

**NI GUARDIAN AD LITEM AGENCY - BOARD MEETING**  
**14<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2019**

- Present:** Mr Fred Smyth, *Non-Executive Director (Acting Chair)*  
Mrs Gillian McGaughey, *Non-Executive Director*  
Mr Peter Reynolds, *Chief Executive*
- In Attendance:** Mr Sean Brown, *Corporate Services Manager*  
Miss Patricia O’Kane, *Assistant Director*  
Mr John Sheldon, *QA & Training Manager (arrived 9.50am)*  
Mrs Teresa Fallon, *Assistant Director (arrived 9.40am)*  
Ms Patricia Higgins, *NISCC (Interim CEO) - (Item 1.19)*  
Mr Paul Martin, *NISCC (Chair) - (Item 1.19)*
- Apologies:** Mr Bernard Mitchell, *Chair*  
Dr Karen Winter, *Non-Executive Director*
- Minute Taker:** Mrs Ann Andrew, *Administration Manager*

**START TIME : 9.30am**

**1.19 SERVICE DELIVERY PRESENTATION**

- 1.19.1 Mr Smyth welcomed Ms Patricia Higgins and Mr Paul Martin from the NI Social Care Council (NISCC) to the meeting. They provided an overview of their role as a workforce regulator, licenced sector skills council and awarding body and emphasised their commitment to improving quality in social work and social care. There was indepth discussion about the range of pressures faced in the workforce sector, specifically social workers in family and child care. Ms Higgins highlighted NISCC’s ambition going forward working in partnership with the Department and Stakeholders alike.
- 1.19.2 Mr Smyth thanked both Ms Higgins and Mr Martin for their time and useful discussion with the Board.

**2.19 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

- 2.19.1 Mr Smyth provided an opportunity for the Board members to identify any conflicts of interest in respect of today’s agenda. None were noted.

- 2.19.2 Mr Reynolds indicated that he has been appointed to the NISCC bank of Professional Advisors but is not currently undertaking any work. He noted this should however be borne in mind for future meetings. The Board noted same.

### 3.19 MINUTE OF LAST MEETING

- 3.19.1 The minute of the previous meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 was agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and approved. Mr Smyth suggested minor rewording of 81.18.2.

### 4.19 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.19.1 Mr Smyth referred to the action list from the previous meeting. All actions and updates were noted.

### 5.19 CHAIR & NON-EXECUTIVE'S BRIEFING

- 5.19.1 ***NIGALA Chair/Non-Executive Director – Vacancies:*** Mr Reynolds advised that there has yet to be confirmation of the replacements for the positions of NIGALA Chair and Non-Executive Director.

### 6.19 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BRIEFING

- 6.19.1 Mr Reynolds referred to his *CEO Briefing Report* updating the Board in a number of areas.
- 6.19.2 Mr Reynolds highlighted a claim made to the Office of Industrial Tribunals (NI) against NIGALA from a specific self-employed contractor. He confirmed this is being dealt with through HR and Legal Departments at BSO. Mr Reynolds noted he is unsure of what the implications might be but will keep the Board updated.
- 6.19.3 Mr Reynolds referred to Article 56 appointments and updated the Board on progress following a meeting of the Shadow Family Justice Board in January 2019, in which the Chair asked for a sub-group to be convened to discuss proposals made by NIGALA. He indicated that at the same meeting a paper on *Expert Guidance* was discussed and it was recommended that further consideration is given to the paper at a meeting of a subgroup of the Shadow Family Justice Board.

- 6.19.4 Mr Reynolds indicated that the Agency is working to establish relationships with similar bodies in England & Wales, Scotland, and the Republic of Ireland, with a view to hosting an annual 4 Nation's symposium. Mr Smyth noted it was good to see all the input and would be keen to see the broader plan of working with like organisations and tangible evidence of progress in taking messages forward.

## 7.19 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 7.19.1 Mr Smyth referred to the *Finance and Performance Report* and Mr Brown spoke to the report updating the Board on key issues to the month end January 2019.

### Performance

- 7.19.2 The Board reviewed the current strategic themes and relating key performance indicators. Qualitative comment is to be provided for each KPI performance. Mr Brown confirmed as at December 2018 that NIGALA's attendance rate is 97.63%. He noted the Agency were given *satisfactory assurance* following a recent Attendance Management audit.

### Workflow

- 7.19.3 Mr Brown provided an update on the workflow position as at January 2019. He confirmed 81.37% of cases have been allocated within 14 days. There are a total of 634 live cases in the system (1091 children) and 170 cases which have been live for over 400 days. 707 cases have been closed in the current year.

- 7.19.4 Mr Brown confirmed that the additional monies used for self-employed guardians have helped with the waiting list but NIGALA would need to ensure a further year of funding to work with stakeholders on improving the overall system. Mr Smyth emphasised that the statistics show a recent improvement in net live case flow but do not include the full story of behind the numbers and encouraged this be included in reports. In Mr Smyth noted the commentary on an outcomes based approach and asked that specific examples be given for the next meeting.

**ACTION: Mr Brown to include qualitative information to support statistics in future reports.**

**ACTION: Mr Brown to provide specific examples on an outcomes based approach.**

## Finance

- 7.19.5 Mr Brown noted the financial position of the Agency updating on key budget areas. He indicated that the surplus relates to delays in recruitment and one Guardian retiring in December 2018. It was confirmed that a *Workforce Planning* paper will come to the Board at a future meeting.

## Environmental Scan

- 7.19.6 Mr Brown referred to the environmental scan which highlights a number of publications or consultations by the DoH that may be of interest to Board Members. He referred to the publication about the *Proposal for new specialist children's campus to be developed* and indicated that NIGALA have been asked to be involved in future discussions.

## 8.19 IIP ACTION PLAN

- 8.19.1 Mr Smyth referred to *Action Plan for Investors in People – Year One* and Mr Sheldon confirmed that having recently achieved the IIP Silver Award, the SMT is committed to minimally retaining this and actively planning to seek the Gold Award in 2021.
- 8.19.2 Mr Sheldon highlighted a plan of work over the next 3 years which was agreed with Stephanie McCutcheon IIP where NIGALA are to focus on working to improving their weakest areas.
- 8.19.3 There was discussion about one of these areas 'recognising and rewarding high performance' and other methods other than monetary. Suggestions included 'affirmation of work done', career development path, opportunity to meet with stakeholders and contribute to AYE and student placements. Mrs Fallon also indicated that ongoing positive feedback received by children and young people will be forwarded to Guardians contributing to a change in culture and acknowledged appreciation of the work.
- 8.19.4 Mr Smyth acknowledged the ongoing engagement in a range of areas and encouraged same.

## 9.19 UK STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 9.19.1 Mr Smyth referred to the *UK Stakeholder Engagement* paper and Mr Brown spoke to same highlighting engagement with CAFCASS (England), Children 1<sup>st</sup> (Scotland) and the

Department of Children and Youth Affairs who are currently establishing an equivalent service (South of Ireland).

- 9.19.2 Mr Brown noted that engagement will be an excellent opportunity to discuss commonalities and allow learning from each other. He suggested a possible annual summit to bring all the bodies together.

## **10.19 RISK REGISTER**

- 10.19.1 Mr Smyth referred to the *Risk Register* and Mr Brown reviewed the risks with the Board proving update as required.

## **11.19 SOCIAL CARE GOVERNANCE (SCG) FRAMEWORK**

- 11.19.1 Mr Smyth referred to the *Social Care Governance Framework* outlining how the Committee carries out its role and function within NIGALA. Mrs Fallon spoke to the paper providing an overview of the structuring of the SCG programme and the framework which is based on the Governance Framework.
- 11.19.2 Mrs Fallon and Mrs McGaughey confirmed that the SCG Committee will move away from their involvement with operational issues and become more focused on the expectations and assurance to allow for the delivery of objectives. The SCG Action Plan going forward will become obsolete. Mrs Fallon confirmed she will be presenting a work plan for the incoming year to the next SCG Committee meeting.
- 11.19.3 The Board approved the *Social Care Governance Framework*.

## **12.19 DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE**

### **HSC Pay Award 2018-19**

- 12.19.1 Mr Brown confirmed that HSC employees on agenda for change terms and conditions of service will have a pay award implemented and paid at the end of February 2019 including any arrears payable. He advised the new rates are effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and weekly meetings have been taking place with BSO to ensure the process works smoothly.

### Remuneration of Chairs & Non-Executive Directors

- 12.19.2 Mr Brown referred to the circular *The Payment of Remuneration of Chairs and Non-Executive Members Determination (NI) 2019, Circular Ref: HSC(F) 01-2019* confirming an increase in remuneration. It was confirmed this would be paid in March 2019.

### Brexit / EU Exit Preparedness

- 12.19.3 Mr Brown referred the Board to correspondence from the Permanent Secretary in respect of *EU Exit Preparedness, Ref: RP3394*. He indicated the biggest issue for NIGALA relates to working across the border if needed. Mr Reynolds confirmed that BASW and the 'Irish Association of Social Workers' have written jointly to the Tánaiste, Simon Coveney highlighting live issues for social work staff eg placement of children, etc.

### The Boardroom Apprentice

- 12.19.4 Mr Brown referred to correspondence from the DoH in respect of *The Boardroom Apprentice*. Following consideration the Board was in agreement that this year is not an appropriate time for participate in the 2019 programme given the current vacancies on the NIGALA Board.

### liP Accreditation

- 12.19.5 Mr Reynolds referred the Board to correspondence from Mr Sean Holland, Chief Social Work Officer extending his congratulations to the management Board and staff for achieving Silver Accreditation in Investors in People. He indicated it was worthy for staff to see the recognition given by the DoH and the Board noted agreement.

## 13.19 BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS SINCE LAST BOARD MEETING

- 13.19.1 There has been one meeting of the **Social Care Governance Committee** since the last meeting of the NIGALA Board. Mrs Fallon confirmed this occurred on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019 referred the Board to her *Social Care Governance Committee Meeting Update* paper and informed the Board on the business undertaken at the meeting.

---

**14.19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 14.19.1 **Digitalisation of Legal Aid:** Mrs McGaughey informed the Board that the digitalisation of legal aid will be implemented towards the end of April 2019. This will obviously impact on NIGALA Panel Solicitors and the signing of legal aid forms as going forward LSC will only accept online submission of documentation. She advised that Guardians should be made aware of this.

**15.19 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

- 15.19.1 There were two items for discussion.

**END TIME : 12.10PM**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2018 @ 9.30AM**

---

**Chair of the Board**

# ACTION LIST

## OPEN ACTIONS

| Ref  | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | By Whom                                          | Progress Noted for Meeting |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 7.19 | <p><b>Finance &amp; Performance Report:</b></p> <p>Mr Brown to include qualitative information to support statistics in future reports.</p> <p>Mr Brown to provide specific examples on an outcomes based approach.</p> | <p><b>Mr Brown</b></p><br><p><b>Mr Brown</b></p> |                            |