



# Senior Management Team Minutes

QUARTERLY MEETING  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Progressive House

## In Attendance:

Margaret Kelly – Ombudsman; MK  
Sean Martin – Deputy Ombudsman; SM  
Andrew Ruston - Head of Communications; AR  
Julie Healy - Head of Improvement, Engagement & Impact, JH  
Corinne Nelson – Director of Investigations, CN  
Sinead Sargent – Director of Investigations, SSt  
Kirsty McCool – Director of Governance and Support Services KM  
Sarah Sherry – Secretariat; SS

Agenda Item	Minutes	Action Required/ By Whom
1.	<b>Apologies and Conflicts of Interest</b>  No apologies received  MK invited those present to register any actual or perceived conflicts of interest relevant to the agenda. No conflicts were noted.	
2.	<b>Minutes of the last meeting</b>  Minutes from 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
3.	<b>Outstanding Actions</b>  <i>Data Reporting</i> – KM to arrange with SPSO for discussion on data reporting.  <i>Intruder Alarm notification</i> – MK requested KC obtain an indicative costs from a security company.  <i>Trade Union Recognition Agreement</i> –SMT to revert to MK regarding the agreement	
4	<b>Internal Audit Review of Internal Financial Controls</b>  Recommendations from the recent review are to be completed in line with timescales.	

5	<p><b>Information Security Policy</b></p> <p>MK would like the suite of reviewed policies sent out to SMT.</p>	SS – to send out policies to SMT
6	<p><b>23/24 Business Plan</b></p> <p><i>Quality Assurance Overview</i> – SS to invite CN + SSt to the April ARC meeting.</p> <p>SMT to discuss Own Initiative focus after the COVID enquiry statement of evidence has been completed.</p> <p>SS to arrange a special SMT to discuss process terminology, KPIs and re-opens.</p> <p>SS to arrange a meeting with KM, SM and AR regarding Internal Recommendations on the website.</p>	<p>SS – Send invites for the ARC Meeting</p> <p>JH/SS - OI meeting with SMT</p> <p>SS – arrange meetings</p>
7	<p><b>Risk Register</b></p> <p>SMT agreed no changes were required.</p>	
8	<p><b>Corporate Policy Database</b></p> <p><i>Health and Safety Policy</i> – has been agreed and is with the Trade Union for final approval.</p> <p>The <i>Health and Safety Manual</i> – KM to consider benchmarking against other organisations.</p>	KM – health and safety policy and manual
9	<p><b>Quarterly Sickness Absence Report</b></p> <p>Quarterly absence rate from October to December 2023 – 0.9%.</p>	
10	<p><b>Quarterly Audit Recommendations Update</b></p> <p>AR advised that additional website procedures are still to be completed.</p> <p>KM suggested that the completed recommendations should be looked at before the audit.</p>	
11	<p><b>OI and Improvement, Engagement, and Impact Report</b></p> <p><b><u>Own Initiative Update</u></b></p> <p>COVID inquiry statement of evidence work is ongoing.</p> <p><b><u>Improvement, Engagement, and Impact Update</u></b></p> <p><i>Stakeholder engagement</i> – Positive meeting with COPNI regarding the forthcoming Care Home publication.</p> <p>Meeting with Robert Thomas upcoming.</p>	
5	<p><b><i>MAL and LGES Update</i></b></p> <p><b><u>Investigations</u></b></p>	

	<p>Good performance against KPI's but increased workload and staffing pressures.</p> <p>There are a high number of live cases within the team.</p> <p><b><u>LGES Update</u></b></p> <p>Good performance against KPIs.</p> <p>JH/AR carrying out Code of Conduct presentations to councillors.</p> <p><b><u>Adjudications Table</u></b></p> <p>Confirmation that the table is correct.</p>	
7	<p><b><i>Complaints Standards and ASSIST Update</i></b></p> <p><b><u>Assist</u></b></p> <p>There is a pro-rata increase in complaints of almost 10%.</p> <p>Further engagement with NIHE, Southern Trust, and Belfast Trust.</p> <p>Currently forecasting to look at resources needed.</p> <p><b><u>Complaints Standards</u></b></p> <p><i>LG Best Practice Network</i> continue to meet monthly, and have looked at 6 out of 11 new policies.</p> <p><i>Training and Guidance</i> – hope to issue tender shortly.</p> <p><i>Strategic and Operational Networks</i> – The CS team have commenced work on a gap analysis to help set the scene at the network meetings. This will be shared with SMT</p> <p><i>Internal Audit</i> – commenced on the w/c 8<sup>th</sup> January.</p>	
8	<p><b>Finance and Corporate Services Update</b></p> <p><b><u>Corporate Services</u></b></p> <p><i>Workpro Report</i> – Paper provided for SMT.</p> <p>MK suggested looking at the focus of the Data and Workpro group. KM, SSt and CN to discuss.</p> <p><b><u>Finance</u></b></p> <p>Discussion on budget position prior to year end.</p> <p>KM suggested a review of the POs to be completed.</p>	

	<p>SS and JH to work on the predicted budget for the conference.</p> <p><i>Middle Management Training</i> – Development of programme discussed.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Communications Update</b></p> <p><i>Video Shorts</i> – AR waiting on a quotation.</p> <p><i>Media Interview and Social Media Training</i> – The tender document prepared and is expected to go out next week.</p> <p><i>Publication Scheme</i> – AR asked SMT to consider publication of additional Lists and Registers.</p> <p><i>Public Awareness Survey and Customer Satisfaction Survey</i> – AR to re-circulate questions of the Public Awareness Survey to SMT and to get costings for both surveys.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><i>SMT Planning Day</i> – taking place on the 16<sup>th</sup> February.</p> <p>MK/SM to send out a draft agenda.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b> – Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 2 pm <b>via TEAMS</b>	