difficulties for ASTs to implement it locally at this point in time. 		

<p>2) Decisions—</p> <p>The Board agreed—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that Outcome 3 should be strengthened to reflect what CHS expects to contribute to improve outcomes for children and young people • that the Corporate Plan should reflect CHS’ understanding of the policy changes from the Scottish Government since the election of the new First Minister • to circulate an amended Plan to Scottish Government for comments • to agree the Plan subject to changes discussed. 	<p>PRO</p> <p>PRO</p> <p>PRO</p>	<p>w/c 19.01.15</p> <p>w/c 19.01.15</p> <p>January</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Finance Report – period 9</p>	
<p>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As at 31st December 2014 the actual spend to date was £2,293,000 which represented a favourable variance of £309,000 against budget. At the 1st April 2014, the general fund had a cash surplus of £320,895 and after pension losses of £44,000 (non-cash) a closing balance of £276,895. The closing bank balance at 31st December was £470,859 and the cumulative grant in aid drawn down was £2,335,000. • It was expected that all Quarter 3 panel members’ expenses claims would be paid in February. • The Board questioned whether it was possible to spend circa £1.5m in the last quarter to fully utilise CHS grant in aid allocation of £3.7 million. The IDoFCS expressed the view that this was still possible but was dependent on achieving a high percentage of expense claims for quarter ending 31st March from Panel and AST Members before the Year End cut off point. <p>2) Decisions—</p> <p>The Board agreed to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the report. • For the IDoFCS to circulate the Period 10 Finance Report to Board Members when ready and to keep the Board fully apprised of any material changes to the Forecast Outturn assumptions before the next Board meeting in March. 		

10	Panel members training - KPIs		
<p>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report proposed a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against which to measure, assess and provide assurance on the provision of the training service by Children’s Hearings Scotland Training Unit. Those KPIs would be monitored throughout the year and reported on once a year. • There was no specific definition of KPIs in the contract, and the Service Level Agreement (SLA) set out in schedule 5 (2.2) only reflected metrics e.g. volumes and duration of training. Whilst these metrics were valuable and should be part of the assurance tools, qualitative KPIs would represent a significant additional benefit in informing continuous improvement. However, getting qualitative indications was challenging. • There was a debate as to whether the KPIs should provide a measure of the quality and experience of the training. <p>2) Decisions—</p> <p>The Board agreed—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the KPIs in principle • to receive a KPI report for the next Board meeting showing the content referred to in the report. 	MMcM	24.03.15	
11	Report on training contract – change control notes		
<p>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five change controls for the training contract with West Lothian College had been agreed so far since the start of the contract. None of the changes had caused any issues. <p>2) Decision—</p> <p>The Board agreed to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be kept informed of future change controls? • note the report. 			
12	Board and committee planner 2015/17		
<p>1) Summary of discussion and/or issues raised—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board considered meeting dates for the Board and the Audit and Risk 			

	<p>Management committee (ARMC) for 2015/16 and 2016/17.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provisional date of 9 June 2015 for an ARMC meeting was changed to 30 June to align with the external auditors’ audit timings. • Members would alert the Executive Assistant to any meetings they would be unable to attend. • The Board commented positively on the new format adopted for the corporate planner. <p>2) Decision—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board agreed to approve the corporate planner for 2015/16 and 2016/17. 		
13	AOB		
<p>Andrew Thin was attending his last CHS Board meeting. The Chair thanked Andrew for his extremely valuable participation as a Board member since his appointment in 2011 and wished him well for the future. Mr Thin put on record “the very impressive work” accomplished by Boyd McAdam and Joe Campbell. This was unanimously supported by the Board</p> <p>Alastair Hamilton asked that, at the next Board Development Day, options be discussed on how Board meetings may reach a wider audience across Scotland.</p>			
<p>The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution.</p> <p>The next Board meeting will be on 24 March 2015, Edinburgh.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 14.45</p>			