



**Senior Management Team Meeting**  
**Minutes of meeting held on 27 February 2023**  
 09:30-12:00, Microsoft Teams

**Attendees:**

Nicola Vallance-Ross (NVR)	Head of Corporate Services – Chair
Ezmie McCutcheon (EMc)	Head of Communications
Nick Hobbs (NH)	Head of Advice and Investigations
Gina Wilson (GW)	Head of Strategy
Judith Chisholm (JC)	Executive Assistant - Minutes

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and apologies</b>	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Review of Previous Minutes and Actions</b>	
	<p>The minutes of the Senior Management Team meeting held on 25 January 2023 were approved.</p> <p>Actions carried forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NVR to update Risk Register for SMT to add internal and emerging risks. In separate tab.</li> <li>- NVR speak to Executive Assistant re: where saved Young Advisors Group (YAG) contact details in Participation. Recirculate file location to SMT.</li> </ul>	NVR
<b>3.</b>	<b>Finance</b>	



We are sourcing training for procurement, but the options so far are expensive. Considering three options – basic for all, semi-advanced, advanced for procurement champions. In terms of timescales looking at May / June.

HR – policies review and streamlining is ongoing. Delay to this is that no changes can be made that affect employment terms and conditions without consultation and we cannot deviate from SPCB policies unless there is full consultation with all staff. We have not had any HR policies documented in the past, only the previous employee handbook which makes this work more complex. Contracts of employment need to change to reflect bereavement leave and shared parental leave. Working with consultants to ensure our contracts are up to date.

### **Strategy**

The conference originally planned for 16 March has been moved to 15 March due to planned strike action. Strikes are now also on 15 March but we are going ahead on that date with a scaled down plan for the event. Staff are in place to support it. SMT had budgeted for £10k but the event will not be on that scale.

Supporting our Young Advisors as part of the Commissioner recruitment process is a substantial piece of work. This has grown in terms of our input. It will involve 6 of our Young Advisors and 3 senior staff. There is a residential element to the project. This has a knock-on impact to other pieces of work requiring updates to a number of our policies.

Planning is underway for the next stage of UN engagement for the State Review in May. Plan is to take a couple of our Young Advisors to Geneva for them to report back to Scotland to help children and young people understand the role of the UN Committee. This is an exciting project.

Incorporation of the UNCRC requires ongoing work from the Office.

### **Communications**

Very pleased and positive news that a member of staff has returned on reduced hours. They will concentrate on preparing the annual report. We have a freelance copywriter starting one day a week. Their role will primarily be to package up work, interview people and write it up, for example, our energy work and the right to connection. They will also be meeting with the Commissioner to do a legacy piece. Additional 8 hours a week resource which

is necessary to help with communications capacity to support the Office's work.

Early years book is moving forward. Commissioner has provided feedback and we are speaking to designers to incorporate our comments. We will then test the book with the age group. It was noted that the budget for next year will need to consider cost of dissemination of the book. This is not yet part of budget.

Communications are planning and supporting our Young Advisors that will be travelling to Geneva to report on the UN Committee.

Digital Media Officer continues to work on our website improvement process and has developed an animation for the strategic litigation toolkit. This has been a worthwhile process as lots of learning that could be used for future animations.

Communications are also involved in preparing the Rule 9 Covid Inquiry response.

#### **Advice and Investigations**

The Rule 9 and Rule 8 Covid Inquiry responses are taking up a substantial amount of time and resources. We have obtained an extension for our Rule 9 response to 17 March 2023. The Commissioner, Head of Communications and the Head of Advice and Investigations have discussed key messages. We have had a productive conversation with the Scottish Covid Inquiry team who are accommodating on how we structure our response.

The mental health investigation should be concluded before the end of the current Commissioner's mandate. There has been a great session with our Young Advisors on the recommendations from the investigation. Lots of learning on how to involve our Young Advisors meaningfully. We are now starting to confirm our timescales for launch and arranging a meeting with senior officials or the Minister for Children and Young People in relation to presenting our recommendations to the Scottish Government and COSLA.

We have written to the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service Working Group in relation to its review process for applying for warrants and a rights based approach to the level of scrutiny. We are meeting with them to discuss.

We are due an update from the Children's Commissioner's for England's Office regarding the Home Office's proposals to remedy situation in areas of England where unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are kept in hotels without

	support or supervision and are at a high risk of abuse or trafficking. We are discussing the position with Social Work Scotland.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Participation</b>	
	Covered by updates at agenda item 5.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Building Management</b>	
	<p><b>Commissioner's Office Upgrade</b></p> <p>The Head of Corporate Services has ordered the furniture for the upgrade to the Commissioner's Office. We also have option to add on a media area at a later date.</p> <p>ACTION: NVR link with Digital Media Officer in May with a view to considering adding media area.</p>	NVR
<b>8.</b>	<b>Policies for approval</b>	
	<p><b><u>IT Acceptable Usage:</u></b></p> <p>SMT reviewed the policy and approved it subject to amendments to clarify circumstances in which it is permissible to use business email for personal use, that business emails should only be accessed via a work device and that if you do use for personal circumstances the Office has no responsibility for the information.</p> <p>SMT noted that the scope of the policy does not extend to our Young Advisors who have been provided with an Office device for their role. Agreed to develop an appendix to the policy with short guidance for a Young Advisor on acceptable use of that device.</p> <p><b><u>IT Disposal of Assets:</u></b></p> <p>Dunedin to provide narrative for disposal of physical and software assets to be included in the policy. This policy will also need to be read with incident</p>	

	<p>reporting policy for data protection as some cross over. SMT approved subject to approval of Dunedin narrative.</p> <p>ACTION: NVR to share narrative from Dunedin with SMT for approval once received.</p>	<b>NVR</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Annual Planner</b>	
	<p>SMT reviewed the draft annual planner. The purpose of the annual planner is to map out events and activities where the dates do not change in the year. Aim is to have it as an annex to the Delivery Plan. The annual planner includes mandatory training.</p> <p>SMT to add all mandatory reporting dates, for example, equalities outcomes reporting. SMT aim to have a session to go through the planner and consider what else should be reflected in it. The annual planner could also be developed by adding a timetable to deliver for each event or activity and the staffing required to support that.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Summary of Actions:</b>	
	<p>Actions carried forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NVR to update Risk Register for SMT to add internal and emerging risks. In separate tab.</li> <li>- NVR speak to AW re: where saved YAG contact details in Participation. Recirculate to SMT.</li> </ul> <p>Actions from meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GW to circulate wording for Young Advisors involvement of recruitment of Commissioner to SMT for approval.</li> <li>- NVR link with Digital Media Officer in May with a view to considering adding media area to the Commissioner's Office.</li> <li>- NVR to share narrative from Dunedin re: disposal of assets with SMT for approval once received.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NVR</b></p> <p><b>NVR</b></p> <p><b>GW</b></p> <p><b>NVR</b></p> <p><b>NVR</b></p>