

Consumer Scotland Board Meeting
29 March 2022
Minute of Meeting

Attendees: David Wilson (Chair)
Angela Morgan (Board Member)
Nick Martin (Board Member)
James Walker (Board Member)
Sam Ghibaldan (Programme Director)
Sue Bomphray (Scottish Government Implementation Team)
Wendy McCutcheon (Scottish Government Implementation Team)
Ifthakhar Eresh (Consumer Scotland)

Apologies: Jill Rosie (Scottish Government Implementation Team)

Prior to the start of the meeting Nick asked if there was a quorum for the Board meetings going forward. Sue stated that she will check the Standing Orders and advise at April's Board meeting.

- **Action – Sue to find out what is considered quorate for the Board.**

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to this Teams meeting, which had been designed as a stocktake meeting to ensure that everything was in place for 1 April's vesting day.

Agenda Item 2 – Vesting readiness

2. There were two papers for discussion. The "Go/No-go" Checklist and Engagement around Vesting paper was introduced by Sam.
3. Sue then took the Board through the checklist in detail, highlighting that the vast majority of necessary work is already completed; some of the work such as stakeholder letters cannot be issued until vesting day.
4. The Framework Agreement, as has been previously minuted, has been examined by independent expert lawyers. Feedback from the lawyers states that the Agreement is fit for purpose and as such will be brought to April's Board meeting for sign off.
5. The work around FOI and IOC registration is ongoing with both organisations aware that Consumer Scotland is vesting on 1 April.
6. As there will be a phased implementation of Consumer Scotland, FOI officials have advised that Consumer Scotland will have to the end of June 2022 to fulfil all the legal requirements such as producing a publication scheme. However, as of 1 April, FOI requests can be submitted to Consumer Scotland and the holding page on the Scottish Government website has been updated to reflect this. The Board

requested that a document explaining the essentials of FOI be brought to the April meeting.

7. Nick had recently enquired about finance/banking. Sue was able to advise that Consumer Scotland now has its own cost centre code which will allow purchase orders, invoices, grant letters, etc to be raised and paid. Consumer Scotland will be using the Scottish Government's purchase to pay system – Easebuy. Banking will be via the Scottish Government bank account as is the case for all public bodies. Consumer Scotland will have its own separate bank account for processing payroll only. The signatories were discussed for payroll and Sue agreed to send round information on Scottish public finances.
8. As part of the audit chain, it was agreed that systems / procedures around finance and banking should be approved at April's Board meeting.
9. Once Consumer Scotland is up and running, it will be this organisation that pays Board, and any other, expenses, including those for the members of the Energy Consumers Commission (ECC). There is already a process for claiming Board expenses however further guidance will be looked at and developed for use by Consumer Scotland. Angela also suggested that where there was any deviation from the standard procedures this should be highlighted and explained.
10. There was then an update on the interim strategic plan where it was noted that there had been a discussion since the strategy session in March. The structure is in place and content has been drafted. The next meeting is being set up and at that meeting the content will be reviewed to ensure that it is understandable, short and snappy. Angela requested to see the documents to ensure that the papers for the consumers in vulnerable circumstances short life working group aligned with the plan and vice versa.
11. The Chair provided an update on the accountable officer.
12. The Board agreed that they had been provided with sufficient information to proceed with the vesting of Consumer Scotland on 1 April 2022.
13. Eresh joined the meeting and the Chair welcomed him stating that Eresh had started in the finance and governance role. Eresh is the first of the high priority Scottish Government posts to start working in Consumer Scotland.
14. The organogram was discussed in detail with Angela stating that it would be useful to have details of the relationship between the Head of Communications and the communications contract organisation. There was also a request for the organogram to be updated to provide the Board with a clear idea of where Consumer Scotland is with employment of staff. A supplement to the organogram was also requested which would provide a list of companies that have been contracted to carry out work on behalf of Consumer Scotland. An updated organogram will be brought to April's meeting.
15. Sue provided the following update to the Board:
 - A new role has been created which is the Head of Strategic Co-Ordination.

- Many of the high priority posts have now been filled and staff will take up their posts throughout April and May.
- The recruitment for the externally advertised posts will get underway on 4 April.
- Security clearance is ongoing for the CAS TUPE transfer staff.
- Consumer Scotland will be able to utilise the Government Recruitment Service (GRS) from 4 April. This is a fully-managed service which only takes around six to seven weeks to undertake the full recruitment process for individual roles.

16. Sue also advised the Board that there was a detailed induction pack and plan in development and that this would be brought to the April Board meeting for information.

17. The relationship between Consumer Scotland and CAS was discussed and a Memorandum of Understanding is being drawn up which needs to be agreed and adopted by both organisations.

- **Action** - Sue to determine how we will pay ECC members.
- **Action** – Sam to provide confirmation of Head of Communications relationship with the external communications company Consumer Scotland is procuring.
- **Action – For April Board:**
 - Sue to share written update on finance systems and how they operate noting any diversion from standard procedures.
 - Wendy to provide FOI guide on what Board members and staff need to know.
 - Sue to share suite of policies, induction pack/plan, Pathways link and mechanism for reviewing/updating.
 - Sue to update organisation charts to show recruitment of staff and external parties providing support.
 - Sue to provide list of confirmed suppliers.

Agenda Item 3 – AOB

18. There being no other business the Chair thanked everyone for their participation and expressed his thanks for all the progress that has been made.

19. The date of the next scheduled Board meeting is 19 April 2022 from 10 am until 12 noon. However the Chair requested that the meeting be extended until 1 pm to incorporate lunch. The meeting will be held in Meadowbank House, Edinburgh. *Note that subsequent to this meeting it has been agreed that the format for 19 April will be Audit & Risk Committee (1000-1030 hrs), Main Board (1045-1230 hrs), lunch (1230-1300 hrs).*

- **Action** – Calendar requests to be updated with new timing and venue of April Board meeting – Implementation Team.
- **Action** – Lunch to be ordered for April Board meeting – Implementation Team.

Consumer Scotland Implementation Team, April 2022