**Citizens Advice Watford - Trustee Board Meeting**

**Tuesday 28 April 2020 6pm**

**Meeting held by video conference due to Covid-19**

**Minutes PART 1**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Minutes Part 1 | |
|  | **Standard Items** | |
|  | **Apologies / Introductions**  **Present (meeting held by video conference due to Covid-19):**  Farrukh Siddiqi (FS) – Chair  Leena Nagrecha (LN) – Company Secretary  Pui Wah Carter (PWC) – Treasurer  Yomi Akisanya (YA) – Trustee  Laurence Blake (LB) – Trustee  Meera Lachani (ML) – Trustee  Fikile Mkoyana (FM) – Trustee\*  Gail Tendler (GT) – Trustee  Salim Bakirci (SB) – Chief Officer  Catherine Markowski (CM) – Advice Service Manager & staff representative  Mike Sellman (MS) – Volunteer representative  Rosie Woodhouse (RW) – minutes  \*For technical reasons FM joined the meeting by phone and was able to contribute using the online chat function only.  **Apologies**  George Derbyshire (GD) – WBC representative  Stephen Bolton (SBolton) – WBC representative |  |
|  | **Conflicts of interest**  None |  |
|  | **Minutes**   1. **Board meeting held on 28 January 2020**   The minutes were approved by the board and signed by the Chair.   1. **Matters Arising**   **Completed actions:**   * KPIs – MS has fed this back to volunteers * SMCR – Level 1 completed * Trustees to attend workers’ meetings – FS has circulated an email to this effect   **Actions carried forward:**   * GDPR – All trustees to activate their Docebo account on receiving email link. Complete GDPR e-learning if this was not done on Learn (all except FS, PWC and LB). * COI – All trustees to declare new conflicts of interest annually to Salim. * SMCR – Level 2 now available on Docebo and to be completed by all supervisors, debt advisers and generalist advisers delivering debt advice. * Fire drill – postponed due to Covid-19   **New actions:**  4a) Business plan to be reviewed.  4c) Update volunteers with progress on remote working.  5c) SB to circulate list of items for additional expenditure.  7) Review arrangement for remote working and GDPR.  10) Read policies within two weeks and send SB an email either to approve or suggest modification(s) or improvement(s).  11) CM to invite FM to a meeting in her role as Equality Link Trustee when circumstances permit.  11) Send finance policy to FM.  13) Review R&C development plan.  13) Identify an influential contact to assist with R&C work. | RW / ALL  SB / ALL  CM / RW  SB  CM  SB  SB / PWC  ALL  CM / FM  PWC / FM  CM  ALL |
|  | **Decisions by email since last meeting**   1. **Business Plan 2020-23**   This has been updated but needs to be reviewed due to Covid-19. The business plan was approved on the basis that it will be reviewed.   1. **Income generation plan**   SB updated this using the Watford & Three Rivers Trust template. Approved.   1. **Covid 19 Action plan**   All staff and some volunteers are working remotely (currently 23 people). The rota is covered every day with people delivering Adviceline, email advice and telephone advice appointments. The Recovery Plan is in progress. CM will keep all volunteers updated with current progress and working arrangements. Approved.   1. **HCF grants for clients**   £100 remains to be distributed out of the £500 grant.   1. **HCF Covid-19 IT grant**   This grant covered £2,000 for additional computers and £3,000 for delivering telephone advice, which pays for additional assessor capacity of 6 hours per week for 12 weeks. Approved.   1. **Rough Sleeping intervention**   The funding will continue for another year for a full-time housing adviser.   1. **Pension Wise room hire**   We have received a payment of £900 from CA High Wycombe to cover room hire costs until the end of the year.   1. **Shanly Foundation**   We have received a grant of £2,000 to deliver disability benefits advice for 12 weeks.  Confirmation is awaited on two further funding decisions.   * The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced additional funding for CA but there has been no communication from CA concerning how this will be distributed. * HTC is extended for a further year with a 2% increase.   All decisions by email were approved by the board subject to the reviews / updates identified above. | SB / CM |
|  | **Assurance Items** |  |
|  | 1. **Q4 Management Accounts**   The accounts were presented to the meeting. There is some additional expenditure as a result of Covid-19 but this is mostly covered by the funding received.   1. **March 19 Financial report**   The report was presented to the meeting. The importance of maintaining healthy reserves was noted due to the potential impact of Covid-19 on future funding, and the uncertainty of HWAS and HTC.   1. **Budget 20/21 overview**   This will be updated in September to reflect any additional expenditure generated by Covid-19. SB will circulate a list of items.   1. **CA’s financial dashboard Q4**   The report was presented to the meeting and approved by the Board. | SB |
|  | **CA Watford KPIs**  The report was presented to the meeting. It shows that 800 more people were helped this year than last due to improved performance. It is expected there will be an increase in demand when the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) comes to an end in June. |  |
|  | **Risk Assessment**  The risk register was presented to the meeting. Five new risks were added to the register as a result of Covid19. The Board considered whether to add the risk of a breach of GDPR due to more people working remotely and on their own devices. It was agreed that SB and PWC will meet next week to review the arrangements currently in place for remote working. | SB / PWC |
|  | **Advice Needs Analysis 20/21**   * Minority groups are generally over-represented among our clients but this year shows an increase in clients identifying their ethnicity as white. This is likely to be because telephone advice covers the whole district, reducing the diversity overall. Young people are under-represented but this is deemed acceptable because alternative sources of advice are available to this age group. * Amongst volunteers, young people are also under-represented but there was an increase this year due to student volunteers. |  |
|  | **PQF Dashboard – Quarter 4**  SB presented this to the meeting. The report shows an improvement in client experience which is likely to be due to the initial check process. |  |
|  | **Policy and Decision Items** |  |
|  | **Policies update**   1. Safeguarding policies 2. Confidentiality 3. Domestic Abuse 4. Environmental 5. Equality and diversity 6. Home working policy 7. Home working data protection 8. Bring your own device 9. Information Risk Policy 10. Supporting vulnerable clients  * New home and remote working policies were necessary due to Covid-19. * There was a discussion around GDPR and whether a breach is more likely when WFH. It was suggested an intentional or malicious breach could take place regardless. Use of Casebook can be monitored to identify suspicious working practices. The above policies are in place to minimise the risk of an unintentional breach. * There was a further discussion around the approval and implementation of the policies. The most important policies are made available to staff and volunteers at induction and are on the website. * It was agreed the trustees would read the policies within two weeks and send SB an email either to approve the policies or suggest modification(s) or improvement(s). | SB / ALL |
|  | **Information/Discussion Items** |  |
|  | **Chief Officer’s report**  SB presented the report to the meeting.  **Equality and diversity training**  FM raised a query on this for discussion. SB provided an overview of the CA online training and explained that E&D is embedded into the Adviser Learning Programme (ALP). In addition, we invite speakers to workers’ meetings to share good practice and have an E&D policy. CM added that diversity is reflected in staff and volunteer recruitment and we are actively identifying additional learning including an ACAS workshop due to take place in April which was cancelled due to Covid-19.  FM was invited to meet with CM in her capacity as Equality Link Trustee when circumstances permit.  **Price comparisons**  FM raised a query on this for discussion. SB explained how the policy works in practice. PWC will send the policy to FM. | CM / FM  PWC / FM |
|  | **Service Manager’s report**  CM presented this to the meeting and explained updates due to Covid-19.  Staff and volunteers have responded well to the changes imposed as a result of Covid-19, with many volunteers overcoming their apprehension of the additional IT necessary. The supervisors have a heavy workload but have stepped up. RW is offering learning opportunities and keeping in touch with volunteers who are not working remotely. Only one volunteer has left and would probably have done so regardless. Remote working is likely to continue in the long term for some people so there is an opportunity to review how we work. |  |
|  | **Research and Campaigns update**  CM presented the report to the meeting.   * There is now a team of four people. * The first three objectives have been met, the focus this year will be on objectives 4 – 6. * CM is currently reviewing the R&C development plan. * Recent work includes letters to MP and WBC, scam awareness talks in the community. Current work will include collecting evidence on how clients are affected by Covid-19. * CM asked the trustees to identify an influential contact who could help with R&C work. | CM  ALL |
|  | **Volunteer representative’s report**  MS has sent tout two quizzes to volunteers and asked for suggestions on how they would like to stay in touch with each other. We are unable to share email addresses without their consent. |  |
|  | **Paid Staff Representative’s report**  CM thanked the board on behalf of the staff for the recent small salary increase. |  |
|  | **Date of next meeting and prospective reports**  7th July 2020 |  |
|  | **Part 2 HR reports** | Separate minutes |