

## National Adult Literacy Agency

**Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday 23 October 2019**  
**13:00 – 15:00**

Present: Mary Bambrick (MB), Chairperson, Noel Phelan (NP), Anna Touhy Halligan (ATH), Louise Canavan (LC), Pat Ayton (PA), Liz O’Sullivan (LO’S), Lee Mitchel (LM), Michael Duffy (MD), David Heylin (DH), Hazel Cryan (HC).

Apologies: Kevin Kelly (KK), Marie O’Gorman (MO’G), Olive Phelan (OP), Sinead Ryan (SR).

In Attendance: Inez Bailey (IB).

Minute Taker: Miriam Johnston (MJ).

<b>Decision taken at the meeting:</b>
<b>1. The NALA Making Protective Disclosures Policy was approved</b>
<b>2. NALA QQI Re-engagement – Documents updated were approved</b>
<b>3. The Board approved the draft Strategic Plan 2020-22 as presented.</b>
<b>4. Values of NALA to be changed by replacing ‘Support’ with ‘Inclusion’</b>

**5. Declaration of any conflict of interest/loyalty – none.**

**6. Previous minutes and matters arising.**

The minutes were adopted subject to a correction being made in Section 9(f) to clarify that the report from the SOLAS appointed auditor was a draft and not the final report.

In relation to the actions arising from the previous meeting it was noted that:

- The report of the current numbers in 1:1 provision and voluntary tutors would be made to the board at a future date.
- Instructions in relation to the writing of the minutes had been given.
- A report on the process of nominating members to the ETBs was included in the board pack.
- LO’S had been contacted in relation to a potential nominee.
- An update on the SOLAS report had been included in the CEO report.
- Board members would be contacted with options for venues for the AGM shortly.
- The proposed rolling agendas for 2020 had been reviewed by the Chairpersons of the Audit and Finance and Staff and Policy Sub-committees.
- The title of the Data Protection legislation had been corrected in the Board Manual and the GDPR policy.

**7. Reports from all Sub-committees:**

**a. Student Sub-committee**

MD reported that a meeting of the Sub-committee had been held on 16 October. The main issue which had arisen was the requirement for Literacy Awareness Training for client-facing staff in INTREO offices. IB assured him that such training had already been provided and that an offer of additional

training had also been made. MD also asked whether libraries had of a copy of NALA's publications and he was informed that those libraries which were NALA members did receive the publications. It was agreed that membership should be on the agenda of a future meeting of the Board.

**b. Audit and Finance Sub-committee**

As it had been previously agreed that the meetings of the Sub-committee were to take place on the afternoon of the Board meeting in future, DH gave a report on finance instead. He pointed out that the September Accounts had been included in the board pack and the figures were largely in line with these. He reported that another instalment of the grant had been received from SOLAS. It was expected that there would be fairly big expenditure in the near future and that it was anticipated that NALA would be in a slight minus situation at the end of the year. He notified the Board that Alan McCormack was happy to join the Sub-committee without becoming a member of the Board. He outlined Alan's experience and the Board approved the appointment.

He informed the Board that Mazars, the new auditors, were scheduled to meet the Sub-committee that afternoon.

**c. Staff and Policy Sub-committee**

It was noted that it is now possible for Board members to access SharePoint and that any member who wants access should contact the Chairperson or the office manager. The organisation chart is to be put up on SharePoint. There was an update on the Erasmus+ project and it was noted that not all of the grant-aided conferences had been attended. It was noted that the advertisement for the new position of Finance and Support Services Manager was to be published within a couple of days of the meeting. It was noted that the new role would also cover business development.

The Chairperson reminded members that the attendance record is compiled at the end of the year and is published as part of the annual accounts.

**d. Education, Training and assessment Sub-committee**

PA went through the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Sub-committee. It had been agreed that completing the form was a learning outcome in itself. The minutes contained a good deal of detail on the Brightspace project and the NALA Re-engagement – Documents Updated which had been recommended to the Board for approval. It was noted that in future that the draft minutes of meetings of the Sub-committee would be circulated to the following meeting of the Board.

**8. NALA Board minutes for Publication to NALA Website**

The process of approving Board minutes for Publication was discussed and it was decided that the full, redacted and 'for publication' minutes should be circulated together under the usual heading 'Minutes of last meeting and matters arising' as this would be less confusing. It was decided that the cover page should always include the various grounds for redaction to aid members in considering the

minutes. It was agreed that the minutes of the September Board should be recirculated to the next meeting for further consideration.

**9. NALA Making Protective Disclosures Policy**

The Policy was approved subject to the replacement of the reference to the 'Chairperson of the Audit and Finance Sub-committee' under the heading Protected Disclosure made by NALA Worker on page 5 by 'Chairperson' unless MJ could produce a rationale for the current reference.

**10. Register of Beneficial Ownership**

The Board noted the contents of the paper on the RBO and most members who were present produced completed forms for submission. MJ was to follow up to obtain the remaining forms.

**11. NALA QQI Re-engagement – Documents updated**

The Board approved the updated policies.

**12. Strategic Plan 2020-2022 (Presentation)**

IB presented the draft Strategic Plan, giving an overview of the process involved. She explained that there was a changed context for the plan and that this required a plan which was distinctly different. It is important that NALA displays its achievements when a general election is pending and that the draft plan build in some flexibility with provision for a mid-term review. The plan was designed to provide the Board with a clear set of priorities to aid its decision making. She said that there had been no wish to change the Mission or Vision of NALA. It was agreed that the Values might be changed by replacing 'Support' with 'Inclusion'. In response to a question from DH, IB explained that the plan focussed on Health and Community Development because it was felt that NALA had spread itself too thinly in the past and that Government funding is available for those two areas so it made sense for NALA to concentrate on them.

Several points were made in the ensuing discussion:

- That the language is good and clear and that the explanations under the titles 'Why did we choose this Objective' are excellent.
- Noted that some of the work described in the plan has already started and that this reflects the reality that work already in train will not be jettisoned.
- NALA is committing to supporting an FET Policy which has not yet been published but it is confident that it will be satisfied with the adult literacy element of the new FET Policy.
- Under Objective 2 it was suggested that the description piece be expanded to make the objective come to life.
- It was agreed that Language and ESOL should be mentioned specifically in the plan.
- It was suggested that a definition of Literacies might be considered and that a graphic about skills might be included.

IB asked that any further suggestions be sent to her by Tuesday 29 October. The document would be sent for a plain English review and design prior to being printed. The Board approved the draft Strategic Plan as presented.

**13. Q3 Report**

The report was noted.

**14. CEO's Report**

The report was noted. The TASC Report is expected to be finalised shortly and will be useful in the context of a general election.

There is some interest in the Whole of Government approach.

There was a discussion on the advantages of increasing diversity on the Student Subcommittee.

**15. Private Members**

Not requested.

**16. Google Analytics**

Noted

**17. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 11 December 2019 to be followed by Christmas lunch.

<b>Actions from the meeting:</b>
Produce a rationale for the current reference in the Protected Disclosures Policy (MJ)
Follow up to obtain the remaining RBO forms (MJ)