

Minutes (APPROVED)

B/20/86

NHS NATIONAL SERVICES SCOTLAND (NSS)

**MINUTES OF THE NSS AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 AUGUST 2020
COMMENCING AT 0930 HRS**

Present: Ms Julie Burgess, Non-Executive Committee (Chair)
Mrs Kate Dunlop, Non-Executive Director
Mrs Alison Rooney, Non-Executive Director
Mr John Deffenbaugh, Non-Executive Director

In Attendance: Ms Rachel Brown, External Auditor, Audit Scotland
Ms Inire Evong, External Auditor, Audit Scotland
Mrs Carolyn Low, Director of Finance

Mr Keith Redpath, NSS Chair
Ms Laura Howard, Assoc. Dir. Finance Operations

Apologies Mr Colin Sinclair, NSS Chief Executive

ACTION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Ms Burgess welcomed all to the meeting and noted the apologies and those in attendance. Before starting the formal business of the meeting, Ms Burgess asked the Committee Members if they had any interests to declare in the context of the Agenda items to be considered. No interests were declared. Members noted that this was a single item special meeting of the Committee to review and discuss the NSS Annual Accounts and Report 2019-20.

2. NSS ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND REPORT 2019-2020 [paper ARC/20/34 refers]

2.1 Members went through the document in detail and asked that Management ensure a final proof read of the document was completed prior final submission to the Board. Mrs Low then took Members through the report and highlighted the following:

- The approach to the first section (performance) had been to make the document more accessible and like an Annual Report in its own right. The NSS Marcomms team had been instrumental in this more progressive approach. This included a statement from the Chief Executive, a meet the Chair introduction and then a more detailed view of NSS strategy and activities. Mr Redpath commented that work was still required on the Chair segment to expand the content if it was a required element. Ms Howard offered to meet outwith the meeting to review and update this section. **Action: Ms Howard and Mr Redpath to discuss further outwith meeting;**
- Payment Policy – Members asked for additional text to add perspective to the attainment percentages – Ms Howard to update appropriately. **Action: Ms Howard to update section;**

**L Howard/
K Redpath
L Howard**



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Chair: Mr Keith Redpath
Chief Executive: Mr Colin Sinclair

ACTION

- Additional context around the financial implications of the COVID-19 response to be added. **Action: Ms Low to add text into this section;** **C Low**
 - Audit & Assurance Section – text to be updated in line with Service Audit outcomes. **Action: Ms Low to add text;** **C Low**
 - Item to be added to provide context on the removal of the NSS Information Governance Committee to be added as the decision was taken during the period of these accounts. **Action: Ms Low to update text;** **C Low**
 - Additional context to be added to reflect that figures in the Board remuneration table related to leased cars. **Action: Ms Howard to update text;** **L Howard**
 - Members noted that the workforce figures included in the report still reflected Public Health & Intelligence who did not transfer to Public Health Scotland until 1st April 2020;
 - Reminder that the Trinity Park Foundation was a charity in its own right and did not need to be consolidated within these accounts;
 - Further clarity on the implications of Public Health Scotland and what would remain within NSS;
 - Recognition that the report only covered the beginning of the response to COVID-19 but that work was already underway in relation to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Mrs Low advised that this would form part of the report for 2020-2021;
- 2.2 Members thanked the team for their informative report and welcomed the changes to format and accessibility. They added that having had a development session as well as this meeting had provided extra scrutiny opportunities. This had been complimented by having all NSS Non-Executive Directors invited to the Audit & Risk Committee and that this should be replicated for future years. **Action: Committee Services Manager to add to forward programme.** **CSM**
- 3. AUDIT SCOTLAND AUDIT REPORT 2019-2020 [paper ARC/20/35 refers]**
- 3.1 Mr Taylor took Members through his paper and highlighted the following;
- The audit was almost complete with some further queries awaiting final explanation;
 - Pleased to be able to propose the unqualified and unmodified certificate in the Audit Scotland letter;
 - Requirement to ensure the signed letter of representation from the Accountable Officer was available;
 - There would be an addition for a number of Boards this year around asset valuation uncertainty. This draws attention of the readers of the accounts to the fact that these figures are uncertain due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. This was not a qualification or a modification just additional information;
 - Audit Scotland were happy with the financial statements and policies.
- 3.2 Mr Taylor advised that the intention was to take the Accounts to the Board on Friday 14th August 2020 for signature. It was noted that due to COVID restrictions it would be necessary to provide electronic signatures for this year. All noted that the audit process had been done virtually due to these restrictions and Audit Scotland would like to pay tribute to all NSS staff who had been involved in the process.
- 3.3 Ms Burgess asked that it be recorded that despite being mentioned in the report NSS had yet to receive formal confirmation that expenditure due to the COVID-19 response would be fully funded by Scottish Government. Mr Taylor advised that if prior approval was available it would be added to reporting but for this year it was noted that whilst approvals were in place it had been necessary to make

ACTION

the purchases before this was formalised due to the speed on response required.

3.4 Mr Taylor continued that there was recognition of the significant quality of the performance section of the report, including recording of progress on prior year recommendations. It was also noted that there had been some areas of work that had been planned for this year that were not possible due to the COVID-19 response but these would be picked up again next year.

3.5 Members thanked Mr Taylor and Audit Scotland for their report and welcomed the content in full.

4. NOTIFICATION FROM SPONSORED BODY AUDIT COMMITTEE TO SGHSCD [paper ARC/20/26 refers]

4.1 Ms Howard took Members through the paper and highlighted that this was a letter to Scottish Government advising that there were no wider issues to be raised after the audit. This letter as confirmation of the findings.

4.2 Ms Burgess would be required to sign this letter at the end of the meeting, which she confirmed she was content to approve.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Members had no further pertinent business to raise at this point.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6.1 Next scheduled meeting to take place on 15 September 2020.

There being no further formal business the meeting finished at 1013 hrs