



Governance Meeting
Minutes of meeting held on
19th May 2022

10:00 – 12:00
via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Bruce Adamson (BA)	The Commissioner
Nicola Vallance-Ross (NVR)	Head of Corporate Services
Ezmie McCutcheon (EMc)	Head of Communications
Nick Hobbs (NH)	Head of Advice & Investigations
Gina Wilson (GW)	Head of Strategy

Apologies:

Judith Chisholm (JC)	Executive Assistant
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Chair:	Bruce Adamson (BA)
Minutes:	Nicola Harris (NHa)

	Details	Action By
	Start: 10:00	BA
1.	Welcome and apologies	
1.1	Meeting started, welcome and apologies.	BA
1.2	Declaration of Interests None to declare.	
1.3	Minutes & actions from previous meeting. Previous meeting held on 27 th January – none to bring forward. Action point for Executive Coaching was approved for SMT.	
2.	Commissioner Update	
	<p>Commissioner reflected that Office has been busy since return of festive period in January.</p> <p>Office has been engaging in more participation work, positive discussions around the impact in which the roadshow is having. Acknowledged that visits so far have created more opportunities to connect with more organisations/ key partners with extra meetings in additional to activities which had been planned, providing extra benefits to the trips. Overall felt that there is a lot of good practice with the participation work being carried out and Roadshow has been fruitful.</p> <p>Roadshow focus is starting to wind down and office will begin focusing on general participation, engagements and projects moving forward. NVR would like to evaluate and capture our evaluation and impact of work in the Roadshow.</p> <p>18th Birthday celebration – very successful overall. Helped for reengagement for civil society partners, use this work to continue these partnerships.</p> <p>Incorporation Bill - we are concerned that progress is not being made and we are continuing to see a delay from the Scottish Government. Expecting a statement of commitment next week but this impacts at a strategic level, as incorporation is one of our strategic priorities.</p> <p>Looking forward; Poverty will continue to be a key focus for our work. BA reaffirmed our commitment on poverty and provided general overview on the</p>	

growing concern around the significant increase for cost of living and other pressures. Poverty was one of our strategic priorities pre Covid, the impact of Covid made this worse and the situation over the last few months has made it significantly worse. Children's rights must be focused on within this context.

Covid seems to be moving into the next phase but is still with us. Work to do around the impact Covid has had on children and young people, acknowledged some of the good work around legislation and impact assessments but we will now start to move our focus back to other key priorities.

Climate Justice continues to be a key priority which we are working on, along with our European partners. There will be pressure points coming up at the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) and European Network of Young Advisors (ENYA) spring meetings.

More broadly at European level, Ukraine has been a significant focus. We have been spending a lot of time both domestically and internationally, focusing on the impact of children and young people in Europe and Scotland since the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. This will continue to be a focus through ENOC and domestically in Scotland when numbers begin to increase for those seeking refuge.

Next month or so is particularly busy. Expecting significant, reactive policy work before Parliament recess and will spend summer months focusing on Strategic priorities along with the transition for new Commissioner.

BINOCC, ENYA and UK Commissioner Update – Commissioners will be meeting in Edinburgh on the 14th June, this will be the first in person meeting since before Covid. During this time we have had a new English Commissioner and Welsh Commissioner. ENOCC Conference & General meeting scheduled for September and ENYA taking place in June.

BA met with new Welsh Commissioner, the office is supporting her very well and currently undergoing exploratory phase whilst they decide the direction of the office. The new English Commissioner has taken a change in direction and approach from the previous Commissioner, there is work to be done at the BINOCC meeting and bilateral level around this how relationship will work. the English Commissioner is intending to have a closer relationship with Government,

	<p>and much of this work is structured around taking commissions from Government and seeking to effect change by working behind the scenes with Government. This is a different approach to BINOCC where work includes the public liability of the UK Government, partially around issues including Social Security, the Human Rights Act, Immigration and Nationality, Cross Border Issues, the remit of the English Commissioner the function in relation to reserved issues and accepted issues in the case of Northern Ireland. There is significant strategic work which we need to do to how best understand the approaches that we will be taking in ensuring that the MOU we have at UK Commissioner level & BINOCC level is fit for purpose given the different approach taken by the English Commissioner.</p>	
2.	Senior Management Team Update	
	<p><u>Communications</u></p> <p>EMc provided update, acknowledged the amount of work around the 18th Birthday celebrations and positive reflections about involving children and young people into various aspects of this, including the Podcast, Sistema, Scouts and general running of the event with our YAG.</p> <p>Recruitment – vacancy since last September but new Digital Media Officer has now joined. Reflected on skills and impact this is having on the team.</p> <p>End of work with Scouts –Right’s badge has now been launched and there is work around this and we will meet with Scouts to support Scout leaders to run this resource.</p> <p>Media – Particularly there has been a lot of work around the ‘Mother & Baby unit’ work with production of report and communications and media attention this has received.</p> <p><u>Advise & Investigations:</u></p> <p>NH reflected on relaxation of covid restrictions and reinforced work in the Parliament and being able to connect with colleagues. Spoke highly of the 18th birthday celebrations, Parliamentary evidence sessions and the Mother & Baby Unit report and follow up impacts of this.</p> <p>Moving on, Cross Borders work is still ongoing, grateful to support from office colleagues who were able to support work for this.</p> <p>Mental Health Investigation has been held up a little bit by the Scottish</p>	

	<p>Government, but we have a meeting planned with the Researchers, Young Scot and our YAG to ensure that all work around this is streamlined.</p> <p><u>Corporate Services:</u> NVR gave overview of procurement and recruitment. We have been busy with annual accounts, payroll, and recruitment. The team have enjoyed being involved in more participation projects and able to learn more skills which impacts on the work on the office. We have had a big period of change but feel involved and have greater understanding of wider work of the office. Planning for induction of new Commissioner will be a big piece of work in the coming months.</p> <p><u>Strategy:</u> GW advised that BA covered a lot of Strategy's work but overall was feeling that there is a positive impact around participation. There is a vacancy for a Policy officer and recruitment is underway to fill this. We are working very reactively at the moment. There is a lot of time being spent working on the relationships between the UK Commissioner's offices. Significant work being created due to UK legislation and our involvement with the UK Commissioners.</p>	
3.	Governance	
3.1	<p><u>Information Governance</u> Robin Davidson – Head of Information Governance and Data Protection Officer with the Scottish Parliament joined the meeting.</p> <p>Appointed the post following the retirement of Claire Turnbull in October 2021. Provided general update of projects and enjoyment of working in this position. Invited us to discuss any processing and data impacts at any time, door is open to hold these discussions and seek support where it is needed.</p> <p>Robin provided overview of Cyber security and IT protection. Reflected on increased publicity of cyber-attacks. Cyber security training and GDPR training is available on the NCSC (National Cyber Security) website and steps to do to resolve breaches.</p> <p>Working with NVR currently on MoU will include quarterly reviews and by-monthly meetings for data protection updates with organisations who are supported in a shared service.</p> <p>Discussions around Data Impacts on the rights of C&YP.</p>	

3.2	<p><u>Covid update</u> NVR shared key areas of consideration for in hybrid working. Wider complications about recovery for staff with long covid or other health issues due to NHS stresses/ delays. We are on track with Covid recovery, but we need to consult with union for any decisions – further discussions to be had at next SMT meeting.</p>	
3.3	<p><u>Review Annual Planner and progress of delivery of workplans</u> General discussion that we need to be able to make it more visible and accessible to staff across organisation. Reflections on how to make it more functional, would prefer this to be a ‘Governance Planner’. Agreement to change Annual Planner and split over two tools. Additional meeting to be scheduled to plan their function. Work on these should be carried out during the summer months during Parliamentary recess, running time of Sept – Aug with 2 year plan.</p>	
4.	Monitoring	
4.1	<p><u>Finance:</u> NVR gave update on spending and budget allocation. Would like to focus on in depth budget lines for financial reporting. End of last year we had spent £1.23m, our budget was 1.37m – our underspend consists of staff costs, running costs due to covid working.</p>	
4.2	<p><u>Annual report & accounts</u> NVR and Finance Officer are in discussions with auditors already and will soon be starting to progress on these. EMc is pulling together files for the annual report and work is currently ongoing</p>	
4.3	<p><u>Risk register</u> This is to be pulled forward to next Governance meeting as no changes have been made.</p>	
4.4	<p><u>Recruitment:</u> Across the board, market is challenging, and we are not receiving level of interest which we normally would expect. We are taking advise from recruitment expertise to ensure that we are following best practice but we are confident this is a reflection of the market rather than us needing to change our strategy on recruitment.</p>	

5.	Children & Young People's Participation	
5.1	<p><u>Young Advisers Groups</u> All work continuing as planned.</p>	
5.2	<p><u>Roadshow</u> Kevin Browne-MacLeod – Participation Officer joined to give Roadshow update. Reflected leadership around this project alongside the impacts Covid has had with our interactions and participation with children and young people, impacting on how we can have children and young people inform our work.</p> <p>Gave run through our visits during the roadshow, focusing on the positive work which has come out of this work including and reports, development opportunities and links around decision making and activity recording. Collaboration has been key to this work and there are now stronger links with policy and work of other organisations.</p> <p>Next steps – Use learning from the roadshow activity to develop transition to a sustainable long-term national participation and engagement program/ toolkit and UNCRC reporting.</p> <p>SMT gave feedback on reporting template and how this can feed into the website as well as the events/ visits and engagements with C&YP. Acknowledgement of wider impact across the whole organisation, as well as BINOCC & ENOC level.</p> <p>Consensus that there is more work to be done on Roadshow has been successful, we need to continue to develop this good practice as it turns into a general participation programme and reporting to the wider public, this work is still in development.</p>	
6.	Continued professional development & training	
6.1	<p><u>SMT executive coaching</u> In hand, has started is payment by result.</p>	
6.2	<p><u>Contribution management</u> SMT will have all of these tied up by the end of summer, currently management</p>	

6.3	<p>are behind on these, but have been meeting with teams & objectives are being set.</p> <p><u>Mandatory all staff training – Progress & update mapping</u> SMT have discussed training, additions from conversations with DPO – document to be created and carried over to next Governance meeting.</p>	
7.	Reflections and end of meeting	
	<p>Reflections of meeting Feedback that meeting over ran but was good to have external guests visit.</p> <p>Meeting end: 12:30</p>	
8.	Actions:	
	<p>NVR to circulate MoU (Data Protection) with SMT.</p> <p>‘Governance Planner’ meeting to be scheduled.</p> <p>‘Operational planner’ to be designed to support with delivery plan at SMT meeting.</p> <p>SMT to meet with staff to discuss work planning & projects.</p> <p>Further covid recovery discussions for SMT.</p>	