

NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE TRUST
Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors held in person at The Lookout, Hyde Park,
on 03 October 2023 between 16:00 and 18:45

Present:	Harris Bokhari OBE (Chair) Jessica Evans (Youth Rep) Mark Gifford (CEO) Jo Harrison (Board Apprentice) Tristram Mayhew Jacquie Nnochiri	Ndidi Okezie Ashley Summerfield (virtual) Lamin Tarawally (Youth Rep) Deborah Tavana Amanda Timberg Darren Xiberras (virtual)
In attendance:	Amanda Best (COO) Michael Devlin (Strategic Adviser to the Chair) Kelly Holder (Executive Director, Operations & Transformation) Jo Hutchinson (Executive Director, Digital Products) Sarah Knight (Head of Board Governance & Compliance)	Lisa Mullen (Executive Assistant to the CEO) Sarfraz Nawaz (Executive Director, Finance) Adrian Ruddock (Executive Director Digital and Technology) Hannah Stoddart (Executive Director, Strategy and Insight)
Apologies:	Nick Hurd Laura Jackson (Govt Rep) Ian Livingstone	

Item 1. Icebreaker

- Mr Bokhari introduced the meeting and conducted an icebreaker for the group.

Item 2. Welcome and conflicts of interest

- Mr Bokhari opened his first meeting as new NCS chair, highlighting three focus areas: young people (YP), impact and growth. He noted that four new non-executive directors would join the board from December.
- Mr Bokhari noted Board member apologies and gave thanks to the outgoing chair for his commitment and congratulated the board on its achievements to date.
- Apologies were noted and the conflicts of interest (COI) register was acknowledged, with any further emerging COIs to be reported to Ms Knight following the meeting. No further COIs were declared during the meeting.

Item 3. Youth introduction

- Mr Bokhari introduced a video created by the Youth Advisory Board as a moment of reflection. He noted that the recent Youth Advisory Board meeting included a strategy development session, with young people providing valuable input. Mr Bokhari and Mr Gifford both had the privilege of being present at the sessions.

Item 4. NCS Impact

- Ms Stoddart gave a comprehensive explanation of the approach to impact within NCS, noting that impact evaluations consistently demonstrate that NCS equips young people with valuable skills sought by employers that go above and beyond traditional school curriculums.
- The board discussed the importance of data collection from different sources such as young people and providers, and capturing longitudinal data. It also inquired into the manageability of balancing all the key areas outlined within the report. It was explained that the intensity of focus can be varied based on the service line, and also that different impact metrics are often complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

Action: Ms Stoddart to share one pager on impact.

Item 5. CEO Report

- Mr Gifford took the management report as read.
- The board noted the strong relationships that NCS had cultivated with the government and wider stakeholders, including credibility gained through the successful bid for the shared outcomes fund (SOF). The Trust's partnership with the Duke of Edinburgh's award was welcomed.
- The organisation was running at capacity, with adjustments being made internally to maximise impact with existing resources in order to capitalise on opportunities while retaining important focus on BAU. A potential General Election, and the need to prepare for another upcoming spending review, were also flagged as key areas of focus.
- Board members with corporate connections were encouraged to share these connections with the executive in order to explore additional funding opportunities and the board also discussed the advantages associated with an ability for the Trust to hold its own reserves and spread funding across years.

Action: Board members to share corporate links with the executive.

- The board focused on the Net Promoter Score (NPS) and heard that a score above 30 was considered favourable, noting the high benchmark, and thus the importance of working closely with residential partners to address feedback promptly to reach targets in this area.

Action: A Net Promoter Score deep dive to take place.

- There was a discussion on the digital roadmap which was making progress but slower than expected, and the Executive were encouraged to prioritise making headway in this area.

Item 6 NCS Board Operating Framework 2.0

- Mr Bokhari took the report as read and opened the floor to a detailed discussion. The potential absorption of safeguarding into the ARC was discussed, with the board noting the importance of retaining the appropriate skills and expertise on the committee. In particular operational experience would be crucial to maintain whether safeguarding sat on ARC or remained as a dedicated safeguarding committee.

Action: Ms Knight to further investigate the possibility of incorporating safeguarding into ARC without compromising the quality of oversight.

- The board members also discussed the proposal to absorb impact discussions into the main board, highlighting the importance of impact to the mission of NCS and the need for full board discussions on this topic and to ensure necessary weight and focus. Other proposals discussed included the appointment of vice chairs to support the chair in leading the board, and the option to co-opt non publicly appointed external advisors to the board, noting these members would not count towards a quorum or have voting rights (note: both options had been discussed with the department). No decisions would be made until new board members were in place in the next few weeks, and the topics would be re-tabled for discussion at the January Board.
- The board decided that no meeting would take place in December, instead being postponed to January to ensure sufficient time for inducting new board members and to maximise availability given the busy Christmas period.

Item 7 Regular Governance

- The June board minutes were presented for approval, and the approved sub committee minutes were noted. The Board action log was reviewed, with one action being moved to the ARC, and the action around a new safeguarding chair remaining open. Co-chairs of the youth advisory board and subcommittee chairs provided verbal updates on their

respective committees. Ms Tavana reported that she had requested a review of policies that should be tabled at committee level for approval.

- The board discussed the going concern of the Trust, noting the stipulation of NAO that the board should approve the Trust as a going concern as part of the audit. This was approved, signalling the board's confidence in the Trust's ability to operate for at least 12 months following the signing of the accounts. Approval authority for the FY 22/23 Annual Report was delegated to the ARC. The board also noted the Banking Policy, which had been approved by the ARC in September.

AOB

- No AOB was noted.

NED only session

- Mr Bokhari thanked the executive for their contribution before holding a private discussion with the non-executive.

MEETING CLOSED at 18:45. The next meeting will take place on 30th January 2024

Signed by the Chair:



Date signed: 5th December, 2023

DRY