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## Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland

### Governance Meeting Minutes

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**15 January 2020**

**10:00 – 13:00**

**Note to Reader:**

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Requests should be made in writing, email or any other recordable form to:  
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Governance Meeting  
7th Meeting of 2019/2020  
*Office of the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland  
Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS*

## **1. OPENING FORMALITIES**

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### **1.1 The meeting was opened at 10:01**

## **2. MEETING ADMINISTRATION**

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### **2.1 Attendance**

Bruce Adamson (BA)	Commissioner (Chair)
Nick Hobbs (NH)	Head of Advice & Investigations
Ezmie McCutcheon (EM)	Head of Communications
Nicola Vallance-Ross (NRV)	Head of Corporate Services
Heather Belmonte	Executive Assistant (Minutes)

### **2.2 Apologies**

2.2.1 Máire McCormack Head of Strategy

### **2.3 Appointments**

- 2.3.1 The Head of Communications was appointed Meeting Monitor.  
2.3.2 The Executive Assistant was appointed as minute taker.

### **2.4 Declaration of Interests**

2.4.1 None were declared.

### **2.5 Minutes of the last meeting**

- 2.5.1 The minutes of the Governance meeting held on 28 August 2019 were approved.  
2.5.2 The Action Log was reviewed and updated, with outstanding items allocated to their corresponding agenda item.

### **2.6 Previous meeting's monitor report summary**

2.6.1 NH reported the meeting was kept to the correct level for Governance, there were time keeping challenges due to this being the first meeting of this type, NH confirmed consideration was given to children and young people.

### **2.7 Adoption of Agenda**

2.7.1 The agenda was accepted as presented.

## **3. COMMISSIONER UPDATE**

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- 3.1.1 BA reported on a busy last quarter.  
3.1.2 Positive contributions to the principles and culture of the office along with leadership to the Strategy team were provided by the temporary Principle Strategic Advisor and Acting Head of Strategy.  
3.1.3 Policy successes included the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019, and the Scottish Government's accepting all key recommendations and committing to "in every case possible" full and direct incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law in this session of Parliament.

- 3.1.4 The Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024 has been completed, this builds on the foundation set by the revised Strategic Plan and will feed into creating the 2020/21 Delivery Plan and individual Contribution Management Plans.
- 3.1.5 The Children’s Human Rights Defenders project, involvement in the Future Food Inquiry and Independent Care Review were all successful. Moving forward the office should how to incorporate, if at all, these projects into the new delivery plan.
- 3.1.6 ENOC (European Network of Ombudspersons for Children) and BINOCC (British and Irish Network of Ombudsman and Children’s Commissioners) and engagement over the last quarter. BA is now ENOC chair elect, sits on the ENOC statutes working group and represented ENOC at high level Council of Europe conference. CRIA is the priority area for ENOC over the coming year. BINOCC met during the last quarter and the Commissioners communicate regularly. BA discussed more staff involvement in communications between BINOCC offices.
- 3.1.7 There have been many good opportunities for engagement with children and young people - the Annual Human Rights Gathering, the Young Advisors Group and the exercise with all staff and the Young Advisors Group creating shields to represent work within the office. BA visited schools in Dundee and Edinburgh and would like to do further targeted visits to schools linked to the core work of the office.
- 3.1.8 BA requested SMT encourage staff to prepare in advance of the Monday morning meeting and reflect on previous week as well as current week.

#### **4. INFORMATION FROM THE SMT**

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##### **4.1 SMT Quarterly report**

- 4.1.1 Contribution Management Plans – SMT will complete in February with BA, all staff will complete in March with line managers. This information will feed into the annual planner, training needs and budget will be considered in April.
- 4.1.2 The next Annual report to be laid in June 2020 – NVR confirmed will have final account figures in time for the report. NVR to check legality of laying annual report before accounts are signed off.
- 4.1.3 Risk register – NVR is taking forward the recommendations from the auditors.
- 4.1.4 Annual Human Rights Gathering feedback – NVR confirmed the budget was under £25000 and Governance group considered and reflected on the internal review of the Gathering.

##### **4.2 Finance Quarterly report**

- 4.2.1 SMT made the recommendation not to request contingency from SPCB (Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body) based on financial forecasting report provided, the office has managed overspend through efficiency savings. BA agreed.

#### **5. EDUCATION**

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##### **5.1 Audit - NVR spoke to paper provided by AAB**

The aim of the audit process is assessment of risk and check of financial controls. NVR has arranged time for SMT to meet with auditors for further learning.

##### **5.2 Training needs**

- 5.2.1 NVR to arrange finance and audit training at the next SMT meeting when BA is available to join the meeting.

- 5.2.2 NVR and BA to work on a skills matrix for SMT. Other training needs will be identified through the Contribution Management Plan process
- 5.2.3 NH to speak to Legal Officer to develop training on the office's legal framework and obligations for the whole office. Legal Officer to prepare a proposal for approval at the next Governance meeting.

## **6 GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

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### **6.1 Progress of Governance manual**

NVR to draft Governance manual in line with the FReM (Government Financial Reporting Manual). NVR to agree dates with BA.

## **7 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION**

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### **7.1 Young Advisors' Group**

- 7.1.1 EM gave a verbal update on the work of the Young Advisors' Group (YAG).
- 7.1.2 The YAG were a key part of the Annual Human Rights Gathering.
- 7.1.3 The Participation Officer is currently working on expanding the group.
- 7.1.4 SMT recommended that the YAG form the ENYA (European Network of Young Advisors) group working with the ENOC conference. BA agreed.
- 7.1.5 The next meeting is on 22 February.

### **7.2 Additional Participation Opportunities**

- 7.2.1 The Participation Officer is developing a "Commissioners engagements paper" to be informed by delivery plan.
- 7.2.2 All agreed not to hold an Annual Human Rights Gathering in November but rather to focus on involving children and young people in the ENOC conference to be hosted by the office.

## **8 MONITORING**

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### **8.1 Delivery Plan and Workplan Progress -**

- 8.1.1 NH spoke to the process of developing the Delivery Plan 2020/21.
- 8.1.2 Strategy and Advice and Investigation teams to bring together the list of existing issues and develop a long list of evidence-based projects. Refinement of horizon scanning with a focus on the year 2020/2021. Shortlist prioritized projects for the year.
- 8.1.3 In parallel Corporate Services team to look at budget and project management tools.
- 8.1.4 Whole team to come back together to assess and make final decisions on the plan for the year.
- 8.1.5 Agreed to hold planning day on 29 January and whole team building / planning day on 30 January.
- 8.1.6 NH and BA to meet to agree where to draw from for existing issues and projects.
- 8.1.7 BA to be involved after initial discussions by Strategy and Advice and Investigations teams. BA to be involved in shortlisting prioritized projects.
- 8.1.8 NH to clarify process to all staff, ultimate decisions for Delivery plan will be made by SMT and the Commissioner.

### **8.2 Annual Planner Monitoring**

- 8.2.1 NVR explained the aim is to create an organisational tool for the whole office, which will be displayed on the wall of the office and aid overall planning.

8.2.2 Policy review dates to be agreed by SMT.

## 9 OTHER GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

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- 9.1 New and Revised Policies - 2020** Provided for information
- 9.1.1 Contribution Management Framework
  - 9.1.2 Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy
  - 9.1.3 Code of Behaviour
  - 9.1.4 Social Media Policy. NVR to make a small update.
- 9.2 Absence briefing**
- 9.2.1 NVR recommended absence monitoring should be a standing item at SMT and Governance meetings. Agreed.
- 9.3 Audit Planning meeting update**
- 9.3.1 NVR and Finance Officer to meet with auditors next week. Auditors will provide a plan to go to SMT

## 10 MEETING FORWARD PLANNING

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- 10.1 Planning – see current year’s annual planner**
- 10.2 Date of next meeting**  
Move date of next governance meeting to after SMT in April

## 11 MEETING MONITOR’S REPORT

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- 11.1** EM reported back on the meeting. Good timing. Maybe too much detailed discussion of projects. Children and young people were considered within participation.

## 12. CLOSE

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- 12.1** There being no further discussion the Commissioner closed the meeting at 12:55

## CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Title	Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland
Name	Bruce Adamson
Signature	
Date	7 May 2020