

Minutes of the meeting of Action against Medical Accidents

Held on 6th October 2021

Present: Moi Ali (Moi) Chair, Caroline Browne (CB) Vice-Chair, Nigel Holland (NH), Jonathan Hazan (JH), Amrat Khorana (AK)*, Janine Collier (JCol), Mary Smith (MS)*

*AK and MS as 'trainee' (non-voting) trustees

In attendance: Peter Walsh (PW)

Attended via Teams: Angela Brown (AB) Treasurer, Mike Andersson (MA), Bill Kilvington (BK)

Apologies received: Jocelyn Cornwell (JC), Maggie Davies (MD), Linda Kenward (LK)

1. Chair's introduction

The Chair welcomed trustees to the first face-to-face meeting of Council for almost two years, including those attending online. Everyone thanked AB, who was retiring later in the month, and LK who was standing down for work and personal reasons, for their excellent contribution to AvMA.

Trustees were asked to declare any new conflicts/potential conflicts of interest. BK advised that he was acting in his old role as Associate Director of Women and Child Health Services at Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust.

2. Confirmation of decisions reached by email

The following decisions had been the subject of consultation via email, with the vast majority of trustees agreeing and with no trustee objecting:

- Appointment of JH as interim Treasurer from the point of AB's retirement (Election to be held at AGM).
- Appointment of JC as the Whistleblowing Trustee
- Approval of up to £12,000 expenditure on additional costs of implicit finance software and consultancy to help with this project (trustees having seen the business case for this).

Council formally ratified these decisions.

3. Minutes of Council meeting 8th April 2021 (re CRM)

The minutes were AGREED as an accurate record.

4. Minutes of Council meeting 6th July 2021

Under declarations of interests, BK's was corrected to "perioperative" (not "palliative"). Otherwise the minutes were AGREED as an accurate record.

Under the Actions Schedule, action C01 (website) was given a new date for completion as "Spring 2022".

Actions C002, C003, C005, C006, C007, C008, C009, C010, C011, C013, C015 were noted as complete and to be removed.

It was AGREED that action C012 (Fundraising Consultancy) be removed as work was being concentrated on income generation with the establishment of the new working group. If PW wished to commission consultancy, then this would be subject to a business case being agreed.

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The completion date for C014 (Risk Management) was changed to December 2021 Council meeting.

Action: C016/PW

5. Staff Working at Home

The Chair opened this item by reminding Council that a decision was made at the July 6th Council meeting that home working was a strategic decision for Council, but that agreements to continue to work from home on a temporary basis could continue until Council had the requested options appraisals on the interconnected issues of Freedman House and home working risks/benefits. At that point it would be in a position to take the strategic decision. She was therefore concerned when the Executive Committee discussed the matter at its next meeting, and discovered that the majority of staff had already had their contracts changed. The Chair therefore believed that changing these contracts again was not an option, and that home working was a *fait accompli*. The discussion therefore needed to be on how to avoid this kind of thing from happening again.

The CEO reported that legal advice indicated that it was possible to change contracts again, but formal consultation would be required and it would not be easy.

It was AGREED that as contracts had now been changed, it was not practical to change them back and that, new requests for permanent home working would have to be agreed unless there were sound business reasons for not doing so.

. The CEO stated that some staff had been unsettled by the possibility that Council might decide to reverse the agreements agreed with managers about homeworking. This was noted with concern by some Trustees particularly as staff had continued to deliver uninterrupted services throughout. Council expressed that their reservations had been the process behind the decision-making and the strategic implications of a formalised change in working arrangements for the majority of staff. However, a proposal to minute that Council supported the principle of homeworking was not agreed.

NB and PW's report on home-working was noted and it was agreed that there were both significant benefits and significant drawbacks to home working. In particular, it was AGREED that more work was needed on the risks of staff potentially working alone in the office and that a lone worker policy needed to be looked at. There were also issues about creativity and information sharing across different teams that needed to be addressed, as well as onboarding new staff and ensuring they felt part of AvMA while working remotely.

Action: C017/PW/NB

There was general agreement that a 'hybrid' arrangement of some staff working at home mainly but spending some time in the office was desirable. For the time being, it was not considered desirable to deny the possibility of new and existing staff being able to work in an office.

The effect of new working arrangements on staff wellbeing would be monitored as part of the regular 'People Report' at each Council meeting.

6. Building Options Appraisal

The report was noted. It was noted that the figure of £76,000 'better off' under option 2 was incorrect and should read £66,000. It was felt that using managed office space was another option worth considering.

Action: C018/PW/NB

Council AGREED to accept the recommendation of option 2 (retain ownership of the building but seek to rent out one of AvMA's two floors) as this could provide extra income if successful; allow for the staff who wish to, to use the office; retain flexibility for 'hybrid' arrangements; and keep other options open longer term. PW was authorised to negotiate over the rent, but it was AGREED if this

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were to result in significantly less than AvMA being £66,000 better off, to bring this to Council for decision.

It was AGREED to seek professional advice at reasonable cost to inform the longer term strategy re Freedman House.

It was noted that if successful in renting out one of our floors, this may require moving from the existing floors to the 2nd floor. This might also mean not having a meeting room large enough to hold a Council meeting in. It was AGREED that if this is a case we hold meetings at a Central London office of one of our law firm members.

7. Mergers Working Group

The report was noted. It was noted that the attached email conversation was not complete – MA's latest email was omitted. This would be circulated to the group. It was AGREED to accept the two recommended actions from the Working Group, that they:

1. Explore the types of organisations and individual organisations AvMA could merge with or join up with in other ways,
2. Develop a 'toolkit' to use if/when the possibility of a potential merger arises, including 'triggers' for a potential merger and criteria AvMA would apply when considering different types of merger.

Action C019: CB to convene next meeting(s) of group on these topics

8. Income Generation Working Group

The report was noted and welcomed. The group would continue to meet as a whole and on specific projects.

9. Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy

The draft ED&I Policy was AGREED. Council was keen to explore how AvMA can improve its approach to EDI. AK commended an approach along the lines of the (American) National Football League (NFL), which he could share details of. It was noted that we are due to commission a consultant to review our current approach to EDI. The Departmental reports reporting on EDI were noted, but it was AGREED these need to be developed as EDI felt like an add-on rather than an embedded part of our work. Consideration should also be given to how staff are protected from inappropriate behaviour from outside the organisation.

11. Minutes of Sub-Committees

The minutes of the sub-committee meetings were noted.

12. Chair & CEO reports

The reports were noted.

13. Finance

The Finance Manager's report and management accounts were noted.

14. People Report

This new report was welcomed. It was noted that around 5% of staff were not happy according to the last survey. Another survey is due to be conducted and more consideration can be given in the next report on the reasons for any unhappiness.

15. Operational Plan and Departmental Reports

The reports were noted. It was agreed that the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is a regulator which AvMA should develop a relationship with.

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16. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 7th December 2021, 1pm-5pm (including AGM). Venue to be advised.

