

Management Board Meeting Minutes

(Held via Skype)

Monday 8 June 2020

Attendance: Secretary General (Fergal Lynch); Bernie McNally; Dermot Ryan; Laura McGarrigle; Conor Rowley. Miriam Kenna reporting.

POs attending: Vera McGrath and Ger Hughes.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of meeting of 18 May 2020 were agreed with minor amendments.

2. Matters Arising

As agreed a notice issued to all staff asking every unit to review and update its risk register.

3. Review of the Child Care Act Update

Lara Hynes and Albert O'Donoghue joined for this item. LH had circulated a slide presentation prior to the meeting. CR introduced the item and LH presented on the purpose of the review and its progress to date as they prepare to issue a consultation paper. She outlined the BOBF commitments and updated on the work achieved so far, including open policy debates; written consultations; engagement with Tusla and legal professionals; and research commissioned.

The next steps would be to publish the consultation document, consult with children and young people, prepare a Memo for Government (Autumn 2020) and draft a General Scheme Heads of Bill (Q1 2021).

The MB welcomed the progress to date and commented on aspects of the proposals. Among the main points made were the extent to which the situation has changed the Act was passed in 1991; the need for clear support at political level for changes; the difficulties of achieving continuity of care given the number of adults interacting with children in care; and related issues that have become all the more complex, including surrogacy and adoption. It was agreed that the consultation document would be circulated to the SMT for a discussion at the next SMT meeting on Friday 19 June. The consultation document would be submitted to the incoming Minister, with a recommendation that it be published immediately for views.

4. MB meetings: future arrangements

It was agreed that the MB would return to its pre-Covid 19 arrangements for meetings, as set out in a note prepared by FL. This would include fortnightly meetings, a focus on selected issues of a strategic, policy or operational nature, and the attendance on a rolling basis of two POs for two meetings each. FL thanked VMcG and GH for their strong contribution to the MB meetings held since early March when they were asked to attend on a regular basis.

5. Business Plans: approach to mid-year review

Ger Hughes presented some options for the Business Plan mid-year review for 2020, as outlined in a document circulated prior to the meeting. After a discussion the MB, conscious of existing pressures across the various Divisions, agreed to revisit how best to carry out the reviews in early July. In the meantime, managers should ensure that they keep a focus on delivering their unit business plans and associated priorities in order to be in a position to provide mid-year reviews when requested.

The need to prioritise work was noted, especially in the context of pressure for staff. The matter would be reviewed shortly in the context of a new Programme for Government if one is agreed.

6. Covid-19 updates:

LMcG reported that the next meeting of the Youth Oversight Group is scheduled for Monday, 8th June.

BMcN updated the MB on work to reopen childcare facilities from 29 June. Substantial public health guidance had been prepared and it was anticipated that Government agreement to a funding package would be sought very shortly.

DR said that an updated report on the social implications of Covid had been published by the Department of An Taoiseach. Work was continuing on his side in relation to working from home and limited return to Miesian Plaza.

CR updated on: IRPP – 8 unaccompanied minors expected from Greece 17 June; a media campaign supporting vulnerable children starting 19 June; and his participation on the interview board for the position of Interim Director of Services and Integration in Tusla on Tuesday 9 June. CR reported that Kate Levy, PO has been assigned to Tusla Development and Cross-Government Framework Unit. There would be a BOBF Consortium meeting 18 June.

7. For Noting

The main updates on main developments by each division/unit, as summarised on the Hive site, were noted. The FOI report was also noted.

8. AOB

FL said he would shortly circulate an updated draft of the introductory material to be given to an incoming Minister and asked that it be reviewed and returned. Other material including the finance brief could be updated as appropriate. It was agreed that the first MB meeting with the incoming Minister should be face to face; arrangements to facilitate this in line with social distancing requirements would be made.

9. Next Meeting

The next MB meeting was confirmed for Monday 22 June 2020 at 10.30.