

Minutes of Management Board Meeting – Monday, 4th September, 2017

Attendance: Secretary General (Fergal Lynch), Éimear Fisher, Bernie McNally, Michelle Shannon and Dermot Ryan. Alan Savage and Miriam Kenna reporting.

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 24th July, 2017 were agreed.

2. Matters Arising

FL circulated an updated list of possible MB agenda items relating to policy, strategy and operation. The Private Secretary will liaise with MB members regarding dates as appropriate for each item.

3. Brief Updates

EF provided updates on: (i) Section 3 of the Child Care Act 1991, (ii) Review of the Child Care Act 1991 [Open Policy Discussion], (iii) Guardian ad Litem, (iv) Special Care Regulations, (v) Payments under Section 10 of the Child Care Act, (vi) Child and Adult Mental Health Services, (vii) Psychological Services, (viii) CYPSC National Coordinator, and (ix) North Inner City Group [DCYA Representation].

BM provided updates on: (i) Early Years [September Measures], (ii) Senior Officials Group, (iii) Affordable Childcare [Project], (iv) Work with OGCIO, (v) Schools Completion Programme, and (vi) LGBTI Youth Strategy.

MS provided updates on: (i) Adoption (Amendment) Bill [Commencement Order], (ii) Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill, (iii) Adoption Authority of Ireland [Board Vacancy], (iv) Oberstown Implementation of Reviews, (v) Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes, and (vi) IYJS staffing.

DR provided updates on: (i) Protected Disclosure, (ii) Internal Audit Reports, (iii) Children's Rights Alliance Annual Report Card 2018 [Notification to DCYA], (iv) Tusla Service Director Posts, (v) HIQA Report [St. Joseph's, Clonmel], and (vi) Farrelly Commission of Investigation.

4. Minister's Bilateral Meeting with the Taoiseach – 28th July, 2017

FL briefed on the Minister's meeting with the Taoiseach, attended by Martin Fraser and Angela Flanagan and himself. The main focus was on the Affordable Childcare Scheme, with items covered including the ambitious timeline, the scheme benefits and transitional provisions. The Minister also updated the Taoiseach on her recent meeting with the Tusla Board and on initiatives relating to the Commission on Mother and Baby Homes. Other key items noted were current legislation, Adoption [Information and Tracing], the LGBTI Youth Strategy, BOBF, Psychological Services and issues relating to young offenders, bail supervision and Oberstown improvements.

5. Minister's Meeting with the Board of Tusla – 28th July, 2017

FL briefed on the Minister's meeting with the Tusla Board, which he had attended. The key issues discussed at the meeting were ensuring public confidence in Tusla, the importance of good communications at all levels, strong inter-agency working, close working with the Department and a positive 'executive challenge' by the Board in its work with the executive of Tusla. The Minister had considered the discussion to be very positive and in particular, welcomed the Board's emphasis on a Tusla communications strategy, ICT development and its commitment to ensuring that Tusla's work focused on the safety and welfare of children.

6. Estimates 2018 – For Mention

It was confirmed that the MB would discuss HR and Estimates issues at a special meeting on Thursday, 7th September.

7. Unallocated Cases and Implications for Children First Mandatory Reporting

Marie Kennedy, Michele Clarke and Denis O'Sullivan attended for this item. The documentation considered included a note prepared by DR in the context of the Department's monthly meetings with Tusla senior managers and a letter to FL from the CEO of Tusla, dated 31st August, 2017. The discussion centred on risk and Tusla's readiness to handle the additional workload likely to be created by referrals from mandated reporters under Children First, on top of the current significant number of unallocated cases.

Other factors to be considered included progress in training of mandated reporters, IT systems, and the availability of social workers and other staff to deal with an expected substantial increase in referrals due to mandatory reporting. There was particular concern about the absence to date of a workforce plan by Tusla and the need to map family support services across the country. These elements were seen as key to an effective implementation of mandatory reporting.

It was agreed that EF would prepare a written submission to the Minister, and that the timing of commencement of Children First would be discussed with the Minister immediately.

8. AOB

DR noted that Alan Savage will leave the Communications and Corporate Governance Unit to commence working on data protection from 11th September. He will be replaced by Michael Keenan. The members thanked Alan for his excellent work with the MB and with his Unit.

FL reminded MB members about the Civil Service Excellence Awards process and encouraged all to consider submitting applications before the deadline of 8th September.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 11th September, 2017 @ 10.30 a.m.