



**CHILDREN &
YOUNG PEOPLE'S**
Commissioner
Scotland

Governance Meeting Minutes

7 May 2020

Governance Meeting

1st Meeting of 2020/2021

*Office of the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland
Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS*

Note to Reader:

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Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland
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Tel: 0131 346 5350
Email: info@cypcs.org.uk

1. OPENING FORMALITIES

- 1.1 The meeting was opened at 10:05**

2. MEETING ADMINISTRATION

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 No apologies

2.3 Appointments

- 2.3.1 The Head of Corporate Services 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 15 January 2020 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 EM reported the previous meeting kept to good timing. There was maybe too much detailed discussion of projects. Children and young people were considered within participation.

2.7 Adoption of Agenda

- 2.7.1 Recruitment and Training to be discussed in private at the end of the agenda.

3. COMMISSIONER UPDATE

- 3.1.1 BA reported that the office had handled the transition into lockdown due to Covid-19 and working from home well. Contingency planning and providing necessary IT was carried out exceptionally well. The challenge of adjusting to new urgent work and re prioritising has been met well.

- 3.1.2 Additional work arising from Covid-19 lockdown has been joining the Independent Advisory Group on Police Powers and increased engagement with Scottish Government and the media.
- 3.1.3 BA highlighted the risk that meetings, conferences etc will be rescheduled later in the year, the diary will need to be carefully managed during this time.
- 3.1.4 As it is the halfway point of his mandate BA is in the process of holding 1:1 discussions with all staff. These have provided a good time for reflection and future planning.

4. INFORMATION FROM THE SMT

4.1 SMT Quarterly report

- 4.1.1 Contribution Management Plans have been completed with all staff.
- 4.1.2 NVR to circulate CPD plan once complete
- 4.1.3 Training will be revisited and reprioritized. NVR to arrange online training where feasible by July.

4.2 Finance Quarterly report

- 4.2.1 NVR gave a verbal financial update:
There is no finance update via excel to this SMT as we are currently processing year end transactions. Due to the slower processing of Sage, this is taking longer than normal. By way of verbal update:
- 4.2.2 Our total drawdown for the year including the Commissioner's costs was £1,262,282 out of a budget (adjusted for additional pension costs) of £1,288,390 so therefore an undrawn amount of £26,108 or 2% of budget. At year end, this is well within the tolerated levels of 1/12th of our non-staff costs, which for this year was £36,246.
- 4.2.3 Our cash bank balance at 31/3/2020 was £38,169.
Our salary costs for the year were over budget and included recruitment costs of a vacancy which was not expected. This staffing over spend was compensated by an operational budget underspend within Strategy and Advice and Investigations.
- 4.2.4 For the coming financial year, we have submitted our phasing document to the SPCB which was based on a re-prioritisation due to the ongoing coronavirus crisis.
It is foreseen that this coming year we will need to change our budget significantly to mitigate health and safety concerns and ensure as safe as possible return to the office. This is to be discussed at the next SMT.

5 EDUCATION

5.2 Finance Guidance Documents.

Finance guidance documents provided by SPCB were circulated in advance of the meeting. NVR will prepare a briefing note on CYPs relationship with SPCB and finance and budgeting for all staff.

NVR is developing a finance manual which will include a suite of tools for staff to request and manage budgets.

5.3 Training needs

5.3.3 Employment Law and Management training had been arranged but was postponed due to lockdown. NVR will look at options for training online.

5.3.4 Legal Compliance training links to work the Legal Officer has been doing. NH to discuss whether this will be ready to deliver at the July meeting.

6 GOVERNANCE REVIEW

6.1 Employee Handbook

NVR is currently redrafting the Employee Handbook and related policies. BA asked that references to the Commissioner be gender neutral.

6.2 Procurement.

There are new emergency rules for procurement and tendering. NVR does not foresee a need for the office to use the procurement process during the period of lockdown.

7 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

7.1 Young Advisors' Group

7.1.1 EM and NH gave a verbal update on the work of the Young Advisors' Group (YAG).

7.1.2 The YAG have been actively involved in communications with SQA and Police Scotland

7.1.3 During this time, the primary concern is the welfare of the YAG. BA acknowledged the good work of staff in providing support to them.

7.1.4 EM would like to continue to grow the YAG. BA suggested new connections would be made when the office is able to travel around Scotland after lockdown.

7.1.5 The next meeting is on 12 May.

7.2 Additional Participation Opportunities

7.2.1 The planned Early Years project will provide additional opportunities for staff.

7.2.2 Training and support will be provided to staff for engagement with younger children.

8 MONITORING

8.1 Revised Delivery Plan.

- 8.1.1 The Delivery plan has been revised to reflect reprioritization due to Covid-19
- 8.1.2 Agreed to disseminate to staff at next team meeting on 13 May.
- 8.1.3 The next stage is project planning with appropriate staff.

8.2 Annual Planner Monitoring

- 8.2.1 HB talked to the plan and the symbols key.
- 8.2.2 Agreed office policy review dates should sit behind the plan.

9 OTHER GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 New and Revised Policies - Provided for information

- 9.1.1 Business Continuity plan approved
- 9.1.2 Media and Communications Policy approved
- 9.1.3 Anti-Fraud Policy approved

9.2 Audit Planning meeting update

- 9.2.1 NVR met with Auditors – Due to lockdown the audit will be carried out remotely. Timescales are unchanged but the method of testing will be adjusted to comply with lockdown.
- 9.2.2 Annual report and accounts – NVR will provide figures first.
- 9.2.3 NVR is prioritising banking processes and protecting the office from fraud during lockdown.

10 MEETING FORWARD PLANNING

10.1 Planning – see current year's annual planner

10.2 Date of next meeting 30 July 2020

11 MEETING MONITOR'S REPORT

11.1 NVR reported back on the meeting. Timing – late to start due to everyone coming online. Good discussion taking into consideration children and young people particularly in relation to the YAG. Decisions were taken well and collectively.

12. CLOSE

- 12.1** There being no further discussion the Commissioner closed the meeting at 11:50

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Title	Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland
Name	Bruce Adamson

Signature	
Date	4 August 2020