



Meeting	Advisory Board
Date	09/12/2020
Time	14:00
Venue (Chair) VC <input type="checkbox"/> Venue 2:	By WebEx

Minute

Gayle Gorman - Chair	Gillian Howells (item 8)
Alan Armstrong	John Fyffe
Gillian Hamilton	David Gemmell
Janie McManus	Kevin Kelman
Jackie Halawi	Ray McCowan
Paul Johnston, DG ECJ	Lyndsey McRoberts
Jill McPherson	Aileen Ponton
Maureen Hamilton (item 5)	Roz McCracken - Secretary
Stephen Edgar (item 6)	

1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1. Apologies were received from Ray McCowan. Lyndsey McRoberts would join the meeting part way through due to another commitment.
- 1.2. A warm welcome was extended to both Paul Johnston, who was attending in his role as Fraser Figure for the Agency, and Jackie Halawi who was attending in her role as SD Regional cover.
- 1.3. Paul Johnston took the opportunity to confirm how impressed he'd been with the exemplary support offered to the sector by Education Scotland.

2. Previous meeting

- 2.1. The minute of the 7 October Board meeting was approved.
- 2.2. Members reviewed the action tracker. A number of actions were approved for closure:
 - 07 /20-21 : The Advisory Board Terms of Reference were approved for publication.
 - 11 /20-21 : The frequency of Strategic Board discussions had been increased.
 - 12 /20-21 : The governance diagrams had been issued to members
 - 13/ 20-21 : The Budget process and management meeting with Non-Executives had taken place and found to be very helpful. This would now form part of all future non-executive induction programmes.
 - 14 /20-21 : Abbreviations removed from Finance Report
 - 15/ 20-21 : A central overheads breakdown now included in finance reports
 - 16/ 20-21 : Case study included in the Evaluating our Work report.

3. Declarations or conflicts of interest

3.1. There were no declarations.

4. Chairs Update

4.1. The Chair updated members about the work being delivered across the Agency and the sector. Particular points of note included the upcoming publication of Scotland Learns; the consultation on the future of Denholm House and the appointment of two new Strategic Directors, one of whom would start on 11 January, initially covering the Regional remit. The second appointee would start in early February.

4.2. Following discussion about the Agency's People and Place work it was agreed that inspection plans should be shared at the Advisory Board strategic session in January.

4.3. The appointment of the SG's first Director for Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights was highlighted. The new Directorate was created to ensure equalities, inclusion and human rights are at the centre of everything the Scottish Govt and its agencies do.

5. Education Scotland Recovery Year: Governance and progress

5.1. Maureen Hamilton attended to introduce her paper, reporting that the Oversight Board had been set up to govern the work of Education Scotland during the recovery year.

5.2. The wide range and excellent quality of ES interventions across the sector were flagged with a summary of key issues, risks and progress provided.

5.3. There was a discussion about the numbers contained within the tabled paper and it was noted that the Agency was basing its planning on meeting the needs and asks of the sector rather than setting arbitrary hard targets.

5.4. The need to try and reach those elements of the teaching workforce not currently engaging with ES was noted. Board member promotion of the support available from the Agency would be really helpful in this regard.

6. Monitoring and evaluation plan update – including online events evaluation findings

6.1. Stephen Edgar attended to discuss the initial evaluation of online events. The evaluation had been undertaken as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, with members welcoming the management information now coming through.

6.2. Supporting and upskilling the profession to deliver online learning was a key focus for the Agency. The need to include, in future updates, information about the proportion of teachers reached, as a percentage of the profession, was highlighted. This was agreed, noting however that it would not be possible to identify and remove repeat attendees from such figures.

6.3. It was further noted that great strides had been made in the field of online sessions and it would be important that the Agency leverage that industry progress.

6.4. Further updates would be provided to the Board in due course.

7. Management Information Report – Q2 2020/21

7.1. Stephen Edgar introduced the Corporate Management Information Report for Quarter 2. The report continues to evolve, for example it now included web analytics for the first time.

7.2. The average working days lost category was a cause for concern. More detailed analysis of sick absence was therefore being undertaken to identify how to decrease this, including looking at the age profile of staff to see if there is any correlation.

7.3. The need to confirm if our sick absence levels are in line with the SG was discussed and it was agreed that comparative SG figures should be obtained.

7.4. Stephen Edgar would shortly be leaving ES for a new role in the SG. Members thanked Stephen for his exceptional contribution to the work of the Agency.

ACTION POINT: Stephen Edgar to gather comparative SG sick absence information.

8. Finance Report to 31/10/20

8.1. Gillian Howells attended to present the finance monitoring report. A budget transfer of £3.1m had been requested to meet the current forecast pressure. A response from the SG about this had not yet been received. The requested budget transfer excludes the costs associated with the National Learning Offer which had been bid for separately as part of the 'consequential' funding from HM Treasury to help meet unexpected Covid 19 costs.

8.2. In looking ahead, budgetary challenges would continue, especially as things return to normal with the Agency again incurring full costs. It would therefore be important not to simply return to old ways of working but to identify new, different ways of working in order to meet ongoing demands.

9. Audit and Risk Committee Update

9.1. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) updated members on discussions at the last ARC meeting. Particular points of note included the comprehensive self-evaluation of emerging risks associated with Covid; the agency's improved Freedom of Information performance; and the recent Internal Audit report on HR which while positive, raised some concerns around the efficiency of the SG's HR shared service.

9.2. Members welcomed the update.

10. Items for noting

10.1. The annual procurement report was tabled for information.

11. Any other business

11.1 There was a discussion about the COVID 19 vaccination programme and it was confirmed that the current UK policy was to continue to prioritise based on age and health conditions.

Date of next meeting of the Advisory Board:

The next session of the Advisory Board would be a strategic session on 20 January 2021.

Name Roz McCracken
Date 19/12/2020