

<b>National Adult Literacy Agency</b>	
<b>Draft Minutes of the NALA Board</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	29 March 2023
<b>Time:</b>	4:30pm – 7.00pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Online - Zoom

<b>Chairperson:</b>	Margaret Kelly (MK)
<b>Present (Charity Trustees):</b>	Aoife Foley (AF), Catherine Devlin (CD), Ciaran Casey (CC), Eleanor Neff (EN), Elma Teahan (ET), Frances Ward (FW), Lynne Keery (LK), Maurice Sammon (MS), Tracey Reilly (TR), Tom O'Mara (TOM), Trish Nolan (TN)
<b>Quorum:</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<b>In Attendance (Others):</b>	Colleen Dube (CEO), Paul Cahill (PC) (Finance & Corporate Services Manager), Michelle Reade (MR) (Governance & Compliance Officer)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Maria O'Gorman (MOG), Pat Ayton (PA)

<b>1. Welcome</b>
MK opened the meeting
<b>2. Conflicts of Interest</b>
None
<b>3. Draft Minutes of 7 December 2022 Board meeting</b>
The minutes for the meeting held on 7 December were approved subject to some typo corrections mentioned by TOM.
<b>4. 2023 Work Plan and Implementation Framework</b>
<p><b>NOTED:</b></p> <p>CEO referred to the Work Plan and Implementation Framework for 2023 that was provided and remarked that there is a huge amount of detail and information contained within. CEO gave a presentation highlighting some key projects and challenges looming that may impact our 2023 ambitions and activities. The following were highlighted in the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023 Strategic Objectives – a reminder of the 4 agreed objectives contained in the Work Plan</li> </ul>

- 2023 Ambitions - Individuals:
  - 500+ callers to the Freephone
  - 250+ referrals to the Educations and Training Boards (ETBs)
  - 2 further Direct Referral protocols put in place
  - 500+ users of the Skills Checker
  - 400 Learners using the Tutoring Service
  - 4000 1:1 Learning Sessions
  - CEO informed the Board that a new Freephone line has already been set up to support existing users of the Learn with NALA (LWN) Service
- 2023 Ambitions - Students:
  - 7 student subcommittee meetings – 3 have taken place already this year
  - 200 Students attending our events (including Student Days). 1 Student Day in Dublin has been cancelled due to low interest, but another is scheduled for Galway.
  - 50 centres in receipt of funds benefitting 500 students.
  - 1200 independent learners
  - 170+ centres including new centres and tutors
  - 300 learners achieving 120 QQI Awards (Quality and Qualifications Ireland)
  - International Literacy Day event(s). Currently in discussions with An Post to support this.
  - A research report with LWN is approaching finalisation and will be launched.
- 2023 Ambitions – Professional Development
  - Informed by a survey of needs
    - ESOL a big feature due to the influx of Ukrainian Learners
    - Health and Wellbeing also a strong theme coming through
  - 50 events (1000 participants)
  - 7 online programs (300 participants)
  - 500 course enrolments (120 certificates)
  - Investigate new pathways with Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)
  - Encourage practitioners outside of ETBs to engage with our services
  - 5000 teaching resources delivered
  - 2 teaching and learning resources updated.
- 2023 Ambitions – Organisations
  - 1000+ organisation staff availing of Literacy Awareness Training
  - 1000+ organisation staff availing of plain English Training
  - 100+ documents edited in plain English
  - CEO informed the Board that we are consistently booked out for the above activities.

- A new ambition arising from our decision last year to focus on the Furthest Behind First (FBF) is our Outreach work engaging with migrants, prisoners and people in recovery:
  - Integrating Literacy and Literacy Awareness training delivered to 500 participants of partner organisations
  - Follow on prison education project – we are in active discussions with the ALL Strategy Office about this
- 2023 Ambitions – Policy Makers
  - Target met in Q1 2023 but there will be ongoing submissions throughout the year
- Challenges:
  - Receiving clarification of 2023 Budget (expected in April 2023). We are hopeful we will receive what we requested and an initial tranche has been received
  - Understanding our role in the ALL (Adult Literacy for Life) Strategy Implementation
  - Prison Education and Innovation Fund Projects – considering applying for collaborative projects as part of the Innovation Fund. One example is s Dublin City Library Literacy Champions
  - Staff Recruitment – filling current and upcoming vacancies may impact our timelines and delivery of actions.
- MK enquired about a suggestion from the Financial Literacy report whereby Banks should make available dummy account opening processes where people could practice in their learning centres. CEO discussed with the IBCB (Irish Banking Culture Board). There is a follow up meeting with Bank of Ireland later but nothing definitive is arising.
- CC, being a former digital banking employee, remarked that this is technically very difficult to produce within the banks, even for their own purposes. Step by Step videos have been produced however.
- TOM interjected that we hadn't completed the business of Agenda Item 3. MK provided and update on action items 4.2 relating to the upcoming end to the former CEO's career break. The actions have been complete and the former CEO has until end of April to respond. CEO clarified if an action has not been mentioned as a matter of rising it has been incorporated into a program of work likely in a Subcommittee. The former CEO would have been discussed at the LSPG Subcommittee.
- TOM reverted to Agenda Item 4 and wanted to provide feedback on the detail of the Work Plan and Implementation Framework and enquired about the procedure to do so. CEO offered to answer any queries if TOM wanted to follow up after the meeting.
- FW enquired about the number of current ETBs using the Direct Referral Protocol. CEO clarified there are only 2, City of Dublin and Dublin Dun Laoghaire ETBs. CEO noted that a

proposal had been submitted to four other ETBs but had not been progressed. In addition, numbers to the Freephone have been low due to their being no active awareness campaigns. We need the support of the ALL Program office to push this before there is another campaign and get more ETBs signing up to the protocol. MK suggested we ask the ALOA to support these efforts also.

**AGREED:**

- The Work Plan was approved

**5. Subcommittees – minutes, documentation and items for decision**

**5.1 Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee**

**NOTED:**

- MK noted that a full clean audit was received and welcomed ET as the new Chairperson of the AR&F.

**5.1.1 Draft Minutes of 6 March 2023 meeting**

- ET noted that the minutes have been provided in the Board Pack and that most items will come up for discussion on today's agenda.
- MK asked if there were any alarming items in the ICT report. PC clarified that all suggestions provided in the report were improvements. PC highlighted that all the solutions being proposed are cloud based NALA needs to find the source and resolve its ongoing issues with broadband / Wi-Fi connectivity in the offices before we move to more cloud-based solutions.
- CEO added that if any Board Member have any recommendations for a network engineer to inform NALA staff.

**5.1.2 Student Expenses and Gifts Policy**

**NOTED:**

- ET stated the paper is recommended for approval and provided high level overview noting that:
  - Reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs reimbursement applies to non-board and subcommittee members already
  - The new policy provides a way to recognise people who provide their time to NALA and may be financially disadvantaged as a result. Following discussions with Mazars, NALA will offer revenue exempt gift vouchers or a third party contract.

- There was considered discussion amongst the Board Members on the application of process in an equitable manner as the policy lacks detail. It was clarified this will be clarified at the outset of an arrangements, for example, if a learner was going to assist with a campaign the overall commitments would be assessed at the outset and the appropriate arrangements agreed upon by the Management Team with the proposing staff member. It is intentional that we didn't get too granular in detail as all scenarios may be different and the intention is not to be inadvertently contractually obligated to provide specific recognition to all offering support to NALA.
- CEO further added that it will be piloted this year and further detail added after the pilot if necessary.
- PC also added that the proposals are in compliance with our Statement of Internal Financial Controls

**AGREED:**

- Approved in principle subject to:
  - a review following a pilot in 2023 with norms being developed
  - reflection in the Statement of Internal Financial Controls

**5.1.3 Update on VAT**

**NOTED:**

- PC advised that we had a favourable outcome to the ongoing VAT queries. All our activities are out of scope for VAT. A very clear determination letter has been received from Revenue. NALA now needs to reclaim VAT paid in 2022 and account for the €10,000 accrued in the balance sheet for 2022. Our 2022 Financial Accounts do not need to be amended. This can be accounted for in 2023.
- CEO mentioned the bill received from Mazars in relation to tax services. NALA has paid them what was agreed for 2022. However, Mazars want an additional fee to complete the services which NALA cannot agree to pay and will be negotiating a lower fee.
- CEO thanked the members of the AR&F for their help and advice on this matter in particular ET.

**5.1.4 Draft 2022 Financial Statements**

**AGREED:**

- The Draft 2022 Financial Statements were approved subject to a broken link being fixed.

### **5.1.5 2022 Audit Results Report**

#### **NOTED:**

- The 2022 Audit Results were noted. No approval needed.
- ET mentioned there is a Risk to be accepted in the report. The NALA Board approves the Budget before SOLAS approves our funding. This is unavoidable due to the timing of SOLAS approvals. CEO reminded the Board the details of our budget which was approved in principle in December 2022 relating to the details of the staff pay rises we were able to account for.

#### **AGREED:**

- The risk was accepted.

### **5.1.6 2022 Draft Letter of Representation**

#### **AGREED:**

- The 2022 Letter of Representation was approved

### **5.1.7 Management Accounts 2023**

#### **NOTED:**

- PC advised that there is nothing untoward in the Managements Accounts and are reflective of the time of year we are currently at.

### **5.1.8 Update on Income Protection / Death in Service Cover**

#### **NOTED:**

- CEO provided some background to this topic and how it arose following review of our Staff Handbook in 2022. It has not been budgeted for in our 2023 budget. The Board's thoughts on the proposal are requested at this point to return to the AR&F for any further required consideration and action.
- The Board discussed and clarified the details of the quotes.
- MK enquired about the view of staff and if staff would contribute. CEO responded that staff hadn't been consulted on this. However, based on experience with the pension she believed that staff would not be willing to contribute. Therefore, any proposal would likely need to be a NALA funded offering.
- TOM enquired if there was ever a DIS or IP benefit previously. PC clarified that there was not.
- MK remarked that our pension is very generous. And while the quotes to provide additional DIS or IP seem reasonable in isolation, when added to our existing benefits the

package exceeds what would be expected in the public sector. TOM suggested that it would be necessary to provide these benefits to attract and retain staff. CEO clarified that the main area of challenge NALA has in terms of recruitment and retention is the length of our contracts as they are not providing enough stability for candidates.

- MK enquired if there had been any demand for fortnightly pay. PC confirmed there was not.

**AGREED:**

- Leave this proposal for the moment and take no further action. Prioritise a solution for a return of the 2/37<sup>th</sup>s pay to staff.

## **5.2 Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee**

### **5.2.1 Draft Minutes of the 21 November 2022 Meeting**

**Matters Arising:**

**NOTED:**

- CEO advised that the main topics at the ETA at the moment are:
  - the development of an Online Learning Policy which arose from the QQI Validation visit last year. This is going back to the ETA for recommendation and will likely go to QQI in June
  - completion of the Straightforward Research and findings will be available shortly.

## **5.3 Student Subcommittee**

**NOTED:**

### **5.3.1 Agreed Minutes of 19 January 2023 Meeting**

### **5.3.2 Draft Minutes of 16 February 2023 Meeting**

### **5.3.3 Draft Minutes of 14 March 2023 Meeting**

### **5.3.4 Issues for Board's consideration and 2022 Student Development Fund**

- MS summarised the items documented in the paper to be brought to the Boards attention:
  - The SSC supports the call for tutors to have better pay and conditions. Could NALA show solidarity with tutors and lobby for tutors pay and conditions?
  - Can NALA lobby in some way for more tutors to teach maths?

- Can NALA call for more specialist teachers for dyscalculia?
- CD informed the Board:
  - the planned Student Day for 25 March was cancelled
  - There is a new member of the Student Subcommittee – Niall Lawlor
  - The Subcommittee also has a new ALOA representative – Denise Shannon from South Inner City Dublin.
- MK noted that NALA have consistently lobbied for fair play when it comes to pay and conditions. CEO summarised the actions we have taken including raising it with the Minister of DFHERIS.
- Other ideas to help tutors with their cause were discussed at length such as petitions or contacting local TDs.
  - LK informed the Board that the TUI have lodged an action on this matter to the DFHERIS.
  - TOM suggested that someone look at the Quality Review that were undertaken by the ETBs over the last 18 months or so. There may be a theme on professionalisation and pay and standards which could be used by literacy practitioners to lobby their unions.
  - MK suggested we raise it at the next Implementation Meeting with SOLAS.
- The Board discussed the topic of dyscalculia and the issues with getting tutors for dyscalculia. MK asked if there is any expertise NALA could offer or recommend. Unfortunately, it is very specialised and we are not aware of any specific supports available. LK advised that most ETBs have appointed a Learning Support Officer which can meet with learners individually and support may be able to be sourced outside the ETB and they should be able to advise on this.

**AGREED:**

- Raise the topic of pay and conditions for Tutors at the next Implementation Meeting with SOLAS
- CEO will speak to Student Subcommittee Member regarding dyscalculia
- NALA will try identify the reason for the low registrations for the NALA Student Day in Dublin

**5.4 Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee**

**5.4.1 Draft Minutes of 20 March 2023 Meeting**

**NOTED:**

- MK summarised the points in the LSPG Minutes
- MR mentioned on behalf of CC that he is happy to step aside for the position of Honorary



Treasurer if anyone else was interested in the position. No Board Member was interested in the position.

- CEO provided an update on the new member to the AR&F Subcommittee and that membership of that subcommittee is sufficient and will be looked at again following the AGM.
- MR provided a brief update on the AGM:
  - There are currently 22 people registered including some NALA staff and Board Members. There will be another notice going out.
  - Board Members were asked to register particularly if they are attending on behalf of an Organisation as well
  - The Constitution will not be available for the AGM as it is still with the CRA and we have run out of time to prepare even if it were to be reviewed before the AGM
  - The final communication will be sent after the 13 April deadline to return nominations. This will include the Directors Report and Financial Statements but the Annual Report will be prepared for the AGM.
- MK provided a background to the Board on the engagements with staff regarding the changes.
- CEO informed the Board that the changes were discussed at a Members' Meets in January. A further Members' Meets was due to take place in March but was cancelled due to low registration numbers.

#### **5.4.2 Terms of Reference**

##### **NOTED:**

- MK informed the Board that changes were agreed by the Subcommittee.

##### **AGREED:**

- NALA LSPG Terms of Reference was approved.

#### **5.4.3 Policies for Adoption**

##### **5.4.3.1 Child Safeguarding Statement**

##### **NOTED:**

- MK informed the Board that changes were agreed by the Subcommittee.
- MK informed the Board that we received communication from the Garda Vetting Bureau that Garda Vetting is not required for NALA as our interaction with Children and

Vulnerable Adults is incidental in nature. Our policy remains to look at each role on a case by case basis to assess if Garda Vetting is required.

- TOM enquired about the Risk Assessment and recommended we include a risk to reflect situations where we may be provided with an incorrect age. The Board and CEO discussed. It was acknowledged that the risk is low and that there may be no controls. Requesting age verification would hinder people seeking our support. However, it should be noted as a risk.

**AGREED:**

- Child Safeguarding Statement approved subject to the addition of a risk that we may be provided with an incorrect age from a child.

**5.4.3.2 Adult Safeguarding Statement**

**NOTED:**

- MK informed the Board that changes were agreed by the Subcommittee.
- TOM enquired why there was no risk assessment in the Adult Safeguarding Statement. MR clarified that NALA are required to have a Child Safeguarding Statement and it must follow a particular format. We are not required to have a Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Statement or Policy but have chosen to create one. Therefore, we have more flexibility in terms of format to suit the needs of NALA services.

**AGREED:**

- Adult Safeguarding Statement approved.

**6. AOB**

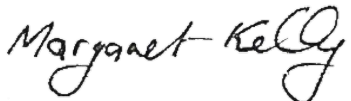
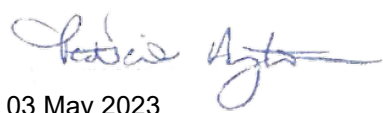
**NOTED:**

- PC asked all Board Members to return the Director's Confirmation Form if not already done so. Digital Signature is sufficient.

**Next Meeting**

<b>Date:</b>	3 May 2023
<b>Time:</b>	4:30 pm to 7:00 pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Online

<b>Actions Arising from This Meeting:</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Person Applicable</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
3.1	Correct Typo's in Minutes of 7 December 2022 Meeting before signing and publishing	MR	April 2023
4.1	TOM to liaise directly with CEO on any queries or clarifications on the Work Plan	TOM	As necessary
5.1	Child Safeguarding Statement to be updated with agreed risk before publication	MR	April 2023
5.2	Adult Safeguarding Statement to be published	MR	April 2023
6.1	Any Board Member yet to return a Director's Confirmation Form to PC to do so ASAP	All	Immediately

 03 May 2023	 03 May 2023
Chairperson's Signature and date	Secretary's Signature and date
MARGARET KELLY	PATRICIA AYTON