

NCST BOARD MEETING

MINUTES 26TH SEPTEMBER 2024

Location	The Science Museum Dana Suite 165 Queen's Gate SW7 5HD
Participants	Harris Bokhari (Chair) Mark Gifford (CEO) Catrin Anderson (virtual) Jess Evans Jonathan Freeman Michael Livingston (DCMS) Duncan McCourt Jacquie Nnochiri Rachel Oloyede Deborah Tavana Amanda Timberg Darren Xiberras
In attendance	NCS Trust Amanda Best - Chief Operating Officer Sarah Charlton - Executive Director, Digital Products Michael Devlin - Strategic Adviser to the Chair Sarah Knight - Head of Board Governance and Organisational Compliance (virtual) Lisa Mullen - Executive Assistant to the CEO Sarfraz Nawaz - Executive Director, Finance Ali Rose - Head of CEO Office Adrian Ruddock - Executive Director, Digital and Technology Hannah Stoddart - Executive Director, Strategy and Insight
Apologies	Tristram Mayhew Ndiri Okezie (ext member) Jo Hutchinson - Executive Director, Digital Products Kelly Holder - Executive Director, Operations & Transformation

1. WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1A - WELCOME

- Mr. Bokhari welcomed the Board and the Executive to the meeting

1B - INTRODUCTION TO SARAH CHARLTON - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - DIGITAL

- Mr. Bokhari welcomed Ms. Charlton to the board meeting, as the newest member of the Executive team, joining NCS Trust from The Prince's Trust

1C - APOLOGIES

- Apologies were noted from: Ms. Okezie (co-opted member), Mr. Mayhew (NED) Ms. Hutchinson and Ms. Holder (Executive)

1D - REVIEW OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- Mr. Bokhari noted the Conflicts of Interest register, and asked for any additions to be reported to Ms. Willey

1E - CHAIR'S UPDATE

- Mr. Bokhari highlighted the Non Executive Director interviews and the CEO recruitment, both of which are currently in train
- Mr Bokhari updated the Board on some of his immediate priorities: recruitment of the new CEO; increasing awareness of NCS delivery and impact and bringing its ambition to support the new Government in its missions with its focus on youth and social cohesion
- Mr. Bokhari thanked the Executive team and the wider Trust for their work and commitment to raising NCS's profile, noting it has been outstanding
- Mr. Bokhari noted that today's meeting would be Mr. Gifford's last board meeting before his departure, and he and the Board thanked Mr. Gifford for his dedication and commitment to NCS during his tenure
- Mr. Gifford then thanked the Board, the Executive and all NCS staff for their support and hard work. NCS is a transformed organisation and this was a collective effort. Being leader of NCS during a significant period of change has been a career highlight, and Mr. Gifford stated that he will always remain a champion of NCS

2. YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

- Ms. Oloyede introduced the Youth Spotlight session and provided an overview of the content of the video detailing a symposium that was held in the North East which created a safe space for young people to come together, and an opportunity for young people and key stakeholders to connect and engage on key topics

2A - YOUTH SPOTLIGHT VIDEOS

2B - YOUTH VOICE AUDIT

- Ms. Evans noted that the inspiration behind the Youth Voice audit is for NCS to be sector-leading within the youth space
- Experts in the field were engaged to support the audit, which has resulted in useful insights
- A co-production event will take place. From this, the evidence and recommendations will be assessed, and provisional actions will be agreed going forward. Outputs from the event will shape a delivery and implementation plan, and Ms. Evans noted that findings should be available ahead of the next board meeting in December
- Another deliverable is the production of a youth engagement policy/framework, which will assist in measuring effectiveness and impact
- The ask of the board is to engage with the findings when they become available and that the results are embedded into the future strategy
- Mr. Livingston noted the Secretary of State's (SoS) passion for youth voice and that there may be an opportunity to speak with the government about NCS's impact and findings and collaborate on the production of a youth strategy
- **Action:** a DCMS engagement plan is to be drawn up as part of the findings. Ms. Evans noted the action to take forward

2C - YOUTH INSIGHTS

- Ms. Olyede ran through the insights, highlighting that a number of the survey questions were based on political education and an interest in learning how to vote
 - A slight majority were in favour of lowering the voting age to 16
 - Social media was noted as the main source of news for young people, demonstrating that the power to educate via social media is strong
 - Mental Health continues to be a top priority for YPs, and self-defence was noted as a "life lesson"; the Board discussed the fact that this was a sobering finding
- Findings will be socialised and tested, and shared with DCMS
- **Action:** consider how the insights be shared externally/publicly. Mr. Bokhari asked the Board to consider how this can best be done

3. CEO REPORT

- Mr. Gifford took the report as read, highlighting the following:
- Participation numbers: NCS's summer performance has been strong, and NCS will achieve its 2 year experience target.
- Skills Booster has been effective, adding to and enhancing the NCS brand
- Net Promoter Score (NPS) has moved from 40 (last year) to 64
- NCS's Trust Pilot score has an "excellent" rating. Young people are filling out Trust Pilot surveys as well as parents/guardians
- No attrition has been associated with the riots (linked to the Southport attack) over the summer, and YP reported they felt safe during the programmes. NCS were very proactive here and are pleased with how leadership at a sensitive time had made a difference
- Social cohesion has been drawn out as one of the Secretary of State's priorities which is relevant to NCS.
- Mr. Xiberras asked what has driven the NPS improvement, and Mr. Gifford stated that results from feedback have been implemented, with year 1 acting as a learning opportunity to improve year 2
- Mr. Livingston flagged that the new government was still settling in, and opportunities to engage Ministers would likely increase over time.
- Priority Areas focus: the model is challenging for providers to reach into all the areas and this has been a discussion point with DCMS

4. IMPACT AND EVALUATION

- Ms. Stoddart took the report as read and shared observations on year 1's evaluation findings, noting the richness of the data. NCS is one of the more rigorously evaluated youth programmes in the country, setting a high bar but resulting in interesting and informative data
- Ms Stoddart highlighted that NCS has a consistent track record of demonstrating value for money. Depending on which methodology is used, NCS has shown to generate more than £3.05 of value for every £1 spent. And the Trust has continued to strive for continuous improvement to drive these numbers up even further
- The pre and post impact survey wrap up time for Residential is up to 9 months, thus impact may be affected by this timeline
- How long the experience is versus the impact is key and there are opportunities to weave the other service lines in, as well as develop links between partners and partner up with specialists in areas requiring growth
- Ms. Stoddart flagged that NCS will look to publish its evaluation next year, as part of a 2 year evaluation programme
- The Board asked for further context around the Social Inclusion scoring and Ms. Stoddart noted that the provider is still analysing the scoring. "Social Inclusion" is a broader banner and she would provide further information on this
- **Action:** Ms. Stoddart to send to the Board what makes up the "Social Inclusion" scoring/banner

5. SPENDING REVIEW UPDATE

- Mr. Nawaz took the paper as read, and flagged that the end of October is the anticipated date for understanding what the settlement will be
- There is a Residential contract hard stop on the 31/12/2024
- The Chancellor's advice was that pre-commitments prior to the 30/10/2024 should not be agreed
- Mr. Gifford ran through the three options and scenarios and Ms. Best set out key dates and talked through the contingency plan. There is a risk of contracts not being in place, with no leverage if confirmation is not received by late November

Multi year settlement

- Calendar alignment will be explored, to understand if NCS's delivery year can be consistent with the financial year. There may be a financial and contractual impact, which would need to be understood better, and Mr. Gifford took this as an action for further exploration
- **Action:** Calendar alignment exploration, to allow for better consistency
- Mr. Nawaz talked through phase 2 (multi year) of the bid, with the same income per phase 1 being the working assumption. There is unlikely to be an inflation increase and likely further budget pressure which will need to be managed carefully
- Generating income will become a strategic priority
- The board agreed not to confirm the residential contract until there was further certainty on FY 25/26 funding.

6. FUTURE STRATEGY

- Mr. Hill joined the meeting to co-present alongside Ms. Stoddart on the strategy, and a discussion was held on the NCS offer and the commissioning process. Past, present and future strategies were talked through to understand learnings and the way forward for evolution
- A comprehensive conversation followed, with highlights including:
 - Testing new ideas, innovating and working with specialist partners will be trialled via a specific project workstream
 - Ms. Nnochiri suggested opening the programmes up to an additional year group (9), noting 15-25 feels rigid and that there is a market for a wider audience
 - It was highlighted that evaluation on NCS's other service lines will take place in March 2025
 - Mr. Ruddock noted the priority is to understand how data complements the different service lines

7. BOARD DISCUSSION (NO PRE-READ)

- Mr. Gifford introduced the discussion session and noted the intent of getting ahead of the curve
- Promoting youth voice and amplifying NCS are key focus areas
- NCS has a compelling story and has been operating for over a decade, playing a big part in national events
- Mr. Gifford talked through the Secretary of State's priorities and flagged that NCS can and will support the development of these
- Mr. Gifford advised the Board of the key focus areas to be shared and discussed at December's board.
- A discussion around key strap lines took place, with Ms. Evans noting that many other Not-for-Profits have these. The youth audit is a positive first step however further growth is required for visibility and impact
- The importance of remaining politically neutral but having close relationships with all political parties was discussed.

8. REGULAR GOVERNANCE

- Mr. Devlin introduced the Regular Governance section

8A - MINUTES FROM BOARD 18TH JUNE

- The board approved the minutes of the 18/6/2024

8B - MINUTES FROM ARC COMMITTEE 11TH JULY 2024 (APPROVED 19TH SEP 24)

- Mr. Devlin noted the ARC minutes of the 11/7/24 were approved by the ARC on the 19/9/2024

8C - COMMITTEE CHAIRS' UPDATES (VERBAL)

- Mr. Xiberras noted there were no concerns from the recent ARC meeting
- Ms. Evans updated that 21 youth ambassadors and 12 advisory board members have been recruited
- Ms. Evans' term comes to an end in December and the role is currently being advertised via grantees, LinkedIn and Indeed.com
- Ms. Nnochiri updated on the last safeguarding meeting with no concerns being raised

8D - BOARD ACTION LOG FOR NOTING (WITHIN ITEM 8 REGULAR GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT)

- Mr. Devlin flagged the action log for noting only

8E - EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW - BOARD AND COMMITTEES (WITHIN ITEM 8 REGULAR GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT)

- The board will receive a effectiveness review survey on 1/10/2024 to cover board and any sub-committees members are involved in
- A paper will be brought to the board in December and an external review will take place in 2025 per the framework agreement

8F - CO-OPTING NEW MEMBERS (WITHIN ITEM 8 REGULAR GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT)

- Ms. Isobel Baylis, External Adviser to the ARC committee: Mr. Xiberras was supportive and endorsed the co-opting of Ms. Baylis. The board provided their approval

9. NED ONLY SESSION - TO INCLUDE UPDATE ON CEO RECRUITMENT

- The Executive team, Mr. Livingston, Ms. Rose and Ms. Mullen departed the meeting, and Ms. Knight left the call. A closed session took place with the board facilitated by Mr. Bokhari, which included Mr. Gifford

The meeting closed at 17:00

These minutes were approved as a correct and complete record of the proceedings via correspondence and signed by the Chair as authentication.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hams Bokhan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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Chair

29 January 2025

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Date