

PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND  
**BOARD MEETING – FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER 2019**

**9.30 AM – PBNI HEADQUARTERS**

**414<sup>th</sup> MEETING – 11<sup>th</sup> OF THE TWELFTH TERM OF OFFICE**

ATTENDANCE

Mr Dale Ashford (Chair)  
Mr Neil Bodger  
Dr Jonny Byrne  
Mr Kieran Donaghy  
Mr Paul Douglas  
Mrs Judith Gillespie  
Ms Patricia Keenan  
Mr Alastair Ross  
Mr Max Murray  
Mr Dave Wall

Ms Sarah Bruce (Boardroom Apprentice)

OFFICIALS

Mr Hugh Hamill, Director of Operations  
Dr Geraldine O'Hare, Director of Rehabilitation  
Mrs Gillian Robinson, Head of Human Resources  
Ms Catherine Teggart, Head of Finance (Items 1 – 9)  
Mr Michael Cox, Board Secretary  
Ms Gail McGreevy (Agenda item 18)  
Mrs Wendy Rodgers, Secretariat (Minutes)

GUEST

Mr Graham Walker, Presentation

**1. WELCOME AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The Board Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Mr Graham Walker, DOJ's Brexit Representative.

Mr Walker provided the Members and Officials with an update on the current position in relation to Brexit. A question and answer session followed the update including the possibility of civil disorder. It was noted by members that the increase in the number of community sentences being handed down for lower crime convictions would have an impact of Probation.

The Board Chair thanked Mr Walker for his update and that members had found it informative.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Dr K Clark, Member; Mr G OhEara, Member; Dr T Donaldson, Member; Ms C Lamont, Chief Executive.

### 3. MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING 20 SEPTEMBER 2019 (PAPER M09/19)

The minutes of the previous Board Meeting held on Friday 20 September 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record with the following amendments made.

Page 2 – Point 1 – ‘a fraud claim **involving** Victims Support NI’

Page 3 – Point 3 – replace ‘lost’ with ‘**was a victim of crime**’

Point 13 – ECMS and ICT Delivery – ‘**resulting in some minor costs**’

### 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2019 (80/19)

All outstanding actions have been completed. Action 2 will be discussed at the Corporate Resources Committee on 6 December 2019

### 5. BOARD CHAIR’S UPDATE (Verbal)

The Board Chair thanked all those involved in the planning and running of the Annual Seminar. It had proved to be a great success and it was good to see so many stakeholders attending. He was pleased to attend the Long Service Awards for staff in September. The Chair thanked members for participating in the appraisal process. He will be looking at comments and suggestions made during the appraisal meetings.

The Chair had attended a Brexit briefing at the Chairs Forum and updated the Board on this.

Members were advised that the Chair had attended a church service as part of Prison’s Week.

As a follow up to the Board Development Day, he and the Committee Chairs had met to discuss how to coordinate the work. A note of the meeting will be shared with members. At the meeting it was agreed each committee would lead on an appropriate topic once during the year. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee would lead on Risk Management at the February 2020 Board meeting.

**Action: The notes of the Chair and Chairs’ of Committees to be finalised and shared with Members (Board Secretary)**

Members agreed that they were content with the feedback provided on the meeting.

The Director of Operations confirmed that the field work for the CJI(NI) Inspection is almost complete, meeting with a number of stakeholders is due to complete in mid-November.

It was advised that members’ PBNI email addresses will soon be active. It was agreed that when an email is sent, members will be advised by text message.

The Members noted the Board Chair’s update.

### 6. CHIEF EXECUTIVES UPDATE (Verbal)

The Director of Operations provided an update on behalf of the Chief Executive. Members were advised that the feedback from the Seminar was positive. Mr Hamill wished to register thanks to all staff involved in the Seminar and Gail McGreevy, in particular, for her work and co-ordination of the event.

Industrial Action took place on 3 October 2019 involving some administrative staff. The Head of HR advised that it resulted in minimal disruption for PBNI. In response to a member's question it was confirmed that this was a NICS wide action.

Members were advised that the Director of Rehabilitation had visited the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels as part of a group from Northern Ireland on Brexit matters.

CJI(NI) are publishing the PPANI Inspection next week. It was advised that there were no specific recommendations relating to Probation.

Mr Hamill informed members that Brendan McGuigan's successor is Jacqui Durkin. Ms Durkin comes from a Criminal Justice background and had previously worked with the NI Courts Service.

Mr Hamill advised that the CJI(NI) file audit finished on 7 October 2019. The writing up of the Report will commence in January 2020. Members were advised that the report should be available in 6 to 9 months.

The Board noted the update.

## **7. CORRESPONDENCE (PAPER 81/19)**

The Board noted the correspondence presented.

## **8. FINANCIAL OUTTURN SUMMARY (84/19)**

The Head of Finance reported that as at the end of September there was an underspend of £569k, which reflects the difficulty in filling vacant temporary posts in Programmes and backfilling staff working on Programmes. The monitoring run will allow for re-profiling and this should help. Ms Teggart advised on the underspend in the moving to IT Assist and the easement relating to ECO, resettlement and accommodation.

Prompt payment is below target due to the delay in the roll out of the new postal contract. All offices have now been fully rolled out and invoicing arrangements are in place.

Ms Teggart provided a summary of the scenario planning exercise being undertaken and confirmed that the CRC will be looking at this in more detail at its next meeting. Ms Teggart advised that there was a potential for the Aspire project to involve the over 30s age group although she was not hopeful that additional funding would be available. There are pressures from pay awards, and from commitments arising from the rollout of ECO and Problem Solving Justice, including the Domestic Violence Court. A member commented that there was an equality issue arising from the limited access to ECO. A member noted that working with the over 30s would be more challenging.

**Action: PPC will discuss the Aspire project at its next meeting (PPC)**

A member asked if the funding of a new training facility would be resource or capital. Mrs Robinson confirmed it would be capital and advised that the main purpose was to allow for easier access for staff from across Northern Ireland. She also confirmed that she had looked at partnering with other Criminal Justice parties.

The Board noted the paper.

## **9. ESTATES AND BUSINESS CASES (PAPER – D - 83/19)**

Ms Teggart provided an update on Estates and Business Cases as laid out in the paper provided.

The Board noted the paper.

## **10. AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that there had not been a meeting of the Committee since the last Board and therefore there was emerging business in the interim.

## **11. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER Q2 UPDATE (SRR) (PAPER 82/19)**

Mr Hamill advised that the Board had received a Q1 update previously and now Q2 is presented for Board approval. There is one additional risk, number 8 – Brexit, which had been recommended for inclusion in the SRR by the Board. It was noted that Risk 6 is now 'medium, yellow' as the IT project is coming to its conclusion.

Risk 5 was discussed and that this would require a change in legislation. There is a requirement to draft up an alternative model that will not include PBNI. It was noted that there cannot be a legislative change without an Assembly.

The Board approved the Strategic Risk Register Q2.

## **12. SERIOUS FURTHER OFFENCES (SFOs) (PAPER B – 83/19)**

The Members were advised that there were no SFOs to report.

The Board noted the update

## **13. CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that there had not been a meeting of the Committee since the last Board and therefore there was emerging business in the interim.

## **14. HUMAN RESOURCES (PAPER – C - 83/19)**

### **14.1 National Negotiating Committee and Standing Committee of Chief Officers' Group Update**

Mrs Robinson advised that the Business Case has been forwarded to the Department of Finance and, hopefully, we will now see progression in the near future. Mrs Robinson advised that the pay scales will not fall within NICS pay scales and there will be different Terms and Conditions. Staff have been updated on the current position.

Discussion ensued on job evaluation. Mrs Robinson advised that PBNI accessed the national Job Evaluation Scheme and that they have the skilled resource for this.

**Action: Mrs Robinson to provide more detail on PBNI's Job Evaluation Scheme via discussion with Mr Donaghy**

The Board noted the paper.

## 14.2 NILGOSC Update

The NILGOSC legal action remains unchanged.

The Board noted the paper.

## 15. MANAGING ATTENDANCE – (PAPER 85/19)

Mrs Robinson advised that attendance levels are not where we would wish them to be. She assured members that the process and procedures are being followed robustly, including Ill Health Dismissal meetings taking place, where appropriate, at an early stage. Mrs Robinson and Dr O'Hare are meeting with the Unions on this.

A member asked about the Health and Safety figures on the verbal abuse of Probation Officers. Mrs Robinson advised that front line staff are exposed to risk of violence as PBNI is an organisation in which staff work alone and undertake home visits. PBNI has control arrangements in place to minimise the risk and supports staff. It is noted that staff report any untoward incidents.

The Board noted the paper.

## 16. INFORMATION SYSTEMS (PAPER - E - 83/19)

The Board noted the update provided in the Management Information Paper.

## 17. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT (PAPER – F – 83/19)

Dr O'Hare provided a summary of communications and engagements that have taken place since the last Board Meeting.

The Board noted the paper.

## 18. REVIEW OF ANNUAL SEMINAR – 27 SEPTEMBER 2019 (PAPER 86/19)

Dr O'Hare advised that the Seminar took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019 in the Long Gallery, Stormont, with 86 attending from Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector as well as 5 Permanent Secretaries and the Head of the NICS. The Head of Communications advised that the Communications Department had engaged in social media with endorsements and positive feedback from speakers and attendees. The event received good media coverage across radio and the press.

### **Action: PPC to evaluate the seminar at its next meeting (PPC)**

The cost of the event was discussed and value for money. It was confirmed that DOJ approval was sought and granted. Members agreed that the evaluation of the event should highlight the value for money achieved.

The Board Chair thanked all those who attended.

The Board noted the paper and update.

## 19. STATISTICS AND RESEARCH UPDATE PAPER (PAPER A – 83/19)

Dr O'Hare provided a summary of the paper. Points to note were that the female caseload has increased by 16% on the previous year; those supervised under Enhanced Combination

Orders (ECO) is up by 34% compared to the same period of the previous year; and the sentenced prison population has fallen by 4.1% compared to the same quarter last year (in contrast the remand population increasing in the same period by 3.2%).

Dr O'Hare advised members that she had met with the Public Health Authority, to look at their trends and data. Health and Probation have agreed to a workshop to look at types of data, trends and forecasting to establish common areas of interest. Dr O'Hare advised that the Senior Leadership Team will be arranging a workshop to discuss this and will report to the PPC after that.

**Action: SLT workshop findings to be presented to the PPC once the findings are available (Director of Rehabilitation)**

A discussion ensued on the current increase in older offenders. This is a significant change and requires research. It was agreed that there needs to be work undertaken across Criminal Justice and Education too to combine the available statistical information to help forecasting. It was also suggested that a speaker be invited to talk the benefits of data sharing across departments.

The Board noted the paper.

## **20. CONSULTATIONS UPDATE (PAPER G- 83/19)**

Dr O'Hare advised members that officials respond, where appropriate, to consultations. All consultations received are assessed to establish the appropriate response.

## **21. Q2 BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20 (PAPER 87/19)**

The update for Q2 2019/20 was presented to the Board. The Board noted that 4 Strategic Priorities have a 'Green' rating and 1 Strategic Priority had an 'Amber' rating due to the current level of staff absence.

The Board noted the achievements against the 2019/20 Business Plan Objectives.

## **BOARD SECRETARY'S BUSINESS**

### **22. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The PPC next meeting will be held in Shipquay Street (if it is available) with Judge McElhome and Marie Brown, Women's Aid attending for a discussion on Domestic Abuse.

The CRC will be meeting in the Armagh Office on 6 December 2019.

The Members were advised that the Work Plan is currently being revised and will be brought to the December Board.

Members were reminded that subsistence claims must be within a three-month period to be paid.

**Action: Members to note the timeline for submitting subsistence claims (Board Members)**

**23. MEMBERS VISITS: PHASE 2 (PAPER 88/19)**

The schedule had been included in the papers for this Board Meeting. Members were advised that there is some doubt over particular timings and the schedule will be circulated again when confirmed.

**Action: Schedule of visits to be amended and sent to members (Board Secretary)**

A member requested a visit to the Problem Solving Courts (PSJ). Dr O'Hare advised that she would arrange a visit in the New Year.

**Action: Visit to PSJ to be arranged for members in the New Year (Director of Rehabilitation)**

**24. REVISED STANDING ORDERS (PAPER 89/19)**

The Board Secretary advised that the Standing Orders had been revised. The revised procedures have been sent to the Department for comment. The Board approved the introduction of the revised Standing Orders. Each committee will be reviewing their separate Terms of Reference which will be added to the Standing Orders after approval by the Board.

**Action: The revised Standing Orders are to be posted on Minutepad (Secretariat)**

**25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board Chair advised that the December Board Meeting will meet to cover governance business followed by a meet and greet with staff.

**26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Board Meeting will take place on Friday 15 November 2019 at 9.30 am, Conference Room, PBNI HQ

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**Dale Ashford QFSM  
BOARD CHAIR**

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**Date**