

NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE TRUST

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of directors held at Room 3A, 3rd Floor, 22 Long Acre London, WC2E 9LY at 3:00pm on Thursday 2nd December 2021

Present	Brett Wigdortz (Chair)	Mark Gifford (CEO)
	Ahmed Ibrahim (Youth rep.)	Jacque Nnochiri
	Hannah McLellan (Youth rep.)	Deborah Tavana
	Paul Cleal	John Maltby
	Lord Iain McNicol	Nick Hurd*
	Ndidi Okezie*	Ashley Summerfield
	Ian Livingstone	Tristram Mayhew
In attendance	Louka Travlos (Secretary)	Naim Moukarzel (Item 6)
	Hannah Stoddart (Item 6)	Michael Devlin
	Simon Sharkey Woods (Item 6)*	

Apologies: Laura Jackson *by teleconference

1 Welcome and declarations of conflicts of interest

- 1.1 Mr Wigdortz welcomed the Board to the meeting. There were no conflicts of interest declared. Mr Wigdortz gave an update on the current situation regarding **board membership appointments and renewals**:
- 1.2 Mr Wigdortz outlined the current Board membership situation:
- A request to renew 5 members of the board by the end of November 2021 remained outstanding
 - The appointment to the 2 board vacancies by December 2021 also remained outstanding
 - Both processes have been delayed and the Trust are awaiting advice from the Government on when the renewals and appointments can be finalised.
- 1.3 The Board discussed how to proceed in light of the above:
- Prior to the meeting, the Trust obtained legal advice supporting a position that it could compliantly proceed with the meeting as planned.
 - The Trust had sought DCMS' approval of the Trust's legal view on this matter before the meeting (*DCMS approval was not received until after the meeting*).
 - In absence of express DCMS confirmation of the legal advice prior to the meeting, the board decided to proceed with the meeting on an "advisory" basis (so that no resolutions which would bind the Trust could be passed).
- 1.4 **Decision:** to consider the meeting advisory only, and to amend the agenda accordingly to skip agenda items for the management report, finance update and governance items.
- 1.5 **ACTION:** Secretary to write to board members following the meeting, once DCMS confirmation of legal advice obtained, outlining meeting resolutions and required approvals. Eligible board members to respond in writing in order to indicate approval.

2 Management report & Finance Update

2.1 Items were not discussed

3 Governance

3.1 Items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 were not discussed. The board resolved to secure governance and approvals following the meeting.

3.4 **Recruiting new Co-chair of youth voice forum.**

The Chair and Secretary provided an update on the recruitment of the new co-chair of the youth voice forum:

- The Trust plans to recruit for a new 3rd co-chair to start in January 2022
- For 6 months there will be three co-chairs, until Mr Ibrahim's term ends in June 2022
- Miss McLellan will be replaced when her term ends in December 2022
- Following that there will be youth co-chairs each serving 2 year terms, staggered by 12 months to overlap their predecessor and successor

4 Board effectiveness review summary

4.1 Mr Summerfield summarised the paper and added that the board had been a happy and productive place, despite dealing with some challenging situations. It had been difficult to focus on strategy while firefighting. Overall, board members felt confident in the leadership and the Chair. They are proud of what the Trust has achieved and feel their personal contributions have been valued. Meetings are effective and well chaired. With all new appointments it is vital to ensure the board continues to reflect the diverse set of experiences and skills needed for NCS's future strategy.

4.2 Mr Gifford added a personal note of thanks to Mr Wigdortz and the board for their support during a challenging but productive year.

5 Regular Business

5.1 Item 5.1 was skipped (see decision 1.4 above) Board minutes from 23rd September were approved by correspondence, following the meeting.

5.2 Verbal updates from committee chairs

5.2.1 Mr Cleal, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) provided an update noting:

- effective board delegation to the committee and the committee's effective relationship with the executive: 'challenge' and 'critical friendship'
- value delivered by internal and external auditors leaving management with solid actions
- improvement in risk management and fewer and fewer instances of policies not being followed
- strong representation and support from the external members of the committee
- very positive endorsement from the National Audit Office
- commercial and financial skills gap on ARC will need to be filled after Mr Cleal and Mr Maltby's terms end

5.2.2 Mr Mayhew, **Chair of the Safeguarding Committee** provided an update noting:

- no unresolved level 1 or level 2 incidents - the trend for how the Trust managed safeguarding incidents was in a positive direction
 - Incidents that were raised were historic pre-NCS incidents, which showed that disclosure and reporting systems were effective
- the committee has been proactively engaged in a detailed way, but as requested to better understand outliers - i.e. top 5% and bottom 5% of incidents so that the priority areas can be highlighted in reports
- the recent split of the Impact Committee from the Safeguarding committee (previously one committee focused on Impact and Safeguarding)
- Miss Nnochiri has agreed to chair the new Impact Committee and Mr Livingstone will also be on the new impact committee with two external members Mr Freedman and Miss Perera who are highly experienced and excited to get started in February

5.2.3 Mr Summerfield, **Chair of the People and Remuneration Committee** provided an update noting:

- The strategic approach to the people committee is a pyramid in three parts: 1) have we got the right CEO, 2) is the team around the CEO the right one, 3) is the body of the organisation a happy place?
- The committee believes that the Trust has the right CEO and is a happy place; however, it remains vigilant in ensuring the right match of SLT skills to the Trust's future strategy.

5.2.4 The Board noted that diversity and inclusion in its broadest sense was improving as a result of its People plan, cultural changes and improvements to its fair recruitment strategy, but it should go further. For example, ethnic diversity within senior roles was still not representative of society as a whole and the communities we serve. Whilst recognising the headcount of the Trust was reducing, more focus was needed to advance equality of opportunity, develop a diverse pipeline of talent and encourage more candidates who are Black, Asian or from an ethnically diverse background to apply for leadership roles. Recruiting young people through the government's Kickstart scheme for under 25s on universal credit has helped to bring in new perspectives, and helped to refine our focus and attention on social mobility in the workplace as an employer as well as within our service lines, with some Kickstarters securing long term employment at NCS Trust.

5.3 Verbal update from Youth Representatives

5.3.1 Mr Ibrahim and Miss McLellan, Co-Chairs of the Youth Voice Forum (YVF) provided an update noting that it had been a busy few months:

- Supporting DCMS with new board appointments through youth interview panel
- Youth voice strategy has been integrated into processes and projects from the get go rather than just at the end
- YVF co-chair recruitment for Jan and new YVF members for next year - trying to increase diversity, more non-graduates,
- Hope-Hack collective concluded its journey and presented its report to the Prime Minister at an event in No 10 Downing Street
- Questioning how the YVF can include and engage Kickstarters as part for its strategy

5.4 Item 5.4 was not discussed. The board noted previous Committee minutes.

5.5 Item 5.5 was not discussed. There were no open actions on the Board Action Log.

5.6 Meeting break

Mr Moukarzel, Ms Stoddard, Mr Sharkey Woods joined the meeting.

6 Strategy session

- 6.1 Future Strategy (2023-2025)
- 6.2 Mr Gifford introduced the pre-read paper. The digital strategy has been incorporated into the wider strategy paper and update. He noted:
- I. Digital products and experiences, as distinct from the technology, data and infrastructure needed to enhance and drive those journeys.
 - II. With a reduced funding envelope, taking into account feedback from young people and the Government, the Trust decided no longer to run a 3-4 week residential.
 - III. The Minister (for Civil Society) referenced that NCS responsibility to support young people working with the youth sector and that its strategy should be focused on levelling up and disadvantage. However, the government has shown support for the Trust's assertion of the importance of retaining the universality of its offer.
- 6.3 Ms Stoddart presented the Trust's vision and outcomes for young people. Transforming NCS from a moment to a movement, will mean growing the number of young people who participate in NCS, offering a portfolio of structured residential, non-residential and digital experiences in order to deliver its four objectives:
1. Building life skills and independent living
 2. Providing opportunities for volunteering and social action
 3. Enhancing employability and work-readiness
 4. Enabling social mixing of young people from all backgrounds
- 6.4 The new strategy gives young people greater choice and flexibility of NCS experience with content designed around these themes. Miss Stoddard went on to define more detail around each of these areas of the offer and the broad spectrum of activity they could encompass.
- 6.5 The board noted that the strategy was clear and compelling, and the following points were made:
- These are objectives and experiences are drawn from the government's youth review and youth strategy and our own experience and customer insights
 - The newly created Impact Committee would provide challenge to the impact strategy, including on its evaluation framework and key metrics needed to measure impact on these outcomes - and this will have youth representation
 - The weighting, outcomes and benefits of one type of experience versus another is still to be defined since many of these are in concept development or piloting phase
 - In the past the service design and commercial structure of programmes commissioned by NCS Trust has been difficult for the broadest range of delivery partners, the new strategy should enable this to be addressed
 - Social mixing is central to impact: in diversifying its offer the Trust should ensure its maintained and built upon
 - "Work readiness" and focus on post NCS employability pathways was welcomed: The Trust's Kickstart and UK Year of Service employability training programmes have been a great foundation
 - Accreditation will be a key part of this offer
 - Focus on youth voice and confidence building as well as skill building was welcomed
- 6.6 Mr Moukarzel explained the programme outline, service design choices and the different ways young people will come to and experience NCS: through online, self-chosen, or adult-led routes in a community, club, group or education setting. He outlined the baseline requirements of each of the three types of experiences. There will be more choice and flexibility of NCS experience, but all types will have a balance of the four outcomes for



young people. Digital strategy includes: data and technology that underpins our operating model; digital content & experiences and a refreshed hub that is personalised to each young person that allows them to track their achievements and research options to do more - MyNCS.

6.7 The following points were noted:

- The Trust is exploring using a range of different commercial and contracting approaches to enable the strategy and engage different partners
- There is an opportunity to create better lead-in and lead-out services so that NCS can reach a greater range of young people including those who often find it hard to access mainstream services
- The relationship with the school is very important and should be tighter - the provider should be contacting the school proactively especially in PRUs and AP not the other way around
- There is work to do to identify the variety of providers everywhere in the country especially high quality providers of non residential experiences
- Digital social mixing is more challenging, but possible: surfacing online conversations that help to build shared understanding and blending in-person and live experiences

6.8 To conclude this item, Mr Wigdortz asked the committee to share their overall feedback for the strategy. The following points were noted:

- **Positive new direction:** the strategy was clear, innovative and showed responsiveness to the current political and social climate, and to feedback from the board, young people and government. The move away from exclusive focus on longer residential models and the new service lines would enable NCS to increase participation and deepen engagement from some young people having 'done NCS' to all young people being part of it. However, social mixing and cohesion remained what is most unique about of NCS and should remain a focus for all future services
- **Ambitious transformation:** commissioning multiple services alongside transformation outlined was ambitious and potentially challenging to deliver at pace. Prioritisation would support Trust to answer the most important and urgent questions first and weighting of outcomes or types of experiences could also help
- **Further detail around supply:** Trust had set out clear new services and demand-side drivers, and further scoping was needed especially on supply-side for newer service lines such as non-residential, community and digital (MyNCS) elements. The procurement strategy must aim to find the best new partners, including smaller community organisations.

7 Any other business

7.1 No business was raised. 2022 Board dates were not confirmed or approved (see Decision Item 1.3)

8 NED only session

8.1 Mr Wigdortz invited reflections, feedback and open discussion about the meeting.

9 Meeting Closes

The meeting closed at 6:00 pm.

These minutes were approved as a correct and complete record of the proceedings by the Board at its meeting on 27 January 2022, and signed by the chairman as authentication.



Brett Wigdortz
Brett Wigdortz (Mar 28, 2022 14:07 GMT+1)

Chair