

ACCESSNI STAKEHOLDER FORUM – 25 January 2024

Those in attendance (Via MSTeams)

Board Members:

Bernie Fox (**Ulster GAA**)
Elaine Glass (**PCI**)
Denise Adams (**ARCUK**)
Ruth Mulholland (**Volunteer Now**)
Karen Mawhinney (**EA**)
David Jackson (**CEF**)
Ann Marie Hughes (**SRC**)
Nichola McKay (**QUB**)
Sean Maskey (**DBS**)
David Cleland (**PSNI**)

Note Taker: Brian Fegan (**BF**)

AccessNI:

Brian Thomson (**BT**) **Chair**
Glenn Moorcroft (**GM**)
Amanda Jenner (**AJ**)
Kate Bickerstaff (**KB**)
Julie Anne Stewart

Apologies:

Patricia Kerr (**PK**)
Margaret Rainey (**DVA**)
Samantha Corr (**DBS**)
Ciara McCann (**BSO**)
John Cuthbert (**NICSHR**)
Samantha Vaughan (**Sterling**)

1.	Welcome/Apologies BT welcomed everyone to the meeting. BF read out the list of members who had sent apologies for not attending.	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting (26 October 2023) The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and accepted as a true record of business. They will now be posted on the DoJ website.	
3.	Matters Arising - Action Points BT informed the members that the action points from the previous meeting had been completed. BT advised that AccessNI is having an Away Day on 9 February with colleagues in PSNI and RBs may notice a drop-off in the number of applications being processed that day.	

<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>AccessNI Operational Position</p> <p>KB advised members of the Operational position.</p> <p>AccessNI has continued to be very busy processing all levels of disclosure applications and working with PSNI/GB Forces and ACRO in respect of Enhanced Disclosure applications ensuring disclosure certificates are issued without any unnecessary delays.</p> <p>Operations Team is currently processing around 3,000 to 3,200 applications per week but expect this figure will increase very soon. From 1 April 23 to date approx. 145,000 applications have been processed.</p> <p>Basic and Standard applications continue to be cleared daily and we are currently processing enhanced applications received yesterday. Approx 70% of these enhanced applications will be issued immediately with the other 30% being referred to third parties, mainly PSNI.</p> <p>PSNI have been working hard and have reduced their 'Work in Progress' by approx. 35% since the beginning of the month. PSNI 'Work in Progress' is at the lowest it has been in a long time. Aged cases have also reduced. There are no issues with GB forces and ACRO who are all returning their cases within the set SLA's.</p>	
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>Compliance and Finance Update</p> <p>GM provided an update on the Compliance and Finance position.</p> <p>Compliance Audits As of 19 January 2024, there have been 153 compliance audits completed to date – 149 Registered Bodies, 14 of these were Umbrella Body organisations and 4 Responsible Bodies (purely for Basic) There are currently: 630 Registered Bodies (158 of these are umbrella bodies). 129 Responsible bodies (33 are umbrella bodies) 759 bodies in total</p> <p>Staffing GM welcomed Brian Fegan back and introduced newest member of Compliance staff Julie-Anne Stewart who joined the team this week. Good progress is being made to completing our suite of audits – 28 audits have been scheduled up to including week commencing 26 February with more to be scheduled in the coming weeks.</p>	

<p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p> <p>5.6</p> <p>5.7</p>	<p><u>Training</u> Training videos and Transcripts are available on the Department of Justice YouTube channel and AccessNI pages on NIDirect. Feedback so far has been very positive with over 2,000 visits since launch four months ago.</p> <p><u>Registered Body Review</u> RBs are required to submit 20 or more applications annually to maintain registration. A total of 33 were deregistered.</p> <p><u>Responsible Body Review</u> Following our notification, 12 appeals were successful with a total of 12 deregistered.</p> <p><u>Newsletter</u> The winter Newsletter will issue in early February.</p> <p><u>Finance</u> From 1 April 2024, the cost of Basic and Standard checks will be reduced from the current fee of £18 to £16. At the same time, the fee for Enhanced checks will reduce from £33 to £32.</p> <p>The fee changes follow a review of the AccessNI business model that reflects the increase in demand for AccessNI checks following relaxation of Covid restrictions. The sustained nature of this increase in demand has allowed AccessNI to reduce fees. Secondary legislation to allow the amendment of the fees will come into effect from 1 April 2024. AccessNI believes this increase in demand reflects a number of factors including: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater awareness in NI of the AccessNI brand and the nature of services provided; • Leading to more employers / organisations seeking AccessNI checks as part of their recruitment processes; • More organisations undertaking cyclical re-checking arrangements as part of their safeguarding / recruitment policy. <p>Future adjustments to AccessNI fees will be subject to a formal review of the Business Model.</p>	
<p>6</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>Business Support and Transformation - IT Support Contract</p> <p>AJ provided an update on the Business Support and Transformation - IT Support Contract.</p> <p>Version 1 continues to be quick and efficient in responding to incidents</p>	

	<p>within satisfactory time frames. AccessNI is still experiencing significant delays with Version 1 receiving Impact Assessment to commence new change requests.</p>	
6.2	<p><u>LEDS</u> (Law Enforcement Data Service) As part of the quality assurance process required for onboarding to LEDS and NIAM (National Identity and Access Management), AccessNI completed a quality assurance audit required by Home Office on 29 November. It was due to take 2 to 3 days but due to the work completed on the questionnaire and documents and policies forwarded in advance, it was completed in one day. We do not see the report but have been told there were no issues/risks to report and we have been approved to continue to the next process.</p>	
6.3	<p><u>Update Service</u> No further update. AccessNI continues to engage with DBS requesting updates and have expressed its willingness to be part of any focus, workshop or testing groups.</p>	
6.4	<p><u>Retention and Disposal</u> We have received the Impact Assessment for this piece of work and approval has been given to proceed. This will commence after the portal change project has completed.</p>	
6.5	<p><u>LOA2/ ID documentation Upload Facility</u> We are still waiting on the Impact Assessment for the ID document upload facility for applicants requesting a basic certificate through AccessNI directly. This is the first stage towards moving to LOA2 user accounts. Once this is tested and deployed, the complex issue of using NIDirect LOA2 accounts will be progressed. There are other issues which also need to be looked at prior to onboarding to LOA2 such as generic accounts. We will require internal conversations around these matters and may seek the SHF members views also. We need solutions that work for large organisations as well as small organisations.</p>	
6.6	<p><u>Digital Certificates</u> We now have the coding changes required for digital certificates in UAT (User Acceptance Testing). Processes and automated workflows need to be tested to ensure that disputes and appeals work as expected. The compliance team are kept in the loop at all times with all changes so that they can issue relevant communications eg there has always been the message that all digital certificates are clear certificates and those with information will always be issued on paper. This will change. We also need to consider the risk of digital certificates with information being</p>	

	<p>passed on.</p> <p>As mentioned previously digital certificates are more secure than paper certificates.</p> <p>AccessNI continues to ask RBs to encourage applicants not to choose paper certificates, instead allowing the default digital certificate to be issued.</p> <p>6.7 <u>Portal Changes</u> Work is well underway with portal changes. Groups 1-3 have been tested and migrated to live except for one change as we require confirmation from PSNI and DBS that the new formatted file can be accepted.</p> <p>Group 4-6 are now in UAT with development work still ongoing for groups 7-8. As mentioned Business Support Team work closely with Compliance to ensure that applicants and RBs are aware of changes</p> <p>6.8 <u>Signatory Accounts</u> AccessNI plans to conduct a review of how signatory accounts are managed. This is required as a step to moving to LOA2 accounts. This will also require a review of generic accounts as these can not be used when AccessNI has onboarded to LOA2 accounts. AccessNI undertook to create a small sub-group of Stakeholder Forum members to consider wider impact of emerging proposals.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Review of Stakeholder Forum & TOR</p> <p>BT asked members for suggestions and views with regards to Forum membership and Terms of reference.</p> <p>NMcK suggested a representative from Arts and Culture.</p> <p>BF asked ANI should consider if all high-volume users / customers are included.</p> <p>It was agreed that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The frequency of Forum meetings could be reduced to 3 per year, January, June and October. • When a Forum member is unable to attend a representative from their organisation should attend on their behalf. <p>ACTION – BT to update TOR and circulate for comments and approval.</p>	<p>BT</p>

8.	<p>Stakeholder Member Feedback</p> <p>NMcK requested screenshots for the citizen application portal to assist with their processes and informing applicants of what is required. Other stakeholders also mentioned interest.</p> <p>ACTION – Amanda to ensure Nichola get screenshots required and these can be shared with all Forum members.</p>	AJ
9.	<p>AOB</p> <p>No other items raised.</p>	
10.	<p>Date and Time for Next Meeting</p> <p>BT thanked everyone for attending and for their contribution.</p> <p>The next meeting will be on 12 June 2024. This will be an ‘in person’ meeting at the Pavilion, Stormont at 10.30am.</p>	

Annex A – Action Points

Action Point No / Date of Meeting	Action Point	Owner	Action Taken	Status
<p style="text-align: center;">1 25/1/2024</p>	<p>NMcK requested screenshots for citizen application portal to assist with their processes and informing applicants of what is required. Other stakeholders also mentioned interest.</p> <p>AJ to ensure Nichola get screenshots required and these can be shared with all Forum members.</p>	<p>Amanda(AJ)</p>	<p>Screenshots shared with SHF members</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CLOSED</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">2 25/1/2024</p>	<p>BT to update TOR and circulate for comments and approval</p>	<p>Brian (BT)</p>	<p>TOR circulated to SHF members – no comments received</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CLOSED</p>