



August 2023 Quarterly SMT Minutes

MEETING: Tuesday 1st August 2023, via teams

In Attendance:

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

Kathryn Connor – Corporate Services and Procurement Manager - KC

Agenda Item	Minutes	Action Required/ By Whom
1.	<p>Apologies and Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>No Apologies</p> <p>MK invited those present to register any actual or perceived conflicts of interest relevant to the agenda. No conflicts were noted.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>Minutes from 8th June 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p>	
3.	<p>Outstanding Actions</p> <p><i>NIPSO Code of Conduct</i> – SM suggested that the code of conduct should be included in the Staff Handbook and not be printed separately. Staff Handbook to be added to the business plan and AR to work with YK. SS to remove this from Outstanding Actions</p> <p><i>WorkPro Working Group</i> – has been established</p> <p><i>Phishing Emails</i> – has been completed</p> <p><i>Website</i> – Launch aim for September</p> <p><i>Hybrid Working</i> – MK to sign off and send out to staff. Implementation on the 4th September. MK to send out an all-staff email.</p> <p><i>Streaming Adjudications</i> – MK to consider</p>	
3	<p>Finance Update</p>	

	<p>KC joined the meeting to discuss budgetary issues.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding a number of possible budget scenarios.</p> <p>KC advised on expenditure on upcoming recruitment plans.</p>	
4	<p>Workpro Update</p> <p>Paper taken as read.</p> <p>KC highlighted a number of reports which had priority.</p> <p><i>Workpro Working Group</i> – 1st meeting has taken place. KC was asked to Chair the group going forward and provide a monthly report to SMT.</p> <p>KC left the meeting.</p>	<p>KC – Provide monthly reports to SMT</p>
5	<p>Service Standards</p> <p>CN gave an update on the issues being faced following the review of the service standards process.</p>	<p>CN – investigate the possibility of CE getting access to Workpro</p> <p>CN to review internal processes and definition of roles</p>
6	<p>Business/Operational Plan</p> <p>The plan has been updated and completed to send to ARC.</p> <p>MK said she thought it would be useful to rotate SMT to members to attend the ARC meetings – this was agreed – SSt to be invited to the next meeting.</p>	
7	<p>NIPSO Risk Register</p> <p>The cover page of the risk register has been updated and finalised and is ready to be sent to ARC.</p> <p>SM requested SMT to update the risks in their areas.</p>	
8	<p>Corporate Policy Database</p> <p>SMT discussed a number of policies which were up for review and which may need to be amended or incorporated into other policies.</p>	
9	<p>Quarterly Sickness Absence Report</p> <p>1.62% absence rate Q1</p>	

10	Quarterly Audit Recommendations Update Taken as read	
11	MAL and LGES Update CN provided updates on workloads, trends, and team KPIs.	CN and SST - Long term recruitment for IOs
10	Complaints Standards Update The report was taken as read. A new NIPSO Service Standard Complaints learning folder has been developed. This is to act as a record log and quick reference to the learning identified, the action required and the action taken.	
11	Corporate Services Update The report was taken as read.	
12	Communications Update AR gave an update on the new website and recent media monitoring.	SS to arrange a meeting for LGES.
13	Own Initiative and Improvement, Engagement, and Impact Report <i>Tree Protection Orders</i> – The draft overview report has been completed. <u>Improvement, Engagement and Impact Update</u> After the positive experience of the student on placement from Ulster University, JH suggested developing a policy around hosting student placements. <i>Equality Monitoring</i> – The response rate remains encouraging at 98 (32%) <i>Complainant Feedback</i> – Complaints whose cases closed in April and May have been sent a survey and 13 replies received to date. The IEI team continue to work closely with investigation teams to review and refine the process going forward.	AR and JH to discuss the launch
14	AOB No further business	
15	DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday 14 th September at 10 am, Progressive House	