

Northern Ireland



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**Social Care Council Board Meeting
Confirmed Minutes
10.00a.m on Wednesday 30th June 2021
Via Zoom videoconference**

Present:

Paul Martin (CHAIR)
Sarah Browne, Board Member
Roslyn Dougherty, Board Member
Gerard Guckian, Board Member
David Hayes, Board Member
Christine Hunter, Board Member
Brenda Maitland, Board Member
Jacqueline McGarvey, Board Member
Catherine McPhillips, Board Member
Anne O'Reilly, Board Member – from 11.00a.m
Sandra Stranaghan, Head of Business Support
Lee Wilson, Board Member

In Attendance:

Patricia Higgins, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Social Care Council
Declan McAllister, Dir. of Registration and Corporate Services, Social Care Council
Marian O'Rourke, Interim Director of Regulation & Standards, Social Care Council
Catherine Maguire, Interim Head of Workforce Development, Social Care Council,
Helen McVicker, Head of Fitness to Practise, Social Care Council
Sandra Stranaghan, Head of Business Services, Social Care Council
Claire Trainor, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement, Social Care Council
Aine Morrison, Deputy Chief Social Work Officer, DoH
Jenny McCaw, BSO Internal Audit
Lindsey Paterson, PwC
Kim Robin, Secretariat, Social Care Council

Observer(s):

Karen Diamond, Board Apprentice

Apologies:

Lorraine Conlon, Government Liaison Officer, DOH
Carolyn Ewart, BASW (N.I.)
Roberta Magee, Chair of the Social Care Council Registrants' Forum

Formalities

Item	Agenda	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting via Zoom videoconference facilities. A special welcome on behalf of the Board was extended to Aine Morrison, who takes up the role on 1 st July of Deputy Chief Social Work Officer, DoH. He also welcomed Jenny McCaw, Internal Audit and Lindsey Paterson, PwC.	
1.2	Apologies were noted from Board member Roberta Magee, Chair of the Social Care Council Registrants' Forum, Carolyn Ewart, BASW (N.I), Lorraine Conlon, Government Liaison Officer, DoH.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	None to note.	
3.	Video Presentation – ‘Raising the Profile’ of Social Care	
3.1	<p>The Interim Chief Executive introduced the video presentation – ‘Social Care – Raising the Profile.</p> <p>The videos were part of a 4 week promotional campaign to promote the value of social care and was delivered from 10th May. The campaign showcased the diversity of social care using videos of social care workers and people who receive services. The campaign was delivered through social media channels, digital and print media, and also through a virtual jobs fair led by the Department for Communities.</p> <p>The Chair noted the thanks of the Board to Claire Trainor and her team for the making of excellent videos.</p>	
4.	Board Minutes	
4.1	<i>Minutes of the previous Board Meeting of 21st April 2021 – Paper A for approval</i>	
4.1.1	<p>The minutes of the previous Board meeting of 21st April 2021 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.</p> <p>Decision: The Board approved the minutes of the Board meeting of 21st April 2021.</p>	
4.2.	<i>Action List/Matters Arising</i>	
4.2.1	<p><i>21st April – item 5.2a</i></p> <p>The invite to Martina Moore, Director of Organisational Change, DoH to a future Board meeting remains open.</p>	
4.2.2	The CEF and NICON presentations to be shared with the Board and follow up engagement with key authors of papers has been completed.	
4.2.3	The sharing with the Board of the Fitness to Practise Outcomes of Hearings notifications is being managed by the Head of Fitness to Practice.	
4.2.4	The proposal paper on the Northern Ireland Social Work Degree	

	Partnership is still being written and a meeting for a session on the matter will be arranged in due course.	
4.2.5	The invitation to the Board to attend an all staff informal event is ongoing and will be arranged in due course by the Head of Business Services.	
4.3	<i>FtP Publication and Disclosure Policy – Paper B for Approval</i>	
4.3.1	<p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services (DRCS) presented the Fitness to Practice Publication and Disclosure Policy to the Board. The Policy sets out the approach of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Social Care Council) to the routine disclosure and publication of fitness to practise information about social workers, social care workers and social work students on our Register. In this policy, we refer to the social workers, social care workers and social work students on our Register as ‘registrants’. The aims of the policy are to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to outline Council’s approach to the routine publication of fitness to practise information; • to outline Council’s approach in relation to the routine disclosure of fitness to practise information to interested parties; • to outline Council’s approach in relation to individual requests for disclosure of fitness to practise information <p>The Chair invited comments from Board members and the following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member queried if the 5 year removal order 5 is a common practice with other regulators. The DRCS confirmed yes it is and that following removal the information relating to the removal is available on the Council website for the 5 years • Members noted the policy is clear and welcomed the comprehensive explanation on the Register; • Has the Policy been equality screened? It was confirmed the document has been equality screening; <p>Decision: The Board approved the FtP Publication and Disclosure Policy.</p>	
Business Briefings		
5.	Chair’s Business	
5.1	<i>Duty of Candour Consultation</i>	
5.1.1	The Chair noted the/a letter he received in respect of the Duty of Candour Consultation which was launched on 2 nd April 2021 and closes 2 nd August 2021. He informed members the Head of Fitness to Practice is leading a working group for the Social Care Council response which includes colleague Catherine Maguire and Board members Anne O’Reilly and Brenda Maitland (BM). It is hoped the proposed draft response could be reported at the	

	14 th July extraordinary meeting of the Board where the Interim Chief Executive Officer will talk through the response and the working group will have 2 weeks to make amendments to the response. BM noted the challenges in preparing the response	
5.1.2	<i>Board Members Handbook</i>	
	The Chair referred to the Board members Handbook and noted the Council/he was involved in liaison with Patricia Donnelly. The background to the handbook stems from the Hyponatremia enquiry. The work streams are to be set out with directions to follow and the Chair directed to bring the document to the attention of the Board. His final task is to complete a template letting the Department knowing he has informed members to use the Handbook as a resource, he must respond by 31 st July and it is available online. The Board Handbook is now available in resources on Decision Time (under Governance Documents).	
	The Chair offered his congratulations to the Senior Leadership Team and staff of the Social Care Council in achieving a gold IIP award noting as the 1 st gold award to be achieved by the Health and Social Care family.	
5.2	<p>The Chair provided an update on engagements carried out since the last Board meeting. The Chair highlighted the following:</p> <p>Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair attended a number of meetings with the Interim Chief Executive Officer and RQIA to discuss improving equality standards. She met with Brieghe Donaghy the new Chief Executive of RQIA and Vivian McConvey, Patient and Client Council meeting last week to agree on where to engage and collaborate in the future. • Attended an end of year review with the Senior Leadership team, Sean Holland the Chief Social Work Officer, Lorraine Conlon and Jackie McIlroy, DoH. The meeting was positive and encouraging and an agreement was made to work closely over the next 12 months ; • Attended a May meeting of the NICON Chairs and the Minister. He noted it a positive exchange with the Minister who was interested in what the Chairs had to say. The Minister is interested in meeting with the Board to hear of their contribution over the past 12 months, a meeting has been arranged for Wednesday 7th July. A brief presentation showing what the Board contributed during COVID will be made to the Minister, it will include the draft COMPACT and the carer pathway link to adult social care. A short open question and answer session will be added at the end; <p>Member Christine Hunter noted her apology for the 14th July Board meeting. She informed the Chair and members that today's</p>	

	<p>meeting is the penultimate meeting for Karen Diamond, Board Room Apprentice.</p> <p>Christine Hunter was Board Buddy for Karen Diamond and she commended her for her contribution and positive outlook and stated she will be a great addition to whichever Board she joins. Karen Diamond thanked all for their support and help and commended the work of the Social Care Council and noted her thanks for the flowers she received.</p>	
6.	Interim Chief Executive's Report	
6.1	<i>Interim Chief Executive's Report for 1st April 2021 - 25th June 2021 - Paper C for information</i>	
6.1.1	<p>The Interim Chief Executive Officer gave a brief overview of the report which outlines key activity undertaken for the period 1st April – 25th June 2021 of the delivery of business remotely to support registrants and stakeholders during the Covid-19 pandemic. The following were highlighted:</p> <p><i>IIP Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During May 2021 the Social Care Council underwent the Investors in People (IIP) assessment. She is pleased to report the Social Care Council has achieved the Gold IIP award. She thanked all staff for their commitment to achieving the award, and in particular paid tribute to Declan McAllister and Sandra Stranaghan who led the IIP team over the last 3 years. A virtual celebration event with staff will be planned at a later date; <p><i>Reform of Social Care</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work commissioned during 2020/21 to support the reform of adult social care is concluded: A draft Compact for engagement between Government and the Independent Social Care Sector has been developed in collaboration with the Leaders in Social Care Partnership and has been submitted to the Department of Health (DoH). The Compact was requested by the Health Minister during a meeting with him last year; • A proposal has been submitted to the DoH for the development of career pathways in social care, supported by vocational qualifications and a continuous learning framework; • A further bid for funding for 2021/22 has been submitted to the DoH. <p><i>External Engagement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with RQIA continues, a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been finalised; Paper C (Appendix I). The MoU sets out how information and intelligence will be shared and for developing a collaborative approach to regulation. The Interim Chief 	

Executive will meet with the new RQIA CEO when they assume the role;

- EU Exit and Dual Registration of social workers: Work continues with CORU to support the registration of social workers in NI who require dual registration in order to practice in the RoI. She participated in a meeting with the DoH, the Department for Children and Families, and CORU to discuss the dual registration of social workers. She has written to TUSLA and the Health Service Executive in RoI seeking a meeting to discuss dual registration of their social workers. A meeting with representatives from TUSLA and CORU was held on 22nd June where they agreed a way forward to assist with registration;
- Adult Protection Board: The Interim Chief Executive is a member of the NI Adult Protection Board (NIAPB) on behalf of the Social Care Council. The NIAPB is agreeing its Terms of Reference and membership. She facilitated a meeting between the HSCB and the CEO's of GMC, NMC and HCPC to discuss their involvement in the NIAPB. It was agreed she will act as a conduit for the workforce regulators through the NI Joint Regulators Forum. The NIAPB is seeking to establish a number of sub-groups which the regulators can participate in.
- Mental Capacity Act: With the Interim Director of Regulation and Standards she participated in meetings with the DoH and the SHSCT with respect to the implementation on 31st May of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards within the Mental Capacity Act. The sections of the Act which have commenced include the coming into force of offences in relation to the deprivation of a person's liberty. Through these meetings it is understood that social workers are raising concerns about the impact of the legislation on their practice. She received communication from NIPSA seeking a meeting on this matter, and along with the Interim Director of Regulation and Standards will meet with NIPSA representatives on 2nd July;

The Chair invited Aine Morrison (AM) to give her opinion on the Mental Capacity Act. AM reported to the Board that the act has not been implemented and some aspects of it are being addressed now. She commented there is a lot of misunderstanding of the act and the liabilities it exposes social care workers to; this reveals the lack of knowledge and understanding of the previous act. She reported the Departments perception differs of the acts meaning to social care staff, it views the levels of concerns as somewhat unjustified: She noted the perception of staff is that the act brings a new responsibility and liability when in fact under the previous act they had the same accountabilities. The Chair added practising social workers are aware that they are liable in law if they should to deny a person

	<p>liberty by not following due process.</p> <p>The Chair noted a Board invite will be issued to AM to have a longer discuss on the longer term implication of the Mental Capacity Act. AM noted the Department has issued detailed responses to all the issues that have been raised. It was agreed to hold a separate Board session to focus solely on the complexities of the act. ACTION</p> <p>Members welcomed a separate session to discuss the implications of the act. They welcomed the MoU with RQIA the ethos of the understanding and the approach being taken. It was agreed the ICEO would write to the Trust and providers to inform them of the essence of the MoU and the working that is being done. ACTION</p> <p>Member Gerry Guckian (GG) advised that the wording of the MoU particularly around data intelligence be reviewed regularly to avoid the potential to create new issues. He queried the data intelligence responsibilities of the Social Care Council as stated in point 10 of the MoU. It was agreed the ICEO would discuss with GG separately to discuss these points. Brenda Maitland queried if the Audit and Risk Assurance should have had sight of the MoU, the ICE noted she will discuss these aspects with her separate to this meeting.</p> <p>Action: A Board session to focus solely on the Mental Capacity Act will be arranged.</p> <p>Action: The ICEO will write to the Trust and providers to inform them of the MoU with RQIA and the work that is being done.</p> <p>Action: The ICEO and Gerry Guckian will discuss aspects of the MoU with RQIA.</p> <p>Action: The ICEO will discuss with Brenda Maitland to discuss aspects of the MoU with RQIA.</p> <p>Decision: The Board noted the Interim Chief Executive's Report.</p>	<p>Secretariat</p> <p>ICEO</p> <p>ICEO/GG</p> <p>ICEO</p>
7.	Subcommittee Minutes	
7.1	<i>Leaders in Social Care Partnership unconfirmed minutes of 10th June 2021</i>	
7.1.1	<p>The acting Chair of the Leaders in Social Care Partnership reported on activity and highlighted the following:</p> <p>The June meeting was a busy and constructive meeting. There was much feedback from the partners regards the issues in the</p>	

	<p>sector and concerns for the future were highlighted. Concerns for the Reform of Adult Social Care programme were stated and that some improvements need to be seen now. She noted that Independent Health Care Providers (IHCP) and the UK Homecare Association (UKHCA) have launched the 15 Campaign to end 15 minutes visits for older people noting that these amount to 30% in NI as compared to 3.5% in England. AM informed members the Reform of Adult Social Care programme is now at the outline stage and it is hoped that a draft paper can go to the Minister in September 2021 and then it will go out for consultation. She noted many ideas are being considered and some may form part of the paper and that meetings on the reforms are planned over the summer.</p> <p>Decision: The Board approved the Leaders in Social Care Partnership unconfirmed minutes of 10th June 2021</p>	
7.2	<i>Participation Partnership confirmed minutes of 30th March 2021</i>	
7.2.1	<p>The Committee Chair noted a further meeting of the Participation Partnership took place on the 1st June she reported the following key highlights from the 30th March meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She is part of the working group for the Duty of Candour Consultation response. She noted the challenges involved in agreeing an appropriate response. She further noted she will meet with Scottish social care and the DRCS to discuss collaboration and learning; • The Partnership is looking at some working jointly with Work Force Development; they are currently trying to determine the key priorities including seeking assurances around engagement reach for those pieces of work the Partnership is not directly engaged in; • She noted members of the Partnership are interested in the work on the career structure proposals for social care workers; they are also interested in the Social Care Councils Corporate Plan and how they can best contribute; <p>The Committee Chair requested if wording used in reports and documents could be both accessible and straightforward. Finally she noted a meeting with a representative from the Scottish Social Care Council (SSCC) to discuss SSCC forming a similar partnership is scheduled, she will attend along with the DRCS and other Partnership members.</p> <p>Decision: The Board approved the Leaders in Participation Partnership unconfirmed minutes of 30th March 2021</p>	
7.3	<i>Professional in Practice (PiP) unconfirmed minutes of 2nd June 2021</i>	
7.3.1	The Committee Chair reported on activity from the last PiP meeting and highlighted the following:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some issues with plagiarism were resolved at the meeting; a number of new actions have been put into place in order to strengthen the Social Care Council's Plagiarism Policy; The Mental Capacity Act was discussed including members concerns and anxieties and perceptions around the act; <p>She noted she felt reassured by the earlier discussion on the act which clarified that the accountabilities have not increased or changed.</p> <p>Decision: Professional in Practice (PiP) unconfirmed minutes of 2nd June 2021</p>	
7.4	<i>Registrants Forum Workshop Briefing Paper of 14th April 2021</i>	
7.4.1	<p>In the absence of the Chair, Ms Hunter gave a brief overview of the activity of the Registrants' Forum workshop:</p> <p>She informed members the workshop was held to consider the need for improved structures and to better support registrant engagement. The briefing paper is to advise the Board of work on-going by the Registrants' Forum, as in lieu of formal minutes as the recent meeting took the form of a workshop facilitated by the HSC Leadership Centre. She informed members that previously the Forum membership did not include Board members, however she and Board member Jacqui McGarvey are now members of the Forum.</p> <p>The options for consideration included how the Forum might evolve moving forward. The workshop gave some opportunity to consider possible options for a way forward but did not come to conclusions or make recommendations. A paper arising from the workshop is currently with members for consideration; the outcomes and recommendations will be reported at the next Board meeting.</p> <p>Decision: The Board approved the Registrants Forum Workshop briefing paper of 14th April 2021</p>	
7.5	<i>Audit & Risk Assurance Committee confirmed minutes of 12th May 2021</i>	
7.5.1	<p>The Chair noted an additional meeting of Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) was held on the 16th June and that ARAC members and Council staff held a separate session prior to the 16th June formal meeting to review training. The Chair then spoke to unconfirmed minutes of 12th May 2021 and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The James House Licence in respect of the move to James House in June 2022 and noted there are terms of the licence still under negotiation including the market rent after the 1st 5 years. He added the ARAC will monitor the progress of the licence negotiations closely; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He noted the satisfactory awards from the auditors for the Work Force Development audit, the Data and Intelligence Management audit and for the Internal Audit Annual report; • He noted at the 16th June meeting the further audit work to be completed by the external auditor with respect to the fee income was discussed. Hence the external auditors are unable to recommend the annual accounts at this stage. The delay relates to the identification of the final fee income position. • He raised self-assessment and noted the abovementioned workshop in June focused on self-assessment and it featured on the formal agenda of the 16th June Audit Committee meeting • Audit member were informed it was agreed with PwC on 10 June that the Social Care Council will review the fees outstanding reporting on 5th July following the introduction of the auto removal process on the 4th July 2021. A report will be provided to PwC when the checks are completed. The Board Chair was informed of the need for an additional Board meeting to be held on the 14th July 2021 to approve the accounts, based on the final fee income position provided by the fees outstanding listing report <p>The Audit Committee Chair commended the proactive nature of Committee members. He concluded the Annual Report and Accounts will go for approval at an extraordinary meeting of the Board on 14 July 2021.</p> <p><i>Decision: The Board approved the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee confirmed minutes of 12th May 2021</i></p> <p><i>Jacqui McGarvey left the meeting at 11.45am</i></p>	
7.6	<i>Remuneration Committee unconfirmed minutes of 7th June</i>	
7.6.1	<p><i>The executive director's left the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>The Chair reported an extraordinary meeting of the Remuneration was convened in June due to the new rules put in place by the Permanent Secretary to extend the period for interim extension arrangements, up to the 31st December 2021 for the Chief Executive and the other impacted posts. The new rules state to agree an extension you must have the agreement of the Remuneration Committee hence the extra meeting of the Committee. It was a very brief meeting and sought only to have the Interim Chief Executives post extended to 31st December 2021.</p> <p>The Committee agreed and approved the extension quickly and reconvened to the original meeting on 16th June. Alison Andrews, HR BSO attended the 16th June meeting and informed members the agreement for 2017/18 Senior Executive pay award of 1% is</p>	

approved as such the Committee approved signoff only for that period. He advised he was informed today that agreement is reached for 2018/19 and for 2019/20 but that a percentage has not been advised. The decision is currently with the Department of Finance; having been approved by the Department of Health Minister. He concluded the Board cannot yet approve performance payments associated with 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.

The performance of the Interim Chief Executive was discussed at the meeting where it was quickly agreed that she had delivered an incredible year, and led the organisation during an exceptional year. He noted the frustration of the Committee that it could not justly reward the Interim Chief Executive at this time.

The meeting discussed briefly the objectives for the Chief Executive for the last year and for over the next year which are in line with last year's objectives and are mainly COVID related. The Committee formally approved the Chief Executives objectives for the next year. He concluded the Committee with BSO is moving ahead with the appointment of a Chief Executive. Discussions between the Department and BSO are taking place as to whether the position can be re-evaluated with a view to upgrading the role. Alison Andrews, HR advised that this should move quickly with all paperwork completed and the information pack agreed by all parties. It is hoped the position can be advertised in July of this year with interviews to be held no later than early September 2021.

Members noted their approval that the position is being re-evaluated and hope that it will result in the position being upgraded.

The Chair recommended endorsement of the Interim Chief Executive's appraisal for 2020/21. The Chair and members commended the outstanding performance of the interim Chief Executive in leading the organisation during an exceptional year.

A member queried if discussion has been held on the vacant non-executive position on the Board, the Chair responded there has been little progress to fill the vacancy though the matter has been raised. He understand filling such vacancies is delayed pending appointment of the new Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Chair and members recognised the potential continuity issues due to appointments that are due to terminate in the coming months and year if some action is not taken.

Decision: The Board approved the Remuneration Committee unconfirmed minutes of 7th June 2021

Brenda Maitland left the meeting at 12pm

	<i>Members took a 10 minute comfort break at 12pm</i>	
Business Matters		
Decisions Papers		
8.	COVID- 19 Assurance Report including Business Continuity: Supplementary Plan in Managing a Pandemic – for review	
8.1.	<p>The DRCS gave an overview of the COVID- 19 Assurance Report and the following key implications were highlighted including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The business continuity plan for managing a pandemic ; • The Report noted the Risk Assurance Framework was presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) at their meeting on 12 May 2021. He noted a further meeting of the ARAC was held on 16 June; • The last meeting of the Risk Management Committee (RMC) was held on 28 April 2021 where RMC members reviewed the controls and actions against the risks in the risk register and also took the opportunity to review the strategic risks in preparation for the development of our corporate plan work; • Staff Culture and the Working Environment, as of June 2021, the office remains closed to normal business in line with current government advice that people should continue to work from home where it is possible to do so. A formal review of the Transition Plan will take place over the summer months, with a view to bringing to the Board (in the autumn) a proposal to activate the Transition Plan – if Government advice allows it and it is safe to do so. In anticipation of this the organisation is planning a second Agile Working Pilot scheme over the summer (subject to a full Risk Assessment and a refresh of safety protocols and systems) with a focus on team working and collaboration. Feedback from the Pilot will be shared with the Board. • A full report on the impact of COVID was provided to the Board at their 21 April meeting. • Fitness to Practise business; as reported at the May ARAC meeting, the Social Care Council had received a total of 18 COVID related referrals to date. 14 referrals were made by employers and 2 were received from the PSNI through their Common Law Police Disclosure Scheme. 7 cases were screened out at the triage stage, they did not meet the Social Care Council's Standard of Acceptance. The majority of the cases involved one off breaches in the use of PPE which could be adequately addressed by the employer. Of the 9 cases which were opened, all related to social care workers. Five of the nine cases remain ongoing and two have been disposed of by way of a Letter of 	

- Advice, and two have been closed with No Further Action;
- The move to James House was noted, a risk has been created to manage the impact of moving to James House and the transition from Millennium House, including ensure the probity of the lease and the impact on business. A detailed update will be brought to the Board later in the Autumn;
 - Management of Financial Resources; he noted the financial risk has increased and decreased throughout the year in live time dependant on funding and changes to funding however it has remained a high level risk. The Social Care Council continues to collect overdue fees and commenced an additional project in collaboration with the DoH to ensure those on the register who were not removed (for non-payment) in line with the direction from the Department of Health are now removed where they are no longer working in the sector. Council will review the fees outstanding reporting on 5th July following the introduction of the auto removal process on the 4th July 2021. A report will be provided to PWC when the checks are completed. He reported he is confident when the report is run the actual fees dues will reduce dramatically as leavers etc. will drop-off the register

The DRCS informed members the organisation has communicated with registrants due to pay fees and renew registration since February 2021 and noted communications with the Union through the Joint Negotiation Forum meetings. Each registrant has been written to recently advising them to pay and not to delay as being unregistered will impact on their ability to work. He noted the issues from the Councils end. He also noted the issues arising from registrants not renewing contact details, and not fully following the advisory steps to renew registration and pay outstanding fees. As part of the removal communication registrants will be provided with an online link that will allow them get back on the register almost immediately once they have paid their outstanding fee and/or completed their renewal.

The supplementary papers were reviewed and noted. A discussion followed on the deferred fees and members queried if the deferral was beneficial given the huge amount of work and pressure it has caused the organisation of the criticism towards the organisation now they are requesting the money. The DRCS informed members the organisation will be hold meetings to review the issues from Councils side and to take knowledge from lessons learnt throughout the process.

Decision: The Board noted the COVID- 19 Assurance Report including Business Continuity: Supplementary Plan in Managing a Pandemic

9.	Business Performance Report to 31st May 2021- for note	

9.1

The Interim Director of Regulation & Standards(IDRS) spoke to the Business Performance Report provides a cumulative assessment of performance achieved by the Social Care Council over the period April – May 2021 (the first two months of the new business year) and is overall a positive report. It noted most of the KPIs are on target.

As previously reported the organisation was not required to produce a Business Plan for 2021/22 due to COVID however the Board agreed to produce a business plan to help to map out the key priorities for the organisation during the year as it plans for the development of a new Corporate Strategy.

The following key highlights were noted:

- 9 KPIs met the required standard;
- 2 KPIs were marginally below standard (Registration Processing and Conclusion of FtP Cases
- FTP investigations and committees successfully delivered;
- An extensive Social Care Campaign was shared across multiple media channels;
- Delivery of a wide range of social care transformation projects on behalf of the Department, including the development of a Compact;
- Project to support the recovery of fees and quality cleanse the register following last year's fee deferral;
- A refresh of the Registrants Portal;
- Development of the Annual Report and Accounts;
- IIP Report with a Gold Standard award;
- Ongoing support to staff including the 'Supporting and Empowering You' programme which has been developed for all staff.

The IDRS highlighted the key outputs for the business objectives the organisation has continued to deliver business as usual. She noted the Workforce Development Objectives (WFD) and the work carried out around learning resources; and explained to members WFD is developing for the Learning Zone approving a new resource entitled Grief and Bereavement. The learning zone is to support the knowledge and skill development of our registrants. The grief and bereavement resource is particularly relevant in light of COVID 19 to support those who are supporting and caring for people who are affected by grief and bereavement. The Department provided funding towards developing the resource and it will be shared across the HSC Bereavement Network.

The IDRS concluded by giving a brief summary the proposals bid on the Social Care Workforce Reform Proposals submitted to the DoH. The proposals provide the Department with a framework

	<p>with how to best progress priorities relating to qualifications based register, a Continuing Professional Development framework (CPD) and a career structure/pathway, as part of a wider specification for the development and transformation of the social care workforce. The IDRS and the Interim Chief Executive will attend a meeting with the DOH on the proposals.</p> <p>The Chair commended officials for an excellent and well-presented Business Performance Report.</p> <p><i>Decision: The Board noted the Business Performance Report for April – May 2021</i></p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Finance Performance Report to 31st May 2021 and Budget Profile – for approval</p>	
<p>10.1</p>	<p>The DRCS presented the Finance Performance Report and noted The purpose of the document is to update the Board on the financial position at 31st May 2021 alongside a Budget Profile for 2021/22. He advised the budget profile is not for approval at this stage as it currently reflects an overspend based on the known income position at 31st May 2021. He informed members it is the first financial monitoring report for 2021/22 based on the financial allocation letter received on 7th May 2021 of £2,569,019 which is included in Appendix I. The following key matters of the report were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The allocation letter makes recurrent provision for BSO recharges (£5,811), AFC pay award 2020/21 (£71,178), Fitness to Practise resourcing (£214,901), Rent increase (£52,620) and in respect of the Landscape review the position of a data analyst (£50,529); • the current budget for 2020/21 based on the current allocation, the forecasted fee income, other associated income and assumed income such as cover for a 2% AFC pay award payable from 1st April 2021 • Taking into account the current position with COVID 19 and office closure the Non pay budgets have been apportioned in line with final year expenditure in 2020/21; • As the budget is currently presenting a deficit position of (£28,057) at year end the Board are asked to note the current budget, but it is expected additional funding options may also come available during the year; • The income position at 31st May 2021 shows the Income reflecting a deficit of £32,669, this reflects a reduced fee income received against expected budgeted income for April and May 2021; • The Social Care Councils prompt payment performance at 31st May 2021 is 98.98% of invoices paid in 30 days with a target of 95% to maintain; 	

	<p>The Social Care Council have also engaged with DOH OSS colleagues in relation to a further funding bid to support the Reform of Adult Social Care and a current bid for funding and a presentation has been made to support the activities for 2021/22. An allocation is still awaited.</p> <p>The Chair formally recorded thanks to the DoH for their support and efforts this year and asked Aine Morrison to pass them on. Aine Morrison recorded on behalf of the Department gratitude to the Social Care Council for the excellent work and support they have provided throughout a difficult year.</p> <p><i>Decision: The Board approved the Finance Performance Report to 31st May 2021</i></p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Corporate Strategy – for approval</p>	
<p>11.1</p>	<p>The Corporate Strategy was presented to the Board. Board members were invited to note the strategy paper and approve the way forward. It was noted the Board has been engaged in developing the new Corporate Strategy for 2022 – 2026 as it commences a period of full and open engagement.</p> <p>The Social Care Council current Corporate Plan ends in March 2022 (having been extended with the Department’s approval for a further year). The Board committed to undertake full and open engagement in the development of its new Corporate Strategy and to use the time to act on the recommendations arising from the Landscape Review and to take into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector.</p> <p>In strategic session the Board reviewed the drivers for change, and their priorities and ambitions at their meeting in May. The Board is now being invited to consider a small number of questions that can help frame the engagement process, and to note the arrangements to deliver the engagement and the projected timetable for delivery.</p> <p>The Board were asked to note that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional questions will be asked of specific groups, individuals and organisations; • Robust engagement will take place with registrants, employers, people who use services & carers, and other Regulators/small HSC bodies and the Department; • Engagement will take place primarily after the Summer and until the end of the year, when a formal consultation exercise will be opened; • The aim is to get as much qualitative and quantitative feedback as possible to enable an outline draft of the Strategy to be developed early in the new year; • Alongside this work, the strategic risks will be reviewed, resources identified and the actions Equality Screened; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior staff have been engaged and the Board are being consulted and engaged. <p>Members noted the development of the Corporate Strategy opens up the opportunity for the organisation to demonstrate that it has moved from a punitive to a progressive regulator with a public facing Board seen as supporting the sector. The Interim Chief Executive noted when she meets with the RQIA new CEO she will raise writing a joint communication to go out to the Trusts and the providers to inform them of the work being done including the Employer Standards.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the SLT for an excellent report and noted the Board and SCC will engage collectively on the strategy over the coming months.</p> <p><i>Decision: The Board noted the Corporate Strategy and approved the way forward</i></p>	
12.	Equality – Equality Progress Report 2019/20 and Five Year Review of Equality Scheme – for approval	
12.1	<p>The Head of Business Services invited the Board to review and agree the Equality Progress Report 2019/20.</p> <p>She noted the Northern Ireland Social Care Council is committed to reviewing its Equality Scheme every five years. The purpose of the review is to take learning by evaluating how the organisation has implemented Section 75 over the past five years and to set direction for the coming years. The review was delayed this year with agreement of the Equality Commission due to COVID-19.</p> <p>The review included interviews with the Senior Leadership Team and other staff. She noted the format of reporting is a template is not user friendly, the template is provided by the Equality Commission to fit with their reporting arrangements.</p> <p>A number of key issues are considered within the reports including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation has completed significant work on supporting and promoting disability awareness; • It also carried out a survey with staff (this year) to benchmark awareness of equality issues and its impact on culture – the early findings of this survey are very positive; • All staff complete e-learning and are aware of their individual responsibilities; • Changes to the website resulted in a loss of equality information, it is being addressed with the Communications team; • Issues in relation to equality screening – while screening was carried out these were not published online an exercise is underway to have these published; • Training is being arranged with the Equality Unit to ensure 	

all staff fully understand when to screen and how.

She informed members of some new policy developments;

- Work commenced this by BSO HR on the organisations behalf to develop a Domestic Violence Policy to better support staff working in regional HSC organisations. As domestic violence disproportionately affects women, the policy will have an important impact on the Social Care Council workforce and that of its regional partners, which is predominately female;
- The work promoting equality for people with a disability in the workplace is reported in detail in the Disability Action Plan – Progress Report 2019-20. This comprises, for example, our Disability Work Placement Scheme; Tapestry, the Disability Staff Network; and our Disability Awareness Days for staff;
- Encouraging recruitment agencies to promote equality of opportunity;

She noted with support from the Equality Unit in BSO the Social Care Council has carried out its review of the Equality Scheme. She noted the Council has an Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan which it reports on each year.

She advised members the organisation plans to reinstate a participant of the Disability Work Placement Scheme who worked with the organisation but had to exit the scheme due to COVID 19 as remote working was not possible given her disability.

She reported to members the equality data for Social Care Council staff has significantly improved and that staff are reminded and encouraged to update their

She noted the need to improve the equality data for registrants and explained the Social Care Council has no remit to gather data however they are working with the partners to find legal ways to collect and update the data on training and screening issues.

The Head of Business Services concluded Overall equality is well embedded in the organisation though more work is needed to support the completion, reporting and publication of screening material.

The Chair commended the Head of Business Services on preparing a detailed and comprehensive reports and supplementary papers on equality. He invited comments from Board members and the following was noted:

A member suggested it would be useful to Board members and for staff to be provided with a glossary of the appropriate terminology to use with regards equality language. This would help ensure outdated or inappropriate language is not used and

	<p>so avoid unintentional offence. The Head of Business Services agreed to give consideration to a glossary of appropriate terminology.</p> <p>Decision: The Board approved the Equality Progress Report 2019/20</p>	
Review Papers		
13.	Annual Report and Accounts – for review	
13.1	<p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services presented the draft Annual Report and Accounts. He informed members since the draft Annual Report and Accounts were tabled to the Board on 21 April 2021 and subjected to review by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at the 16 June meeting comments were received from External Audit, Board Members and staff and these changes have been reflected in the current draft Annual Report.</p> <p>He noted the earlier explanation of the Audit Committee Chair in respect of the further audit work to be completed by the external auditor with respect to the fee income. Hence the external auditors decision to delay recommending the annual accounts; the delay relates to the identification of the final fee income position.</p> <p>He noted as agreed with PwC on 10 June the Social Care Council will review the fees outstanding reporting on 5th July following the introduction of the auto removal process on the 4th July 2021. A report will be provided to PWC when the checks are completed.</p> <p>He noted the auto removal control as the only outstanding issue delaying the external auditor report. The auditors have stated the decision to delay completion is not a criticism of the Social Care Council. He added he has been in communication with the DoH to discuss options to ensure breakeven is achieved.</p> <p>The Board will meet on the 14th July to approve the accounts, based on the final fee income position provided by the fees outstanding listing report. He is confident the accounts will be signed off at the 14th July Extraordinary Board meeting.</p> <p>Decision: The Board noted the draft Annual Report and Accounts</p>	
14.	Social Care Council Annual Human Resource and Workforce Report – for review	
14.1	<p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services spoke to the Human Resource and Workforce Report which details workforce information for the Council for the period April 2020 to March 2021. The Social Care Council provides an annual Human Resources and Workforce Report to the Board on staff employed by the Council.</p> <p>He informed members it is a positive assurance report for</p>	

members and noted the highlights from the first two months of the new business year April to May 2021 as the awarding of IIP Gold Standard, and the Supporting and Empowering You Programme which started in March this year.

An overview of the background to the report was provided; the Social Care Council employs around 60 staff across seven functional areas. Staff are employed across a range of pay bands from Band 3 and above, the organisation paid careful attention to the culture of the organisation and the support which staff receive.

A number of key issues are considered within the report including:

- Sickness Absence levels for the year were slightly in excess of the 3.5% KPI – the final cumulative total for the year was 3.63% (primarily due to long term absence which accounted for 75% of all absences during the year) which are the lowest across the HSC;
- The main category for absence was mental health related;
- The organisation has invested significantly in keeping the workforce connected including a wide range of health and wellbeing events and activities organised through its Health and Wellbeing Committee;
- The IIP report places significant positive influence on the culture of the organisation. The Social Care Council is the first HSC body to be awarded Gold under the new IIP assessment route and is platinum pending;
- The Social Care Council has developed a bespoke programme for all staff to help equip them with the tools and skills to manage the pressures of working in a pandemic, working remotely and keeping connected. The programme is called Supporting and Empowering You. It is being delivered by Michael Dunlop and his colleagues from OR Training. The Programme is running from March 2021 to October 2021 and will support the Social Care Council in developing a coaching culture across all parts of the organisation.
- Staff have been fully engaged since remote working activated in March last year and the organisation continues to use Pulse Surveys to ensure it is supporting the workforce in the right way;
- Staff have been involved and engaged in the plans for the new office at James House and designing the purpose and layout of that office.

He concluded the report reflects on the culture of the organisation. The Report and highlights the way ahead in terms of staffing and support for the workforce in particular as the organisation prepares for a transition back to the office at a future date and the move to James House in 2022.

The Chair again commended the Social Care Council in providing another well laid-out detailed report and in achieving an IIP Gold

	Award.	
	Decision: The Board noted the Social Care Council Annual Human Resource and Workforce Report	
15.	Any other Business	
15.1	Gerry Guckian noted the meeting agenda as long but of very good content with and useful learning from the excellent papers provided.	
15.2	The Chair thanked Aine Morrison and Jenny McCaw for attending the meeting today. He informed members a brief note will be issued prior to the meeting with the Minister on Wednesday 7 th July.	
15.3	Jenny McCaw noted her thanks for the invite to attend the meeting today. She commended the content of the Board papers and the robust discussion today will support the satisfactory assurance internal audit will give on the Board Effectiveness audit report.	
15.4	Aine Morrison thanked the Chair and members for the invite and noted the meeting as interesting and helpful to aid her understanding on the scope of issues that face the organisation.	
16.	Dates of next meetings – for information	
16.1	Extraordinary Board meeting – 1-.00a.m Wednesday 14 th July	
	Board meeting – 10.00a.m Wednesday 13th October	
	The meeting closed at 13.25p.m	

Signed by: **Paul Martin** (*Chair, Northern Ireland Social Care Council*)

Date: 13th October 2021

Signature:



ACTION LIST

Wednesday 30th June 2021

ITEM	ACTION	OWNER	PROGRESS
6.1a	A Board session to focus solely on the Mental Capacity Act will be arranged	Secretariat	Open
6.1b	The ICEO will write to the Trust and providers to inform them of the MoU with RQIA and the work that is being done	ICEO	Open
6.1c	The ICEO and Gerry Guckian will meet to discuss aspects of the MoU with RQIA	ICEO	Open
6.1d	The ICEO will meet with Brenda Maitland to discuss aspects of the MoU with RQIA	ICEO	Open
12.1	Give consideration to producing a glossary of appropriate equality terminology.	HOBS	Open

Wednesday 21ST April 2021

ITEM	ACTION	OWNER	PROGRESS
5.2a	Martina Moore, Director of Organisational Change, DoH to be invited to a future Board meeting	Secretariat	Open
5.2b	CEF and NICON presentations to be shared with the Board and follow up engagement with key authors of papers to be arranged	Secretariat	Completed
8.1	Fitness to Practise Outcomes of Hearings notifications to be shared with Board	Head of Fitness to Practise	Open
11.1	Proposal paper on the Northern Ireland Social Work Degree Partnership reporting to be brought back to the Board	Interim Chief Executive	Open
15.1	Invitation to be extended to the Board to an all staff informal event	Secretariat	Open

Wednesday 9th December 2020

ITEM	ACTION	OWNER	PROGRESS
3.3.1	Convene an additional one item Board Strategic session on the TFG meeting, a date in February 2021: What are the required competencies and skills for system leaders.	Secretariat	Completed
3.3.2	A formal letter of thanks in relation to the ESN social Awards to be prepared for issue to the Partnerships	ICEO	Closed
10.2	Seek guidance from the Head of the Northern Ireland COVID 19 Vaccination Programme	DR&CS	Closed

ITEM	ACTION	OWNER	PROGRESS
3.1	NICON sessions recommendations to be collated and viewing links shared	Board/SLT	Completed
10.2.1	A joint Registrants' Forum/Participation Partnership workshop to be arranged to look at a program of work and identify key priorities.	DR&S	Closed
11.1	Board Members and Apprentices to send 2 preferred Task and Finish groups to Board Secretary by Friday 17th October for final agreement by Chair	Board/ Secretariat	Completed

Wednesday 27th May 2020

ITEM	ACTION	OWNER	PROGRESS
7.2.1	Comparative Analysis Report on Social Care registrants remaining on register post-COVID to be brought to a future Board meeting	DRCS	Ongoing

Wednesday 5th February 2020

ITEM	ACTION	OWNER	PROGRESS
10.3	Aine Morrison to be invited to next Board meeting to present updates on the Mental Capacity Act.	JA/MM	Actioned