



NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE TRUST

Minutes of a meeting of the board of directors held at the Pembroke Building, Kensington Village,
London at 4:00 pm on Wednesday 11 December 2019

Present:	Brett Wigdortz (Chairman)	Michael Lynas (CEO)
	Paul Cleal	Dame Julia Cleverdon
	Dame Sally Coates	John Maltby*
	Ian Livingstone	Lord Iain McNicol
	Tristram Mayhew	Ashley Summerfield
	Ndidi Okezie	
	Sarah Knight (Secretary)	Jermain Jackman (Youth representative)
	Michael Devlin (Secretary maternity cover)	
Apologies:	Flick Drummond (who has ceased to participate in the Board and management of NCS Trust following a decision being made about her tenure following her successful candidacy as MP for Meon Valley constituency)	
In attendance		
<i>NCS Trust</i>	Miriam Jordan Keane (items 2 & 3)	Alan Bowers (items 2 & 3)
	John Enstone (items 2 & 3)	
	Simon Sharkey Woods (item 3 & 4)	Amanda Best** (item 3)
	Naim Moukarzel (item 3)	Jen Woodrow (item 3)
<i>Young people</i>	Alexander Shirreff (item 3)	Joe Rattray (item 3)
	Zoë Paulet (item 3)	Amy Cundill (item 3)

*by teleconference

**deputising for John Kerlake

1. Welcome and declarations of conflicts of interest

- 1.1 Mr Wigdortz welcomed the board members to the meeting. Mr Devlin was introduced as the proposed interim company secretarial cover for Ms Knight while she was on maternity leave.
- 1.2 Ms Okezie declared a conflict of interest as CEO of UK Youth; some UK Youth consortia members were 2020 delivery partners and UK Youth was a member of the Additional Capacity Framework. The board were comfortable with this on the proviso that Ms Okezie recused herself from any conversations related to UK Youth.



- 1.3 It was noted that DCMS should be made aware that the board understood the conflict of interest, and the rationale for the decision and mechanisms for avoiding impropriety should be communicated to DCMS in detail.
- 1.4 It was noted that this decision should also be socialised internally.
- 1.5 It was emphasised that it was imperative that NCS Trust should have youth sector representation on its board in order to encourage collaboration with the sector and share best practice, and therefore Ms Okezie's new role meant her presence on the board was even more important.
- 1.6 It was also noted that Flick Drummond was stepping down from the board temporarily during her election campaign; the question of whether she would need to step down permanently if elected was with DCMS for consideration. It was highlighted that her current T&Cs (together with those of the rest of the board), required her to do so; however this did not reflect central Cabinet Office guidance as set out in the *Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies*

Action: make internal colleagues aware of decision about Ms Okezie's conflict of interest

Action: make DCMS aware of the rationale for the board's conflict of interest decision and mechanisms for avoiding impropriety

2. Management Reporting

- 2.2 Management Report: It was noted that 2019 participation had been disappointing, and the first year that a decline had been observed. It was noted that the cause of the decline had been mainly driven by The Challenge's under-delivery this year. Autumn had also been affected by The Challenge situation, with The Challenge places having been decommissioned in light of the ongoing legal and contractual issues. A mixed performance had been observed in the rest of the network, with SW2 seeing an increase in year-on-year participation, but overall, the rest of network seeing a flat or slight decrease in participation.
- 2.3 This had been to some extent expected due to TUPE and other issues associated with the recommissioning programme. It was noted that the NPS scores had increased year on year, however the SW2 region had declined on NPS. It was believed that the cause of this was that the mix of the providers had changed, with more multi-regional providers delivering which may have resulted in less committed focus in the SW2 region.
- 2.4 Ms Jordan Keane noted that NPS scores were lower for young people than they were for parents, and implied that the figures were not reflective of the true situation due to regional variation. It was requested that a breakdown should be sent. It was also suggested that there should be separate parent and young people scores.

Action: Mr Lynas to send round a breakdown of NPS scores agreed with the Impact and Safeguarding Committee

- 2.5 It was noted that the Impact and Safeguarding committee were comfortable with the incident reporting that had been received.
- 2.6 It was stated that the social mix figures were encouraging, but the inter-team and regional mixing had areas for development, which was substantiated by the YP present at the meeting. It was suggested that failure to attract wealthier young people also caused issues with social mix and this should be explicitly captured in the KPI metrics. It would be important in future to monitor more privileged demographics in the statistics. Mr Cleal asked whether there was data of the social mix of the people working on the programme, as it was important that this group was reflective of the population as well.

Action: to include statistics from wealthier social demographics in KPI information
Action: to circulate information about the social demographics of the workforce

- 2.7 It was noted that the marketing rebrand had been successful, and that 67.5% of sign ups had come directly through the media.
- 2.8 Dame Julia Cleverdon noted that the work that had been done to encourage young people to take part in climate strikes responsibly had been well received, and that NCS had been mentioned in one of six key benchmarks around practical action and service to others, and this would be reflected in Ofsted reviews. It would be important for the NCS' social action agenda to be complementary to the character education agenda to ensure it was fully aligned with DfE priorities.
- 2.9 It was queried whether there was an accreditation or kitemark for NCS that could carry weight in industry. It was noted that the Trust was working with organisations to generate accreditations in citizenship which would be recognisable to future employers. It was agreed that this would be a critical part in adding value for young people, especially if UCAS points could be included. Ms Cleverdon noted that it may be helpful to look at the work #iwill had done in this area.
Action: Impact and Safeguarding committee to review the accreditation question, including options around UCAS points
- 2.11 Management Accounts: the management accounts were raised for noting, and it was remarked that the Trust was behind budget in a number of areas. A high level explanation was provided by Mr Bowers including that lower than expected participation and headcount were behind expectation. It was agreed that further explanation would be provided in writing due to lack of time.
Action: to update Ms Okezie on her points on the Mgt Accounts by correspondence.
- 2.12 The Challenge: an update on the most recent situation with The Challenge was provided, including on engagement with the administrator, unpaid providers and DCMS. There was a discussion about The Challenge's administration and claims of non payment from NCS. It was noted that The Challenge had refused mediation or to provide financial information in support of their claims. The Trust had attempted to provide working capital loans to smaller organisations at risk of going bankrupt as a result of non-payment, having been approved by the relevant board committee; however this had not been accepted by Treasury. It was noted that while demonstrably owed funds to The Challenge had been paid as far as the Trust was concerned, this message had not been well communicated to the wider sector and network and not enough was being done to address this issue.
Action: to circulate a further Ministerial letter seeking approval to support organisations at risk of administration by short-term loans
Action: to gather the network together for a face to face meeting with sector partners, sending communication as soon as possible
3. **2020 consolidated planning,**
- 3.1 Four members of the National Youth Board (Amy, Joe, Alex and Zoe) were introduced. SLT members were also welcomed.
- 3.2 Plan on a page: it was noted that the organisational plan on a page had been agreed by the SLT, which was aligned to the long term objectives set by the board at the June meeting. It was noted that this had been well received by Trust staff as a way of focusing and prioritising their time over the year.
- 3.3 2020 delivery Ms Best gave a short overview of 2020 delivery preparations, noting that the programme had not mobilised as quickly as planned in September, partly due to TUPE issues delaying timelines slightly. In particular, due to ongoing issues with The Challenge, further staff had later come into scope for TUPE. It was noted that the commissioning managers had been supporting the regions while TUPE issues continued. In addition, some indirect regions were awarded late due to The Challenge not signing



the 2020 contracts. The vast majority of staff were now in place and planning would progress at full speed.

- 3.4 Ms Woodrow presented a short case study of London, showing the diverse range of providers in the capital, which was a positive development but also presented a logistical challenge. It was noted that 50% of roles (8) were vacant in London, which could not be filled until the TUPE process had concluded.

Action: to confirm how many of The Challenge staff had been TUPE'd into the network in total

- 3.5 The board queried the biggest benefits and risks of 'going direct'. It was responded that working directly with the supply chain to understand what was on the ground was invaluable. For example, through centralising accommodation, it was possible to liaise directly with venues and resolve issues which couldn't have previously been resolved. Contrastingly, the biggest risk was cited as the "unknown", as some of the new network partners were less experienced with NCS delivery, and it was important not to be complacent in the implementation phase. However mitigations were in place (i.e. many existing network staff were retained to deliver the new model).

- 3.6 The cultural impact of bringing three regions in-house, and whether any issues had been experienced as a result, was queried. It was noted that the new operating model had generated a great deal of positive energy. It was particularly noted that the London TUPE situation had had the effect of bringing providers together and empowering them to drive NCS forward in London.

- 3.7 The implications of delays on mobilisation on recruitment was queried, with London in particular seeming to be a significant setback. It was noted that mitigations had been put in place, with a third of school events now scheduled, and staff now in place in London.

- 3.8 It was also noted that divisional directors around the country were in place and this would ensure that there was not disproportionate focus on London compared to other regions.

Action: divisional directors to attend regional youth board meetings

- 3.9 It was questioned whether the graduate community were being appropriately utilised as part of the 'catch up' effort; it was responded that this was to some extent an 'untapped' area, with provisions in the contract in place for graduate champions which should be leveraged.

- 3.10 It was asked whether there was any tracking of graduates from schools, so these graduates could be empowered to pitch the programme.

Action: to explore the possibility of getting graduates into schools to support the 'catch up' effort'

Action: to explore tracking of graduates by schools to make better use of direct NCS peers in NCS presentations

- 3.11 KPIs It was noted that 93,000 - 95,000 had been proposed as the 2020 annual participation target to reflect a planned decline of the autumn programme and modest growth of the summer programme. The executive team were aligned that the numbers were realistic.

- 3.12 The Board queried targets being set conservatively given we wouldn't experience a repeat of the waiting list situation from The Challenge, direct regions had been seeing strong performance, and the new brand was now in place. Mr Cleal also noted that the recommissioning Full Business Case had cited a higher range.

- 3.14 It was responded that there were contractual levers to exceed these targets and the network was being set up to deliver higher than this, however protecting public funds and minimising unfilled places was a priority. It was added that The Challenge's departure had already caused delays in 2020 preparations, and also resulted in the loss



of long-term relationships The Challenge had built over many years. It was also highlighted that the FBC provided an envelope (mid, high and low case), rather than a target. Targets were instead set through an annual process.

- 3.16 It was questioned, on the contrary, why it was predicted that performance would improve year on year, and improvements to brand marketing and the new payment mechanism which put sharper financial incentives in place, were cited as key reasons.
- 3.18 Further discussion took place on the benefits and drawbacks of the proposed participation target. On balance, it was decided by the board that the target should be 90,000 - 95,000 rather than 93,000 - 95,000.
- 3.20 It was commented by the young people present that quality is more important than quantity.
- 3.21 On NPS, it was noted that this had been discussed at the Impact and Safeguarding Committee. Ms Okezie reminded the board the NPS started at -100 going through to +100, thus the NPS scores were world class; however the regional variation was key to be aware of, and the Impact and Safeguarding Committee would be scrutinising these numbers by region. The proposed NPS scores were agreed, together with the other KPIs.
- 3.22 Mr Summerfield and Mr Cleal noted that he wanted to have it on the record that he was concerned about the ability to achieve 90,000 and was putting his trust in the executive team to reach this target.
- 3.23 How NCS was tracking volunteering hours to reflect impact, was separately questioned.
Action: to revert to Julia on tracking volunteering hours
Action: for future board meetings, KPIs should be presented as a standing agenda item.

4. Information services update and plans for 2020

- 4.1 The board thanked the work that had been done by Mr Sharkey Woods to achieve impact in the IS space. Mr Sharkey Woods presented the IS update and invited questions. The board was shown the partner portal and the extranet (which included options for sharing best practice), as well as the new Einstein Analytics dashboard which provided data in real time. It was noted that the system was a huge improvement on what had been in place previously, and was only possible due to the Trust adopting a single system.
- 4.2 It was asked whether there was an equivalent portal for NCS graduates, and it responded that this would be rebuilt together with the marketing team.
Action: to provide the board with an update on the options for a better graduate portal that provides access to a range of resources (ie can they have a graduate equivalent of partner portal / extranet?)

5. Governance

- 5.1 Minutes from board meetings on 28th January, 11th September, 10th October and 29th November 2019 were approved.
- 5.2 The Company Secretary and Company Secretary maternity cover were approved.
- 5.3 The action log from 11th September was reviewed and all actions were completed.
- 5.4 The committee of the board was thanked for their time. It was noted that additional members who would like to join either the recommissioning or ARC committees should get in touch.

It was noted that Ms Okezie was stepping away from the I&S committee, Ms Coates was joining the I&S Committee, and Ms Coates was leaving the ARC committee. A new member of the Audit and Risk Committee was sought.



Action: to follow up with board on ARC committee membership
Action: to circulate the Annual Report to the board

6. Private session

- 6.1 A private session for the non executives took place to discuss the CEO recruitment process progress.

The meeting closed at 9:30 pm.

These minutes were approved as a correct and complete record of the proceedings by the board at its meeting on 23 January 2020 and signed by the chairman as authentication.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Smith', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Chairman

NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE TRUST

Board meeting 11 September 2019 - Action schedule

MIn	Action	By whom?	Update due when?
1.2	Action: make internal colleagues aware of decision about Ms Okezie's conflict of interest	Alan Bowers	January 23rd board meeting
1.3	Action: make DCMS aware of the rationale for the board's conflict of interest decision and mechanisms for avoiding impropriety	Sarah Knight	January 23rd board meeting
2.4	Action: Mr Lynas to sent round a breakdown of NPS scores agreed with the Impact and Safeguarding Committee	Michael Lynas	January 23rd board meeting
2.6	Action: to include statistics from wealthier social demographics in KPI information	Michael Lynas	January 23rd board meeting
2.6	Action: to circulate information about the social demographics of the workforce if possible	Amanda Best	January 23rd board meeting
2.10	Action: Impact and Safeguarding committee to review the accreditation question, including options around UCAS points	Naim Moukarzel	Ask Naim to advise
2.11	Action: to update Ms Okezie on her points on the Mgt Accounts by correspondence.	Alan Bowers	January 23rd board meeting
2.12	Action: to circulate a further Ministerial letter seeking approval to support organisations at risk of administration by short-term loans	Miriam Jordan Keane	January 23rd board meeting
2.12	Action: to gather network together for a face to face meeting with sector partners, sending communication as soon as possible	Miriam Jordan Keane	January 23rd board meeting
3.4	Action: to confirm how many of The Challenge staff had been TUPE'd into the network in total	Amanda Best	January 23rd board meeting
3.8	Action: divisional directors to attend regional youth board meetings	Amanda Best	January 23rd board meeting
3.11	Action: to explore the possibility of getting graduates into schools to support the 'catch up' effort'	Amanda Best / Naim Moukarzel	January 23rd board meeting
3.11	Action: to explore tracking of graduates by schools to make better use of direct NCS peers in NCS presentations	Amanda Best / Naim Moukarzel	January 23rd board meeting
3.23	Action: to revert to Julia on how we track volunteering hours	Naim Moukarzel	January 23rd board meeting



3.23	Action: for future board meetings, KPIs should be presented	Michael Lynas	January 23rd board meeting
4.2	Action: to provide the board with an update on the options for a better graduate portal that provides access to a range of resources (ie can they have a graduate equivalent of partner portal / extranet?)	Simon Woods / Naim Moukarzel / Miriam Jordan Keane	January 23rd board meeting
5.4	Action: to follow up with board on ARC committee membership	Sarah Knight	January 23rd board meeting
5.4	Action: to circulate the Annual Report to the board	Alan Bowers	January 23rd board meeting