

NCSE Council Meeting 30th January, 2019
111th Meeting of the Council

Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim

Attendance: Council Members
Joe Hayes (Chairperson-designate)
Anne Tansey
Don Mahon
Antoinette Nic Gearailt
Áine Lynch

Also in Attendance: Teresa Griffin, Chief Executive
Mary Byrne, PO
Tadgh O’Leary, PO
Mary Mc Grath, PO
Jennifer Doran, PO & Board Secretary

1. Welcome and purpose of meeting

It was noted that the remaining Council members had yet to be appointed. It had previously been agreed that the continuing members would meet to address core items and discuss the induction and training process for new members at the next meeting.

Don Mahon was elected Deputy Chairperson to Council. The appointment was proposed by Anne Tansey and seconded by Antoinette Nic Gearailt.

2. Reminder – Declaration of interests (standing governance item)

The Chairperson reminded members about declaring interests, as per the Code of Conduct for Council members. There were no items to declare.

3. Draft minutes of the meeting on 11th and 12th December, actions and matters arising

Under item 8 in the minutes, the word mandatory should be replaced with highly desirable.

Under actions arising:

1. Done.
2. The points related to assisted decisions remains on the programme of work and an update will be provided at the March meeting.
3. Quarterly trend data will be provided as part of the CEO report at the third Council meeting.
4. Feedback provided to the researchers and the report will be prepared for publication when received.
5. Some further analyses will be done as part of the quarterly report as per point three above.
6. The Charter has been finalised and will be published when translated into Irish.
7. Done.

| Actions | Person |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Progress item 2 for the next Council meeting | MMcG |

4. Chief Executive Report

The report was circulated in advance to members. A number of further updates were provided on the day.

- The Chairperson-designate engaged, as required, with the Joint Oireachtas Committee as part of the ratification process for his appointment. The Committee welcomed his appointment and will write to the Minister to note they have engaged with the Chairperson.
- Joint Committee Members spoke highly about the contribution of Eamon Stack while he was Chairperson of the NCSE.
- In relation to the other Council appointments, the DES advised that a report will be going to the Minister early next week for approval. Members will be notified as soon as possible thereafter.
- The volume of work requested/required from members will be kept under consideration and members should notify Council should any issues arise regarding Council work demands.
- Work on the implementation of a pilot project for the School Inclusion Model in 2019/20 as per the memo for government was still at draft stage and there was ongoing discussions between the lead Government Departments.

The feedback provided from the Consultative Forum on the NCSE's website was noted. The executive will consider these points in developing the website.

Council were required to note one matter. The DES requested an extension to the PDA until the end of February and update it at that point. Council approved the extension until the end of March as it would be this meeting before a new PDA could be approved.

4. Approval of process to appoint Audit & Risk Committee Chair

Council approved the process with the change in the qualifications.

It was suggested that the qualifications may restrict the number of applications but that this would be kept under review as applications are sought. Should insufficient appropriate candidates apply, the executive will review the criteria and re-advertise.

5. Initial discussion on Council Committees and induction

Council views were sought on future representation on Committees. Members agreed that it was appropriate for the Chairperson to allocate people to Committees and if members have a strong view about not being on a Committee, they could discuss it separately. This item will be covered on the second day of the March meeting.

Council agreed that current members would assist in the induction process to explain the role of Council members on the various committees.

The importance of covering governance issues was noted. Induction on governance matters will be interspersed with other agenda items to ensure members are not overwhelmed on the topic.

The March meeting will involve the Canadian representatives presenting on the Canadian system and they have confirmed their attendance on the second day of the March Council meeting. It was suggested that the Canadian representatives should meet with DES and

other stakeholders during their visit. The NCSE is considering organising a small symposium to support this.

6. Process to sign off draft accounts with the Chair and the CEO

A process to sign off on the draft accounts in the absence of Committee structures and full Council was circulated with the papers.

Council approved the process.

7. Special schools/classes policy advice- preparation for study visits and presentations

A well advanced draft of the policy advice is required by the end of the year. Council members considered that study visits to schools and expert presentations would be very helpful. The potential for an overseas study visit, subject to funding, should be considered.

In terms of expert presentations, Council suggested school principals and teachers, parents, someone with a disability and an academic. With regard to parents, it was agreed to invite parents with a variety of experiences, mainstream and specialist. The risk of seeking only one parent view was noted. This risk could apply to all experts and therefore a presentation from an academic with a good overview of systems would be useful.

One Council member indicated that an eastern European country had recently changed their system to close special schools. This will be confirmed and followed up as it may be useful to invite representatives from this country. Portugal and Malta are also making changes, so these can be considered too.

The UN has now made rulings in eleven countries that there shouldn't be any segregated settings. A presentation on the UN Convention could be organised for a future meeting.

In relation to school visits, Council value these visits. It was suggested to go outside of Dublin, though not exclusively avoiding it. It was suggested to consider sites in Northern Ireland and visiting remote schools as they often have no choice but to be very inclusive. A range of schools and a range of special schools will need to be visited to ensure good variety.

Members were requested to email further ideas to Mary Byrne. Some standard questions and areas of focus should be provided to members to structure their observations and questions.

The research on special classes commissioned by the NCSE should be sent to members again to review the executive summary.

The visits will need to be organised after the March meeting and before May.

| Actions | Person |
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| 2. Organise school visits and expert presentations | MB |
| 3. Circulate research report in advance of presentations | JD |

8. Annual Report

A draft outline of the report content was circulated and Council views on the final draft were sought.

It was suggested the annual report could be used to profile the organisation and more copies could be issued, in particular, to the Oireachtas Committee members. The Committee requested that we list issues we are concerned about in our Annual Report. However, it was suggested it may be more fruitful to follow up with the Committee separately on our issues by way of letter and note issues such as the Disability Act.

The AR should highlight the positive work of the NCSE and the positive impact this has on the system, highlighting our main achievements.

More infographics on our stats was suggested and to provide them on a separate sheet to accompany the report.

| Actions | Person |
|--|---------------|
| 4. Write to Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills with the annual report when ready | TG |
| 5. Consider more infographics on our stats | MMcG |
| 6. Send a copy of the AR to Oireachtas Committee members | JD |

9. Initial overview of technology and T&S for members

It is proposed that the new Council will use NCSE Microsoft surface pro tablets for NCSE business to ensure connectivity to NCSE and use NCSE email addresses. Council papers will move to a sharepoint system and will be supported by the NCSE IT unit.

Members will be reminded of the policy and good practice to claim T&S expenses regularly and as soon as possible after meetings. NCSE executive will be present on the day of the Council meeting to support new members use the system.

10. AOB

Council noted the additional cost and approval for the procurement of Occupational Therapy services.

Council members were reminded of the 2019 Council meeting dates.

It was agreed to invite members of the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills to the research conference again and if they cannot attend, to provide a briefing to them afterwards if required.

| Actions | Person |
|---|---------------|
| 7. Invite Oireachtas Committee members to the research conference | JD |

Joe Hayes
Chairperson
19th March, 2019

Teresa Griffin
Chief Executive
19th March, 2019