

IMB MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING 12/04/2020

Note of meeting

1. Chair's report

- New Regional Representatives for Yorkshire and Humber and East Midlands have been appointed
- MB members noted the significant achievements over the last three years
- Priorities are being fed into business planning
- Letters have gone to Phil Copple (DG, HMPPS) on revision of PSO1700 on segregation and to Phil Riley (DG, HOIE) on monitoring at Tug Haven
- Discussions continue with HOIE and Border Force about access to information and setting up new BF STHFs
- Meetings are being held with the HMPPS teams responsible for various aspects of resettlement including post-release accommodation, for video visits and for the digital rollout
- In a meeting with the Prisons Minister, regimes post-Covid, mental health and education were discussed, as well as the new statutory framework for IMBs
- Recent research has identified significantly higher Covid mortality in prisons compared to community
- A survey by the Isle of Wight board has shown ethnic disproportionality in relation to cell searches and other boards are being invited to carry out the same exercise

2. Head of Secretariat report

The HoS updated the Management Board on the work completed by the Secretariat since the last meeting including the initial work on collaborative recruitment, the decisions made in relation to the business cases for additional visits, the financial position as year-end approaches and national training, policy and communications initiatives.

3. Regional Representatives Update

Themes of tiredness and uncertainty about how previous working practices will resume were noted.

4. Working group updates

4.1 RRWG:

Training:

The strategic plan for the next 18 months is being finalised. It will combine business as usual activities as well as pandemic-related activities.

8.3 IWG:

Toolkits

- Reception & Induction is being reviewed
- OMU is complex and needs to be reviewed to reflect national changes.

8.4 Transformation

The head of Secretariat provided an update on the transformation work taking place, with support from the MOJ's ALB Centre for Expertise, which includes refreshing the IT infrastructure and understanding how the role of members can be valued and maximised.

MB AGREED to hire an in-house IT manager to provide governance of IT support to members and general development of the new IT systems, for 12 months in the first instance

MB AGREED a second Board Support Newsletter in May that showcases the work taking place across boards and supplies guidance around returning to establishments.

MB AGREED that 6-8 boards should participate in a six month pilot project to explore options for member use of Kahootz

8.5 Code of Practice and Compact

MB AGREED the final amendments to the procedures. These will go onto the website with guidance for Chairs and be circulated in the April bulletin.

9. Legislative change and governance

The Ministry of Justice has published the government response to the consultation paper on statutory change. It supports putting the National Chair and Management Board roles into legislation and creating a 'national framework', though not a non-departmental public body, and proposes a merger between IMBs and Lay Observers. There is no commitment to a legislative time frame. We have obtained legal advice on how much could be achieved through secondary legislation (the Prison Rules). We have also clarified with government lawyers the current position in relation to compliance with the Code of Conduct and Compact.

MB AGREED that we continue to press for the national governance structure to be created in primary legislation, supplemented by changes to the Prison Rules, which already need updating to take in earlier ministerial priorities and our changing role as part of the NPM. There would need to be similar changes to YOI, Detention Centre and STHF Rules;

MB AGREED that we should propose changes, to discuss with government lawyers and in consultation with the sponsor team and ALB CoE;

MB AGREED that we should make contact where relevant with ministers and senior officials in the MO and Home Office on the proposed changes;

MB AGREED that we should engage with the Lay Observers to agree a common approach if possible;

MB AGREED that we take a view in the autumn as to the likelihood of primary legislation, and if that looks unachievable in the immediate future, we press for changes in the Rules;

MB AGREED that in either event, we explore how the position of the secretariat can be integrated into the governance structure, using the examples of HMIP and the PPO, which already do so.

10. Business plan

A business plan update was circulated. It records what has been achieved during 2020/21. This has been a year of huge change and challenge, due to the pandemic. Some planned activities have had to be shelved or postponed. Conversely, in other areas there have been innovative and proactive responses, some of which will become part of our core business in future. There has also been significant progress in other workstreams, such as the new National Monitoring Framework and annual report template, the review and implementation of recruitment procedures and conflict of interest processes, further work on conduct and the beginning of board support work, continued input into proposed statutory change and the move to a regular monthly members Bulletin.

MB NOTED progress against business plan 2020/1

MB AGREED to consider priorities and workstreams for 2021/2, and the inclusion of all IMB activities

MB AGREED that business plan and three-year corporate plan should be presented to June MB meeting

The Chair thanked MB and Secretariat for the considerable achievements to date and commended how much has recently been achieved that has been dormant for a considerable period.

11. New member induction

This follows the MB discussion in August in relation to the first 12 – 18 months of appointment. It is proposed that the initial period of membership is referred to as an induction period, and that the training, information, resources and procedures to support this are revised and updated.

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