



## **PHSO BOARD OPEN SESSION MEETING**

**13 December 2018**

**Minutes (Approved)**

## **MINUTES OF PHSO BOARD OPEN SESSION MEETING**

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### **CHAIR:**

Rob Behrens CBE, Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

### **NON-EXECUTIVES**

Sir Alex Allan KCB

Elisabeth Davies

Dean Fathers

Ram Gidoomal CBE

Alan Graham MBE

Mick King

Ruth Sawtell

### **EXECUTIVES**

Amanda Campbell, Chief Executive

Gill Kilpatrick, Executive Director of Corporate Services

Alex Robertson, Executive Director of Strategy and Operations

### **APOLOGIES**

Dr Julia Tabreham

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Karl Banister, Director of Legal and Professional Services

Andrew Dawson, Governance officer (minutes)

James Hand, Assistant Director of Business Management

Helen Holmes, Assistant Director of Governance

Abigail Howarth, Director of Operations and Quality

Steve James, Director of Human Resources

Shareena Merzi, Director of Communications

Warren Seddon, Director of Strategy and Insight

Paula Woodward, Chief of Staff

### **OBSERVERS**

Kate Eisenstein, Assistant Director of Insight and Public Affairs

## **7. Chair's Introduction and Welcome**

- 7.1 The Chair welcomed members, others present and observers to the meeting. The Board conveyed their best wishes to Julia Tabreham for a speedy recovery.
- 7.2 Rob Behrens said that he proposed to table two items under Any Other Business:
- The appointment of a speak-up guardian;
  - 2019 Board and Committee Meeting dates.

## **8. Declarations of Interest**

- 8.1 There were no declarations of interest relevant to items on the agenda.
- 8.2 Ram Gidoomal said that he was now an advisory board member for BAO Systems, a company providing global health support systems.
- 8.3 Elisabeth Davies said that she had recently joined the Advisory Group for Legal Services Regulation in England and Wales.

## **9. Minutes and Matters Arising**

- 9.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2018 were approved subject to minor corrections.
- 9.2 Alan Graham drew the Board's attention to three problems in respect of minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC).
- whilst he had given the September Board a verbal update from the on 21 September 2018, minutes of that meeting had not been included with the December Board papers;
  - Minutes of the ad-hoc meeting of 27 September 2018 were not included in the Board papers;
  - The minutes of the meeting of 29 November 2018, included with the Board papers, said on page 2 that they were the minutes of the meeting of 21 September 2018.

**Action: The Governance Team will circulate minutes of the meetings of 21 September 2018 and 27 September 2018 to the Board.**

**Action; The Governance Team will correct the ARAC minutes from 29 November 2018.**

- 9.3 James Hand said that whilst the Matters Arising showed that action on item 14.3 (27 September 2018), had been delayed, the Risk Register included more

detailed information about action being taken to address strategic risks which were outside of tolerance. He would explain further when the Board discussed the Risk Report and Register (Item 13).

## **10. Chief Executive's Report to the Board**

- 10.1 The Chief Executive's report had been circulated to the Board. The report was noted.
- 10.2 Amanda Campbell referred to the Staff Survey results (item 20). She said that she was proud of the Senior Leadership Team for the progress reflected in the Staff Survey results, and wished to place her thanks on record.
- 10.3 Amanda Campbell highlighted the appointment of mental health first aiders. Dean Fathers said that he welcomed this appointment as an important step in ensuring the wellbeing of staff. He suggested that the organisation could introduce 'assurance rounds'.
- 10.4 Amanda Campbell drew the Board's attention to para 6.1 of her report, which recorded that three members of staff had been shortlisted as finalists in the North West Contact Centre Awards. In particular she was pleased to say that Mark Peirce had won the award for best trainer/coach.
- 10.5 Amanda Campbell informed the Board that we were now going into the planning stage for the 2019/20 Budget. It was likely that we would need to make significant savings, and the Resource team were looking very carefully at our expenditure.
- 10.6 Amanda Campbell informed the Board that we had recently decided to pause work on the investigation of state pension age inequality complaints. This followed a successful judicial review application by a pensioner against the Department for Work and Pensions, on grounds which included how the changes were communicated. The decision to pause work was taken on the advice of counsel and was embargoed until 18/19 December, when we were informing the Department and complainants.
- 10.7 Elisabeth Davies said that she had attended a training session on casework for non-caseworkers, which had been very informative. It had been clear from the reactions of attendees that there was an appetite across the organisation for similar sessions.
- 10.10 Alex Allan asked whether pay gaps had been identified and what action was being taken to address these. Amanda Campbell said that the data was mixed. There was a disparity for BAME staff, but not for other groups. She said that Human Resources had been commissioned to do further work. Steve James added that this was looking at recruitment processes, staff retention, and internal processes in respect of promotion and other

opportunities. Ram Gidoomal asked whether we compared ourselves with other organisations. Amanda Campbell confirmed that we did.

## **Elisabeth Davies took the Chair**

### **11. Ombudsman's Report to the Board**

- 11.1 The Ombudsman's report had been circulated to the Board. Rob Behrens presented highlights of the report. The Board **noted** the report.
- 11.2 Dean Fathers asked whether 'own initiative' investigations would include working with other regulators to share data. Rob Behrens replied that he would be happy to do so as long as it did not impact on our independence.
- 11.3 Alan Graham referred to the forthcoming session before the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC), and asked whether any particular issues gave cause for concern. Rob Behrens replied that, whilst PACAC sessions were always challenging, he had no specific concerns.
- 11.4 Mick King said that he wished to recognise the innovative work by PHSO on Outreach, and on Equality, diversity and inclusion. Mick King said that the wider Ombudsman sector recognised PHSO as a leader. However he noted that some UK Ombudsman practice, across the sector, was behind that of Europe and the Commonwealth.
- 11.5 The Board discussed Speak Up month (item 3.3 of the report). Amanda Campbell said that the Whistleblowing Policy had been refreshed last year and was now clearer on where staff should go. The policy would be strengthened by the appointment of a Speak Up Guardian.
- 11.6 Rob Behrens said that, on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion our practice on reasonable adjustments was mostly good and we should keep illustrating and supporting this. Rob Behrens said that he also believed we should do more to publicise the impact of our Insight Reports. The Director of Mental Health for NHS England had said in her Radio Ombudsman interview that the report on eating disorders had had a significant impact on the development of eating disorder policy.

## **Rob Behrens took the Chair**

### **12. Operational Performance Report - October (Period 7) 2018-19**

- 12.1 The Operational Performance Report had been distributed to the Board. Abigail Howarth presented the report to the Board.
- 12.2 Ram Gidoomal asked whether the assumptions of the Target Operating Model would be adjusted to take into account the increased productivity level recorded in the report. Abigail Howarth confirmed that this was now in

place. The model assumptions were monitored weekly, based on a rolling 12-week trends.

- 12.3 Elisabeth Davies said that the Board was now getting a good sense of the impact of the investment in training, which was now positive. This echoed the deeper dive by the Quality Committee.
- 12.4 Board members welcomed the success of the transition plan in reducing the number of unallocated cases. Alex Allan asked how the pause in activity on state pension age inequality complaints would impact on the unallocated cases. Abigail Howarth confirmed that the paused cases would be excluded from the unallocated case count.
- 12.5 Alex Allan expressed concern that, where cases were investigated jointly with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, they were not counted in PHSO's figures. Abigail Howarth confirmed that these cases were reported to LGSCO, but we were talking to them to discuss how they could be reported to both Boards.
- 12.6 Dean Fathers commented that the Quality Committee had been very assured by the quality of the data produced by the organisation and had high confidence. The Committee were now looking in more details at trends and momentum, using lead and lag indicators.
- 12.7 Elisabeth Davies said that the Quality Committee were looking closely at the divergence between the process assurance scores recorded in Table 1 (page 4) and complainant feedback. This was covered in the Committee's report.
- 12.8 The Board **noted** the report and the impact of the organisation's performance on the achievement of PHSO's strategic objectives for 2018/19.

### **13. Strategic Risk Report and Register - Period 7 2018/19**

- 13.1 The Strategic Risk Report and Register had been distributed to the Board. James Hand presented the report to the Board.
- 13.2 Further to para. 9.3 above, James Hand explained that risk tolerances were discussed at the monthly Risk Forum, which highlighted those risks which were outside of tolerance and where measures to mitigate risks were discussed; those actions were summarised in Table 3. The number of such risks had recently fallen from five to three.
- 13.3 Ruth Sawtell said that her concern was that it had not been apparent that the risks outside tolerance were being addressed with a greater sense of urgency. The Board were seeking assurances that risks were being managed.
- 13.4 Ruth Sawtell said ARAC had identified concerns about the longevity of the Finance computer system, and asked whether this would impact on SR16 (Strategic ICT change). Gill Kilpatrick said that whilst the system was inefficient, it was effective and safe. Finance were looking at ways to

automate processes. Replacement of the Finance system would be added to the ICT strategy roadmap in due course.

13.5 Alex Allan asked for clarification of the issue set out under SR16 that upgrading to V10 of MS Dynamics (MSD) will remove our ability to create new cases. Gill Kilpatrick explained that this arose from the way that we had customised MSD. Under V10, some of our customisation will no longer work. Amanda Campbell said that resolving this issue, which also affected other Ombudsmen, was a priority, and that we were looking at moving to a standard version of MSD. This could actually benefit us as the current system was inefficient.

13.6 Amanda Campbell said that we had now implemented a version of MSD that was fully accessible to visually impaired staff. This was a milestone for us. She acknowledged that we had taken too long to address the issue.

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13.7 The Board:

- agreed the strategic risks identified in the report;
- noted the actions in mitigation;
- noted the corporate issues being managed; and
- noted the risk tolerance measures outside threshold and the actions being taken to manage these.

#### 14. Corporate Health Performance Report - October (Period 7) 2018/19

14.1 The Corporate Health Performance Report had been distributed to the Board. Gill Kilpatrick presented the report.

14.2 Gill Kilpatrick said that sickness absence levels were now below the CIPD benchmark. This was a significant milestone.

14.3 Alan Graham commented that in Table 1 (page 4) the two items with Red ratings (Purchases >£3k compliant with procurement code (99.1%); and Number of overdue audit actions (1)) would in most organisations be considered to be satisfactory. Gill Kilpatrick agreed and said that we would have more nuanced tolerances next year.

14.4 Dean Fathers said that he would be interested to see how the Key Performance Indicators for *Our People* and *Staff perception* broke down across minority groups. Gill Kilpatrick said that the Senior Leadership Team were also looking closely at this.

14.5 Elisabeth Davies commented that, reflecting on Strategic Objective 3 (To work in partnership to improve public services, especially front line complaint handling), it was not clear who was responsible for helping complainants to resolve their complaints at the first tier. Warren Seddon said that we did have a strategy for delivering objective 3, including:

- Creating agreed complaints standards across the sector;
- Involving the advocacy sector;
- Developing training and other tools to deliver in practice;
- Supporting complainants (including increasing awareness of how to complain).

14.6 Elisabeth Davies asked about Value for Money metrics Alan Graham said that ARAC were due to discuss this further. Rob Behrens concluded that this would be taken forward by ARAC after the PACAC hearing.

## 15. Financial Monitoring Report, 31 October 2018

15.1 The Financial Monitoring Report had been distributed to the Board.

15.2 The Board discussed the forecast overspend. Gill Kilpatrick explained that, on identifying the potential overspend at the end of October, ET and SLT had taken urgent action to identify potential savings. She assured the Board that each proposed saving had been considered carefully and risk-assessed to minimise the impact on our service. She advised the Board that whilst the report contained a reduced forecast overspend, further savings had been identified. We were looking to identify further savings to create some headroom. Amanda Campbell added that, whilst historically we have tended to underspend, we are no longer in that position and financial control is now far tighter.

15.3 Rob Behrens noted that the Capital budget still included an amount for London Relocation. Gill Kilpatrick explained that this had been factored in to facilitate departure from Millbank Tower. It had instead been utilised in the fit-out of the 21<sup>st</sup> floor.

15.4 Ram Gidoomal asked about the current position with regard to Millbank Tower dilapidation costs. Gill Kilpatrick said that this situation was now resolved.

15.5 The Board **noted** the monitoring position at 30 October 2018 against Resource and Capital budgets, and the forecast position against Parliamentary control totals.

## 16. 2019/20 Business Planning and Budget Update

16.1 A paper by Gill Kilpatrick had been circulated.

16.2 Gill Kilpatrick presented the paper to the Board and explained that as 2020/21 was the first year of the new Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), decisions made now will set the direction for how we deal with future funding levels. She said that Treasury had advised us to expect either a flat cash settlement, or one adjusted for inflation. Those were very different scenarios.

16.2 Dean Fathers asked if we had factored in the impact of increased NHS funding on demand for our services. Amanda Campbell said that demand had been



static over five years and it was difficult to say what the impact would be. Gill Kilpatrick said that if demand rose significantly due to increased systemic failings, we could bid for additional funding. Mick King said that significant changes in local authority funding had not changed the demand for LGSCO services, although the nature of complaints had changed.

- 16.3 Mick King expressed concern that we were forecasting a budget requirement of under £26m by 20/21, against current year expenditure of £30.6m in 2018/19. He asked whether a reduction of this scale was achievable over two years. Gill Kilpatrick said that some savings had been backloaded in the CSR bid. Additionally, much of our expenditure on accommodation and building charges was expected to fall away.
- 16.4 Ram Gidoomal asked whether it was feasible to share some of the costs of our ICT and digital strategy with other organisations. Gill Kilpatrick said that where this was technically feasible we would look to do so, subject to issues of timing, independence and security.
- 16.5 The Board **noted** the approach to the 2019/20 Business Plan and the future financial forecast for 2020/21. They also **noted** the pressure on the budget for 2019/20, and the choices to be made to deliver strategic objectives to the Board in January 2019.

## **17. Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19**

- 17.1 A paper by Helen Holmes had been distributed to the Board.
- 17.2 Helen Holmes explained that the timescale to produce and lay the annual report and accounts was tight this year due to the unavailability of the National Audit Office (NAO) until 24 June 2019, although their visit would last two weeks rather than three as previously. It may also be necessary to put back the Board meeting to approve the accounts, scheduled for 5 July 2019, to the following week.
- 17.3 Alan Graham said that ARAC had looked at the plan and timetable carefully. It was critical that we co-operated and collaborated with NAO to complete the accounts. Gill Kilpatrick said that she had been in touch with NAO. They are coming on site two weeks later than last year, but will carry out some preliminary work in May, which will bring forward the timescale to delivery.
- 17.4 Ruth Sawtell suggested that, for the 2019/20 accounts, we could write earlier contact from NAO into their contract. Gill Kilpatrick said that she would take that forward.
- 17.5 Elisabeth Davies said that she was pleased to see that we proposed to change the format. Whilst it was necessary to comply with financial reporting requirements, this needed to be balanced with accessibility and comparability.

17.6 The Board **noted** the proposed timetable for production of the annual report and accounts.

## **18. Clinical Advice Review**

18.1 Alex Allan (Review Chair) provided the Board with a verbal update on the Clinical Advice Review. He said that he wished to place on record his thanks to Warren Seddon and Dan Leighton for the support that they had provided to the Review.

18.2 Alex Allan said that 167 responses to the consultation had been received, of which half were from complainants and the remainder from within the medical profession. Liam Donaldson is close to completing his report. Alex Allan advised the Board of what he understood to be the emerging themes in the report. Recommendations in the report were likely to include:

- Integration of clinical advice into casework;
- better communications with complainants;
- A more systems-based approach to investigation, rather than a focus on individual clinical failure;
- Improving our terminology;
- Appointment of a Medical Director, and a Director for Patients and Families.

18.3 Alex Allan said that once the draft report was completed it would be shared with Rob Behrens and Amanda Campbell for their consideration. Warren Seddon would then lead the team to look at next steps. The aim was to publish the report by the end of March 2019.

18.4 Amanda Campbell said that some of the likely recommendations would require us to make tough choices or incur significant costs. There could also be an impact on casework throughput. We needed to manage expectations as our ability to deliver the recommendations would depend to some extent on the CSR outcome.

18.5 The Board **noted** the verbal update.

## **19. Professional Skills Training and Accreditation Update**

19.1 A presentation on Professional Skills Training and Accreditation had been distributed. Sue Muckle (Lead Trainer) and Paul Horton (Accreditation Lead) made the presentation to the Board.

19.2 Elisabeth Davies asked if we were only looking at accreditation in the context of full scale investigation, or whether in future it could be extended to cover early dispute resolution and other non-investigative approaches. Paul Horton replied that it could be tailored to cover non-investigative activity. Abigail Howarth added that the accreditation scheme would eventually cover all casework activity.

- 19.3 Alex Allan noted that Unit 1 of the Certificate covered scoping. The Clinical Advice review had identified that there was a risk in scoping investigations too tightly. Sue Muckle said that the unit aimed to teach caseworkers to focus on the key issues identified in the complaint and to ensure these were phrased in a way which avoided ambiguity. Abigail Howarth said that the training module would be reviewed in the light of the Clinical Advice review.
- 19.4 Alan Graham asked if we were likely to reach a point where the organisation accredited externally. Paul Horton said that we were working towards this. Karl Banister added that, at least initially we had consciously decided to accredit internally as there were advantages to doing so. Dean Fathers said that he believed we should eventually seek external accreditation. Abigail Howarth said that we were looking to benchmark with other organisations next year.
- 19.5 Rob Behrens said that we were ahead of the Ombudsman sector, and had a duty to disseminate our programme to other Ombudsmen. He asked if the training was designed to deliver the Ombudsman Association Competency Framework, Karl Banister confirmed that this had been fed into the programme design.
- 19.6 Ruth Sawtell said that she was pleased to hear the positive reflections on the outcome of our Learning and Development Programme. She said that there was a strong link between this work and value for money, Rob Behrens said that Peter Tyndall had referred to the programme in his report.
- 19.7 Mick King reflected that revalidation in the medical profession had caused some doctors to leave the profession. He asked if the accreditation programme could place similar pressures on PHSO caseworkers. Rob Behrens said it was an inevitable consequence of the programme that staff who did not make the grade would feel pressured. We were supporting staff as far as possible. Amanda Campbell said that accreditation had been kept separate from performance management, but that it was the key to delegation.
- 19.8 Elisabeth Davies asked how often staff would be required to seek re-accreditation. Paul Horton said that every eighteen months - two years would be the norm. It was envisaged that this would not cover the whole programme, but a shortened version with an evaluation exercise.
- 19.9 The Board noted the update.

## **20. 2018 Staff Survey**

- 20.1 A paper by Shareena Merzi had been distributed. Shareena Merzi presented the report to the Board.
- 20.2 Dean Fathers welcomed the results. He said that it was important to identify lead and lag indicators within the data, and asked whether the improved

figures on numbers of staff likely to leave had been built into our thinking on future years' budgets. Amanda Campbell replied that this had been recognised and we had taken on some fixed term contract staff this year.

- 20.3 Elisabeth Davies said that it was likely that the investment in learning and development would make staff more marketable. We should reflect on how we managed this. Steve James agreed that the investment in developing staff had enhanced their career development. Amanda Campbell said that it was the aim to develop staff up through the organisation. However at the same time we had reduced the number of senior posts. This was a situation that would need to be managed.
- 20.4 Alex Allan noted that the greatest variance with the Civil Service figures was satisfaction with pay and benefits, where we were significantly ahead. Amanda Campbell said that there was a legacy issue about paying staff more than the market rate, which would need to be managed.
- 20.5 Alan Graham pointed out that there was a significant variance between willingness to speak up and the ability to challenge. Shareena Merzi agreed that this would be worth examining further. Amanda Campbell said that in her experience staff were not reluctant to speak out or challenge management.
- 20.6 The Board noted the survey results.

## **21. Internal Audit Procurement**

- 21.1 A paper by Gill Kilpatrick had been distributed. Helen Holmes presented the paper to the Board.
- 21.2 Helen Holmes said that, following a joint procurement exercise with LGSCO, carried out in line with the PHSO Procurement Code, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services had been selected as the preferred provider of internal audit services for both organisations from 1 April 2019.
- 21.3 Helen Holmes said that ARAC had discussed the procurement process at its meeting on 29 November. This had included discussion of concerns over the development of the tender that had been raised at the Board meeting on 27 September 2018. The Committee had noted that the process had not been good and that there were lessons to be learned. They had also confirmed their view that ARAC must not be subject to any constraints in seeking any additional internal audit on any matter that fell within its terms of reference. However ARAC had been assured that the process to appoint new auditors had been robust. The Board noted the discussion by ARAC,
- 21.4 Alan Graham said that, whilst there had been difficulties with the procurement process, he was satisfied with the outcome and was happy to convey ARAC's endorsement of the recommendation to appoint RSM UK Risk Assurance Services.

21.5 Alan Graham noted that the minutes of the ad hoc ARAC meeting on 27 September 2018 were not included with the Board papers or reflected in the minutes of the 29 November 2018 and asked for this to be rectified.

**Action: Governance to distribute ad hoc ARAC minutes of 27 September 2018 to the Board**

21.6 Mick King said that the joint procurement of new auditors was a positive outcome for PHSO and LGSCO, with significant implications for Value for Money.

21.7 The Chair asked the Board to confirm that they were assured that the procurement process was sound, and that the appointment of the recommended provider should be confirmed. This was agreed.

## **22. Quality Committee**

22.1 Draft minutes of the Quality Committee meeting on 15 November 2018 had been distributed. Elisabeth Davies presented the minutes to the Board and set out the highlights of the meeting.

22.2 Elisabeth Davies said that three main points emerged from the meeting:

- There had been falls in internal assurance scores for both commitment 9 (sharing emerging facts) and commitment 11(explaining decisions). However the committee had been assured that the falls were not mirrored in customer feedback.
- The organisation was piloting a further level of internal QA sampling, where a quality working group including a Quality Committee member would examine a sample of investigation reports. The pilot exercise would be completed and reviewed by the end of December 2018.
- The Committee had received an excellent presentation on Specialist Knowledge in Casework which had provided significant assurance that the loss of specialist knowledge had been identified and was being addressed, with a particular focus on 15 priority areas. Staff were taking the lead in this initiative.

22.3 Warren Seddon noted the references to transparency in the Quality Committee minutes. He said that, following Mick King's presentation on Transparency to the Senior Leadership Team and Board awayday, a strategy paper would be presented to the Board during 2019.

## **23. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

23.1 The draft minutes of the ARAC meeting held on 29 November 2018 had been distributed to the Board. Alan Graham presented the minutes to the Board. He noted that the draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2018 had not been included with the Board papers.

**Action: Governance to distribute minutes of the ARAC meeting of 21 September 2018 to Board members.**

23.2 Alan Graham noted that there was an error on the second page of the draft minutes, which referred to the minutes as those of 21 September.

**Action: Governance to correct ARAC minutes of 29 November 2018.**

23.3 Alan Graham said that he had been pleased to welcome Richard O’Connell (Director of Resources) to his first ARAC meeting on 29 November, together with the new representative from the National Audit Office. He was also grateful to Ram Gidoomal, who had attended the meeting by telephone from the USA. Key points of the meeting included:

- The Financial Management Report had provided assurance about financial controls following the identification of a potential overspend;
- ARAC had received internal audit reports on the Service Charter and on Financial and Accounting Systems - Purchase to Pay. Both had been rated significant *assurance with minor improvement opportunities*.
- The Committee had discussed the internal audit procurement process.

23.4 Alex Allan asked about the outstanding internal audit recommendation on Cyber Security. Alan Graham said that this concerned Access Controls, and had a medium rating. Gill Kilpatrick said that the report had only recently been received so it was too soon to close the item. The target date for implementation was December.

## **24. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **BOARD DATES**

24.1 Helen Holmes said that, during 2018, a number of Board and Committee dates had been notified which conflicted with other appointments. She was trying to find out how this had happened.

24.2 Helen Holmes said that on Friday 14 December 2018 she planned to poll Board Members on alternative dates for the conflicted meetings, and aimed to send out a list of revised dates by Monday 17 December 2018.

24.3 Following discussion, Helen Holmes agreed that, once the revised dates are agreed, a full list of all Board and Committee dates will be issued, together with details of any dates that have been cancelled.

24.4 Alan Graham said that certain dates were important. In particular it was crucial that ARAC and Board both met in July to agree the annual report and accounts and these should ideally take place on the same day.

### **SPEAK UP GUARDIAN**

- 24.5 Rob Behrens said that in line with recommendations in the Francis report and initiatives elsewhere in the NHS and regulatory sector, the office were looking to appoint a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian. Steve James said that the process to appoint a suitable person had commenced. The PHSO Whistleblowing policy will be amended accordingly.
- 24.6 Alan Graham asked whether there were subject areas where a Guardian was particularly appropriate. Dean Fathers explained that any area where the safety of individuals was potentially involved would come within the remit of the Guardian
- 24.7 Rob Behrens said that a report from the National Guardian showed that organisations with no Guardian had a poor record compared to those NHS organisations that did. He said that that the Guardian should be appointed by an open and independent process.

**Action: Steve James to report back to the Board once the appointment is completed.**

## **25. Review of meeting**

- 25.1 Kate Eisenstein said that it had been a long meeting - this was positive as topics were discussed in considerable depth. She had also been impressed by the diversity of the discussion. Overall she had found the meeting exciting and challenging.
- 25.2 Gill Kilpatrick said that we were looking at the possibility of live streaming Board meetings to staff, to increase transparency. Ram Gidoomal said that this may be very costly.
- 25.3 Ruth Sawtell said that the move to assuming that all Board papers had been read and therefore did not need to be summarised was a positive and welcome development, and a much better use of meeting time.

**The meeting ended at 15:50**