

Northern Ireland



Social Care Council  
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**Social Care Council Board Meeting  
Confirmed Minutes  
10.00a.m on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 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 11:45a.m  
Lee Wilson, Board Member

**In Attendance:**

Deirdre Allison, Board Apprentice  
Gareth Elder, Data & Intelligence Manager – for service delivery presentation from 10:30 – 11.00:a.m  
Sean Holland, Chief Social Work Officer – from 11:00 – 12:00 for agenda item  
Patricia Higgins, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Social Care Council  
Declan McAllister, Dir. of Registration and Corporate Services, 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  
Maureen Martin, Secretariat, Social Care Council

**Observer(s):**

Lorraine Conlon, Government Liaison Officer, DOH

**Apologies:**

Carolyn Ewart, BASW (N.I)  
Roberta Magee, Chair of the Social Care Council Registrants' Forum  
Marian O'Rourke, Interim Director of Regulation & Standards, Social Care Council

## Formalities

Item	Agenda	Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting via Zoom videoconference facilities.	
1.2	Apologies were noted from Board member Roberta Magee, Carolyn Ewart and Marian O'Rourke.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
2.1	<p>Several Board members noted that they had previously served as a Committee Panel member and queried whether this was pertinent to item 9.1 in the Remuneration Committee minutes on the outcome to the NMC Fitness to Practise Committee Panel member case. The Chair thanked the Board members for the information and stated that it would not be considered as a conflict of interest.</p> <p>Jacqui McGarvey noted her appointment as a Board member of RQIA.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Board Minutes</b>	
3.1	<i>Minutes of the previous Board Meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021</i>	
3.1.1	<b>The Board approved the minutes of the Board meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> October as a true and accurate record.</b>	
3.2.	<i>Action List</i>	
3.2.1	See Annex I for action list review, and new actions arising out of the meeting of 8 <sup>th</sup> December (and previous meetings).	
3.2.2	<p><b>30<sup>th</sup> June – item 6.1a - A Board session to focus solely on the Mental Capacity Act will be arranged</b></p> <p>The Interim Head of Workforce Development will confirm whether the scheduled lunchtime seminar on the Mental Capacity Act can be recorded and shared with Board Members who have been unable to attend previous two seminars on this topic.</p>	
3.2.3	<p><b>30<sup>th</sup> June – Item 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</b></p> <p>The Memorandum of Understanding is with RQIA for review and sign off and will be shared once the final copy is available.</p>	
3.2.4	<p><b>14<sup>th</sup> October – Item 17.1</b></p> <p><b>Action: Board members were requested to give consideration to the nature and format of an event they would like to attend with the staff of the Social Care Council next year and feedback to the Head of Business Support in January 2022.</b></p>	

<b>4.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
4.1	<i>Emergency Register Analysis - Paper B for review</i>	
4.1.1	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services gave an overview of the key highlights of the report and the following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52% of emergency registrants have not maintained registration and have left the register through voluntary removal or removal due to non-payment of fee after the deferred payment period had ended</li> <li>• The predominance of remaining emergency registrants are in the Non Statutory sector</li> <li>• A survey will be sent out in New Year to emergency registrants to understand the reasons for leaving or remaining on the register and findings will be shared with Board members once it is available.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that intelligence gathered from the survey may provide useful strategic insight for employers in relation to recruitment.</p> <p>The Government Liaison Officer advised that there was no further update available regarding the Special Payment Scheme to non-statutory sector social care staff. A progress update will be shared as available.</p> <p><b><i>The Board noted Paper B - Emergency Register Analysis.</i></b></p>	
<b>Service Delivery Presentation</b>		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Presentation on Data and Intelligence Transformation - Data &amp; Intelligence Manager</b>	
5.1	<p>The Data &amp; Intelligence Manager welcomed the opportunity to provide Board Members with an update on the investment and activity over the last 18 months around data and intelligence.</p> <p>Board members were presented with a demonstration of the Power BI Dashboard which provides real time registrant and sector data and analysis using a range of filters including age, gender, nationality and location.</p> <p>The next step will be to set up information governance arrangements in order to connect with other critical data sets and automatic updates to ensure real time information.</p> <p>Members were invited to comment, and commended the work undertaken to establish the dashboard. The following comments were noted :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dashboard is currently available internally only for</li> </ul>	

	<p>feedback and the link will be shared with Board Members over the coming months. Data will be checked for accuracy before the dashboard is publically launched;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A filter to show removals following a Fitness to Practise decision to be explored;</li> <li>• As the Public Facing Register currently publishes some of personal information including a registrant's name, subpart and town therefore use of the data in the dashboard should not be considered as sensitive or present an organisational risk. The information should be useful for employers around business planning however engagement with key colleagues will take place before the dashboard is fully released to ensure data protection compliance and commercial sensitivity.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair and Board members thanked the Data and Intelligence Manager for an informative and comprehensive presentation.</p> <p>The Data and Intelligence Manager left the meeting.</p>	
<b>Business Briefings</b>		
<b>6.</b>	<b>Chair's Business</b>	
6.1	<p>The Chair advised that he had attended the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HSC Chairs Ministerial meetings – regular updates from the Minister's office have been shared with Board Members</li> <li>• Appraisal 2020/21 meetings for Board Members are underway</li> </ul>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Interim Chief Executive's Report – Paper C for information</b>	
7.1.	<p>The Interim Chief Executive advised that the report had been provided for information and reflected key activity and engagement undertaken during the period of 1 October – 30 November 2021.</p> <p>The ICEO confirmed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no significant update available on the Fair Work Forum since the initial workshop to establish the forum;</li> <li>• no significant update available on the Interim Adult Protection Board apart from the agreement of work streams</li> </ul> <p><b><i>The Board noted Paper C - Interim Chief Executive's Report.</i></b></p>	
<b>Subcommittee Minutes</b>		
8.1	<i>Draft Unconfirmed minutes of Remuneration Committee 6 December 2021- Paper J for recommendation</i>	

8.1.1	<p>The Chair of the Remuneration Committee presented the draft unconfirmed minutes of Remuneration Committee meeting that had been convened on 6 December to agree the recommendation of the interim management extensions to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022. It is expected that the recruitment process for the Chief Executive position will be completed and an appointment in post by this date.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that a formal letter will be sent to the Permanent Secretary to bring attention to the delay in the Chief Executive recruitment exercise and to request permission to review or advertise the post as the interim arrangements have been in place for four years and the continuation of this position is untenable. A copy of the letter will be shared with Board Members.</p> <p><b>Action: Chair to write to the Permanent Secretary for to request permission to review or advertise the Chief Executive position.</b></p> <p><b>Decision: The Board approved the extension of the interim Chief Executive and management positions.</b></p>	Chair
8.2	<i>Participation Partnership unconfirmed minutes of 7 September 2021 – Paper D for information</i>	
8.2.1	<p>The Committee Chair noted the minutes key matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been a good level of interest expressed in the vice chair role;</li> <li>• A future presentation to the Board was proposed to showcase the high level of internal and external involvement of the Participation Partnership members i</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision: The Board approved the Participation Partnership unconfirmed minutes of 7 September 2021.</b></p>	
8.3	<i>Leaders in Social Care Partnership feedback- verbal - Subcommittee Chair</i>	
8.3.1	<p>The Committee Chair reported that a small steering group has been established to review the issues raised at the last Partnership meeting and to explore separate models of recruitment and retention;</p> <p>The Interim Chief Executive advised that there is ongoing engagement with the Prince’s Trust on the development of an academy approach to recruitment</p> <p>The Chair suggested that consideration should be given to inviting the Chief Social Worker to a future meeting.</p>	
<b>Governance</b>		
9.	<b>Sponsor Body Update – Chief Social Worker in attendance</b>	

9.1	<p>The Chair welcomed the Chief Social Work Officer to the meeting.</p> <p>There was a broad ranging conversation on the current and future issues impacting on social care. The Board found the engagement helpful and thanked the Chief Social Work Officer for taking the time to attend to deliver an update.</p> <p>In relation to the delay in the resolution of the recruitment of the Chief Executive post, the Chief Social Work Officer commended the Interim Chief Executive for remaining in the role and for the outstanding leadership shown particularly over the last 18 months.</p> <p>The Chief Social Work Officer left the meeting.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>N.I Social Work Degree Partnership - Paper E for information</b>	
10.1	<p>The Interim Chief Executive advised that the briefing paper had been drafted in response to a Board action to clarify the construct and infrastructure of the N.I Social Work Degree Partnership and the reason it is not a subcommittee of the Council.</p> <p>The Council assumed operational responsibility for Professional in Practise (formerly Post Qualifying (PQ) as a result of a decision by the Department of Health. As part of the governance arrangements, Professional in Practise was established as a committee of Council.</p> <p>The Degree Partnership is an unincorporated association of social work education providers and social work employers from both statutory and third sector organisations. The Partnership is funded by the Department of Health, disbursed by the Council on an annual basis to cover the costs of an Independent Chair, a Professional Officer and an Administrator.</p> <p>The Partnership submits an annual business plan, and interim end of year accountability reports to the Social Care Council to account for their activity against the funding provided. The Chief Executive and Director of Regulation and Standards have an accountability meeting with the Chair and Professional Officer on an annual basis.</p> <p><b><i>The Board noted the N.I Social Work Degree Partnership Briefing Paper.</i></b></p>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Risk Progress Report - Paper F for note</b>	
11.1	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services spoke to the Risk Progress Report and summarised the following key matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The report provides assurance on registration activity over the previous 8 weeks. The Extreme Risk has been</li> </ol>	

	<p>demoted to High Level and consideration will be given to lowering the risk level assessment further after a period of longevity has been sustained at the current registrant response level.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Current response time to registration mailbox is less than 3 days and there are 144 outstanding 144 emails remaining.</li> <li>3. Telephone support has been increased for registrants.</li> <li>4. Services are being maintained for new applicants. This has been reviewed and it is not considered as a risk as the delay to the application process is due to external factors including endorsement not being completed and non-provision of ID documents. This may be supported by the introduction of digital ID submission which is under development.</li> <li>5. The Registration Risk Action Plan is in progress</li> <li>6. Engagement with employers and registrants is ongoing particularly around the importance of the completion of the renewal process. Consideration will be given on 20 December as to whether a third extension date for renewal is required.</li> <li>7. An independent logistics expert has been commissioned to review the registration risk. A report will be provided to the Senior Leadership team by Christmas and shared with the Board in January. The review will include a broad range of internal and external engagement.</li> <li>8. The reintroduction of the financial penalty fee may resolve the small percentage of re-registration applications being received following removal, however due to current circumstances this will be considered at a more appropriate date. A long term strategy will be developed to support the future registrant self-service route.</li> </ol> <p>The Board recorded their appreciation for the efforts of all staff to reduce the registration risk since the last Board meeting.</p> <p><b><i>The Board noted the Risk Progress Report.</i></b></p>	
<b>Business Matters</b>		
<b>Decision Papers</b>		
<b>12.</b>	<b>Business Performance Report Quarter 2 to 31st October 2021 - Paper G for note</b>	
12.1.	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services gave an overview of the Business Performance Report which gives a cumulative assessment of the performance achieved by the Council for the extended period July to 31<sup>st</sup> October.</p> <p>Three of the eleven Key Performance indicators are assessed as Amber for cumulative performance (registration applications processing, triage of Fitness to Practise referrals and conclusion of FtP cases at 15 months). The report provides commentary on</p>	

	<p>pressures that are impacting on these areas of the business and notes on the mitigating actions being taken to manage any associated risks.</p> <p>The following key matters were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business continuity is maintained through bi weekly COVID Business Leadership Team meetings;</li> <li>• Recruitment to fill a number of fulltime and temporary appointments is underway;</li> <li>• Affirmative actions have been implemented to support the significant increase in registration activity;</li> <li>• Ongoing support to staff has been delivered including the ‘Supporting and Empowering You’ programme which has been developed for all staff;</li> <li>• Work is ongoing on the future agile working arrangements for staff;</li> <li>• The new Learning Zone resource ‘Making the Right Decisions’ and the ‘Learning Framework Grief and Bereavement’ digital resource were promoted in September/October;</li> <li>• A lunchtime Seminar was delivered on ‘COVID – Delivering Person Centred Support Services for Children with a Disability and their Families in Times of Risk, Change and Uncertainty’ and the Social Care ECHO virtual network events have been recommenced;</li> <li>• Three major campaigns were developed and supported – ‘Registration Matters’; ‘Social Work Careers’; and the Dept. of Health Vaccine Programme</li> </ul> <p>It was confirmed that the delay in the triage of Fitness to Practise referrals relates to a very small number of cases and is a minimal delay of one day.</p> <p>Consultation on the regional Menopause Policy has been completed with staff and will be presented at the Joint Negotiating Forum and the Board for review and approval in due course.</p> <p>A final draft of the Domestic Violence Policy will be shared with the Board once it is available.</p> <p><b><i>The Board noted the Quarter 2 Business Performance Report to 31st October 2021.</i></b></p>	
13.	<b>Finance Performance Report to 31st October 2021- Paper H for approval</b>	
13.1	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services presented the Finance Performance report to 31st October 2021 for approval and highlighted the following key matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional non-recurrent funding of £186,000 has been</li> </ul>	



	<p>received to support work to enable the Social Care Workforce Strategy; £150,000 to support training and development for the Social Care Workforce and £36,000 to support the further development of Data and Intelligence to support the workforce;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fee income position has been set from £1,524M to £1.610M following a review of the fee income position</li> <li>• Current position at 31<sup>st</sup> October is a surplus of £226,288 The Year-end forecast at the end of month 7 is predicted to be £ (55) k of a deficit position;</li> <li>• The Non Pay underspend position of £59k. is being managed by the extension of overtime arrangements and contracts for additional staff to support Fitness to Practise, Business Support and Registration teams;</li> <li>• Pay overspend position at Month 7 of £43k</li> </ul> <p><b><i>The Board approved the Finance Performance Report to</i></b></p>	
<p><b>14.</b></p>	<p><b>Registration Rules Review- Paper I for approval</b></p>	
<p>14.1</p>	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services requested Board approval for the following amendments to the Registration Rules :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Application for Registration (Rule 4) It is proposed to amend Rule 4 (1) and 4 (3) (c) to complete the transfer to a full online application system, with the addition of Rule 4 (9) to enable an application to be closed if it has not been submitted within 30 days.</li> <li>2. Granting of Registration (Rule 5) Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the General Systems Regulations no longer apply and reference to them has been removed. It is proposed that Rules 5 (1) (d), 5 (2) and 5 (3) be added to deal with applicants to the social work part of the Register who have qualified outside of the UK.</li> <li>3. Application for Restoration to the Register (Rule 13) It is proposed that where a registrant has been removed from the Register for non-payment of fees, and makes an application to be re-admitted to the Register within three months of the date of removal, that they may do so without the application being treated as an initial application, thereby making this process less time-intensive for employers.</li> <li>4. Reference to the Registration Committee (Rule 17) It is proposed that Rule 17 (1) (b) be amended and new Rule 17 (2) (b) be added to enable the Social Care Council to refer a case to the Registration Committee in circumstances where conditions have not been complied with, or where information is received which is concerning during a specified period of</li> </ol>	

	<p>conditions.</p> <p>5. Resumed Consideration of a Case (Rule 24) This Rule has been re-worded to accommodate new Rule 17 (2) (b) above.</p> <p>6. Waiver and Deferment of Fees (Rule 28) The proposed change at Rule 28 would allow the Social Care Council to waive fees in the event of exceptional circumstances e.g. during a period of instability in the social care sector due to a pandemic.</p> <p>Following approval from the Board, consent will be sought from the Department to sign off on the updated Registration rules.</p> <p>A Board Member proposed that the difference between policy and operational decisions is more clearly defined from a governance perspective.</p> <p><b><i>The Board approved the amendments to the Registration Rules.</i></b></p>	
<b>Closing Formalities</b>		
<b>15.</b>	<b>Any other Business</b>	
15.1	The Chair of the Professional in Practise Committee advised that the draft minutes of the last meeting of 25 <sup>th</sup> November had been reviewed and there were no matters for referral to the Board. The minutes will be available for circulation at the next Board meeting.	
<b>16.</b>	<b>Dates of next meetings – for information</b>	
16.1	The Board noted the meeting dates.	

Approved by: Paul Martin, Chair

Signature: 

Date of Approval: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022



## **ACTION LIST**

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>NEW ACTIONS</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
3.2.4	Consideration to be given to the nature and format of an event they would like to attend with the staff of the Social Care Council next year and feedback to be submitted to the Head of Business Support in January 2022.	Board Members/ Head of Business Support	Open- updated action from 15.1 – 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2021
8.1.1	Letter to be sent to the Permanent Secretary to request permission to review or advertise the Chief Executive position	Chair	Open

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
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 once the MoU is finalised.	ICEO	Open

**Wednesday 21<sup>ST</sup> April 2021**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
5.2a	Martina Moore, Director of Organisational Change, DoH to be invited to a future Board meeting	Secretariat	Open
11.1	<i>Proposal paper on the Northern Ireland Social Work Degree Partnership reporting to be brought back to the Board</i>	<i>Interim Chief Executive</i>	<i>Completed</i>

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
7.2.1	<i>Comparative Analysis Report on Social Care registrants remaining on register post-COVID to be brought to a future Board meeting</i>	<i>DRCS</i>	<i>Completed</i>