

NCST BOARD MEETING

MINUTES 24TH MARCH 2025

Location	Virtual, via Google Meet
Participants	Harris Bokhari (Chair) Michael Devlin (CEO) Catrin Anderson Jess Evans (Youth Rep) Jonathan Freeman Michael Livingston (DCMS) Duncan McCourt Jacquie Nnochiri Tristram Mayhew (ext member) Rachael Oloyede (Youth Rep) Deborah Tavana (from Item 6) Amanda Timberg Darren Xiberras
In attendance	NCS Trust Amanda Best - Chief Operating Officer Sarah Charlton - Executive Director, Digital Products Sarah Knight - Head of Board Governance and Organisational Compliance Lisa Mullen - Executive Assistant to the Chair Sarfraz Nawaz - Executive Director, Finance Hannah Stoddart - Executive Director, Strategy and Impact Kerry Viner - Legal Director (NED session only)
Apologies	Adnan Shafi (ext member) Jo Hutchinson - Executive Director, Digital Products Kelly Holder - Executive Director, Operations & Transformation Adrian Ruddock - Executive Director, Digital & Technology

1. WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1A - WELCOME

- Mr. Bokhari welcomed the attendees to the meeting, noting it is the final Board meeting prior to the numerous staff leaving on 31 March 2025, but some staff would stay until the end of June, and the board would remain in place until the charter was revoked

1B - APOLOGIES

- Mr. Bokhari noted apologies from Adnan Shafi, Jo Hutchinson, Kelly Holder and Adrian Ruddock, and noted that Deborah Tavana would be delayed in joining the call

1C - REVIEW OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- Mr. Bokhari noted the conflicts of interest register and asked for any further conflicts arising to be notified to Ms. Knight

1D - CHAIR'S UPDATE

- Mr. Bokhari congratulated the trust on an excellent and professionally managed wind down programme, reflected on the impact that the trust has had on hundreds of thousands of young people to date which would endure, recognised that this was an emotional time for staff, young people and partners, and encouraged the prioritisation of wellbeing at this difficult time

2. YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

- Ms. Evans talked through the regional youth work units across the UK. Youth Focus North East will be leading on this, disseminating the work from the Youth Voice research, the learning loops and the North East Symposium. The work that has taken place will not go to waste, and will be embedded into practise
- A Youth Voice podcast of 2 episodes was recently recorded. This will be taken forward and further episodes will be recorded as part of a longer series. A Lottery grant is being looked into, to continue to fund the project
- The final workshop with DCMS took place recently, with updates on the survey and the vision statement work. The Youth Ambassadors will continue to feed into this, despite the closure
- Anthropy takes place over the course of the current week; the final event to involve the Trust's youth representatives

3. CEO REPORT

- Mr. Devlin took the report as read, noting an exceptional year of delivery. Digital (specifically the game) has also exceeded expectations with very little marketing, tracking far above the participation target (260,244 versus a target of 37,500)
- The Sponsor Steering Group meeting took place last week and Mr. Devlin noted he felt DCMS are aligned on next steps and required outcomes
- Mr. Bokhari emphasised DCMS' positive feedback regarding meetings with the Trust, noting and praising the efficiency of these
- The Trust away day was successful, and an opportunity for current and previous staff and board members to meet and say goodbye
- The Board discussed the RAG ratings and commented on the lack of Red ratings. Mr Devlin acknowledged that in some cases this was due to the fact that activity that could not be carried out due to the compressed timing had been de-scoped, thus removing elements that would otherwise be rated as Red..
- **ACTION:** The board asked that Ms Holder ensure there is a record of major de-scoped activity, and the reasons for not being able to carry these activities out, in the event of future audit(s). The closure report/lessons learnt will detail this.
- **ACTION:** Mr Nawaz to ensure that any descoped activity is included in the Annual Report where relevant

4. FY 25/26 BUDGET

- The papers were taken as read, and Mr. Nawaz noted the budget had been through the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), thus a level of scrutiny had already taken place
- There are staff costs and contracts that need to be continued post March and this is in budget
- A contingency is in place and is currently being accessed slightly earlier than expected due to recent changes in planning decisions by DCMS (novation of contracts). NCS will continue to review the position and keep DCMS and Board informed
- The Board supported the recommendation, and the budget sign off was approved

5. KEY REPORTS AND ARTEFACTS

- The paper was taken as read and Ms. Stoddart provided a summary of the work that has been carried out, in the context of the wider sustained value work that is being finalised

6. GOVERNANCE UPDATE

- Ms. Tavana joined the call
- Ms. Knight talked through the board minutes requiring final approval
- The ARC minutes from the September and January meetings were tabled for noting
- The Modern Slavery and Delegation of Authority policies for April - June 2025 were approved by the ARC and recommended for board approval
- Ms. Knight asked for any comments and none were raised thus the aforementioned minutes and policies were taken as approved
- Ms. Knight flagged one action on the log from February's meeting, noting this is complete
- Draft Business Plan: The Trust has a statutory obligation to publish this document before 2nd June each year. Due to closure, this is light touch including a summary of the wind-down programme
- The Business Plan was approved
- Mr. Xiberras provided an update on the last ARC meeting, noting this was predominantly a discussion of the budget, which has now been approved. In addition, Mr. Xiberras noted updates on audit matters with no issues
- Remuneration Committee: Ms. Tavana updated that this consisted of the tail-end items from the consultation process. Questions raised were how salary reviews will be handled, and whether these will be reflected in redundancy pay. Richard Sandiford and DCMS will be picking this up, and Mr. Livingston noted this is on the sponsor team's radar
- Live updates for sustained value: the Department for Education have confirmed they are developing an enrichment framework which would not have happened without NCS' work
- Reports on social cohesion are being launched and a round table discussion / Anthropy session will take place to explore this further

7. DCMS HANDOVER / POST MARCH

- Ms. Knight noted she now leaves the Trust on the 31 March, and Lauren Ogboru will take the role for one month until the end of April
- DCMS will own this from 1 July, however, Mr. Livingston noted the DCMS team will only be able to carry out a reduced level of support though it will meet legal requirements.
- **ACTION:** To set out board secretariat requirements post-June, and to agree with DCMS on the SLAs (Mr. Devlin / Ms. Ogboru / Mr. Xiberras)

8. AOB

- Mr. Mayhew asked, as a co-opted board member, what his involvement should be post-March, and Mr. Bokhari noted his expertise will continue to be appreciated and welcomed as a co-opted member
- Ms. Evans and Ms. Oloyede extended their thanks to the board as it is their final meeting
- The majority of NCS staff leave at the end of the month, and Mr. Bokhari asked that their hard work and impact be noted and minuted

9. NED ONLY

- The Executive team, Mr. Livingston, Mr. Bokhari, Mr. Devlin, and Ms. Mullen departed the meeting, and Ms. Viner joined the call. A confidential NED-only session took place with Ms. Knight present

Signed by the Chairman

Hams Bokhan

Date 29 April, 2025