

Northern Ireland



Social Care Council
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Social Care Council Board Meeting
Unconfirmed Minutes
10.00a.m on Wednesday 14th October 2020
Via Zoom videoconference

Present:

Paul Martin (CHAIR)
Noelle Barton, Board Member
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
Anne O'Reilly, Board Member
Lee Wilson, Board Member

In Attendance:

Patricia Higgins, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Social Care Council
Sean Holland, Chief Social Work Officer, DOH (CSWO), for item 2.1 only
Declan McAllister, Dir. of Registration and Corporate Services, Social Care Council
Maureen Martin, Secretariat, Social Care Council
Marian O'Rourke, Interim Director of Regulation & Standards

Observer(s):

Kate Harrison, Board Apprentice

Apologies:

Lorraine Conlon, Government Liaison Officer, DOH
Karen Diamond, Board Apprentice
Carolyn Ewart, BASW (N.I)
Roberta Magee, Chair of the Social Care Council Registrants' Forum
Catherine McPhillips, Board Member
Sandra Stranaghan, Policy & Operations Manager

Item	Agenda	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting via Zoom videoconference facilities.	
1.2	Apologies were noted from Board member Catherine McPhillips, Board Apprentice, Karen Diamond, Roberta Magee, Chair of the Social Care Council Registrants' Forum Carolyn Ewart, BASW (N.I), Lorraine Conlon, Government Liaison Officer, DOH and Sandra Stranaghan, Policy & Operations Manager.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	None to note.	
3.	Chair's Business	
3.1	<p>The Chair provided an update on engagement undertaken since the last Board meeting. The Chair highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance of the Joint Chair/Chief Executive meeting with Carolyn Ewart and Orlaith Gibbon, Chair , BASW (N.I) on 3rd September - it was agreed that regular contact would be maintained; • Attended 2 in house meetings with Senior Leadership Team in relation to the Landscape Review report: • 6 Board appraisals completed to date ; • Chair, SLT and several Board members attended the NICON Virtual Conference on 8th & 9th October. The conference was well attended and this year's program had more focus on social care with guest speakers including the Permanent Secretary, Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Executive of the Belfast Health & Social Care. It was agreed that break out session recommendations will be collated and viewing links shared. <p>The Chair thanked Board member, Anne O'Reilly for her input and presentation on the Non-Executive Director Governance document at the NICON conference.</p> <p>Action: NICON sessions recommendations to be collated and viewing links shared</p>	ALL
4.	Interim Chief Executive's Report	
4.1	<i>Interim Chief Executive's Report for September /early October 2020 - Paper A for information</i>	
4.1.1	<p>The Interim Chief Executive invited questions on the report which outlines key activity undertaken for the period September and early October 2020 to continue to deliver business remotely and support registrants and stakeholders. The following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domiciliary Care Workforce Survey results report to be 	

	<p>shared. Several key issues emerging from the survey were the availability of COVID testing, speed of response and areas of improvement relating to guidance and PPE;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board expressed congratulations to the Executive team, staff and partners involved in the <i>'Digital Resources to Support the Social Care Workforce during COVID 19'</i> project which has been shortlisted for a European Social Network award under the Outstanding Team category. Details on the event and the awards link will be shared once available. <p>Decision: The Board noted the Interim Chief Executive's Report.</p>	
5.	Board Minutes	
5.1	<i>Minutes of the previous Board Meeting of 9th September 2020 – Paper B for approval</i>	
5.1.1	<p>The minutes of the previous Board meeting of 9th September 2020 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.</p> <p>Decision: The Board approved the minutes of the Board meeting of 9th September 2020.</p>	
6.	Matters Arising	
6.1	There were no matters arising to note.	
7.	Performance Reporting	
7.1	<i>Business Performance Report to 31st August 2020 - Paper D – for information</i>	
7.1.1	<p>The DRCS gave an overview of the Business Performance Report to 31st August 2020 and the following key areas were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Leadership team is committed to a regular review of business priorities and focused on the changing needs of registrants and stakeholders; A number of virtual information sessions have been hosted to promote the Standards with employers and registrants; ECHO and lunchtime seminars have recommenced; A program of communication and engagement sessions on fee collection has been completed. It was confirmed that 11,000+ registrants have paid their registration fees online to date which equates to 46% of target. Employers, unions and registrants have been contacted to advise that a large volume of emails have been received regarding fee collection/on line account queries and to confirm that all emails will be responded to within 4 weeks; Confirmation has been received of funding for the Fitness to Practise business case. Legal advice was obtained to support the development of a process to manage Fitness to Practise hearings online hearings where there is no 	

	<p>detriment to the parties affected An alternative method of engagement will be found if all parties are not content with this approach;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual PiP Awards ceremony was hosted in August and this the campaign to promote social work and PiP will continue to be delivered via a virtual platform; • The Council and Leaders in Social Care Partnership continue to engage to ensure information and issues around social care are shared and addressed and to support the Department of Health around the Transformation agenda going forward; • A key focus is on the health and wellbeing of staff and ensuring there is regular engagement and connection in place. A staff pulse survey is to be completed on the Health & Wellbeing plan of events and the impact of working remotely; • 42,601 social care registrants and 6660 social work registrants on the register at the end of August; • A large percentage of the KPIs is green apart from Registration Processing and Conclusion of Fitness to Practise cases within 15 months KPIs which are marginally under target. The FtP KPI is impacted by 3 cases with wider employer investigation and 2 cases with registrants' sickness or lack of engagement and although this is a small number of cases it has affected the cumulative KPI figure. <p><i>Decision: The Board noted Business Performance Report to 31st August 2020</i></p>	
7.2	<i>Finance Performance Report to 31st August 2020 - Paper E - for review</i>	
7.2.1	<p>The DRCS advised that the report was presented to provide an update to the Board on the first five months' expenditure against budget and year end position. The following key highlights were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional non recurrent Fitness to Practise allocation of £166k has been included; • Total revenue allocation of £3,016,508 for 2020/21; • The report reflects a revised year end deficit position of £7k due to a large underspend in Non-Pay and minimal expenditure in key areas. A break even position is now expected at 31st March 2021; • Minimal COVID expenditure as the office remains closed and relevant safeguards will be in place if needed to reopen; • Prompt payment targets have been maintained; • The next financial report will include the allocation for social care and the full expenditure position to show the plan on how monies will be utilised by year end. Project work is already in the planning stage and orders will be 	

	raised via e-Procurement.	
	<i>Decision: The Board noted the Finance Performance Report to 31st August 2020</i>	
8.	Professional Matters	
8.1	<i>Fitness to Practise Disclosure and Publication Policy- Paper F for approval</i>	
8.1.1	<p>The DRCS advised that the Fitness to Practise Disclosure and Publication Policy replaces the previous more general Publication policy and takes the Human Rights Act and GDPR into account. The policy has been written in compliance with legal and best practice guidance to cover all aspects of the circumstances in which a registrant’s information will be published and disclosed.</p> <p>The following key information was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy sets out the processes to inform and provide assurance that information is disclosed in a proportionate manner balancing the rights of registrants with public interest whilst complying with legal obligations; • The medical health of registrants will not be disclosed. A process is place for the escalation to the Senior Leadership team for review and decision on publication based on the particular circumstances of a case; • All other regulators publish the detail and outcomes of Fitness to Practise hearings and similar legislation on publication applies across workforce regulators; • Transcripts are redacted and requests for transcripts are redacted and provided in hard copy only; • Consultation on the policy was completed with Direct Legal Services (DLS) and BSO Information Governance. It was agreed that the all consultation would be recorded in the version history section on the front cover of the policy document. <p>Concerns were raised around the need for broader consultation on the policy with registrants and the wider public. In light of the Muckamore Abbey and Dunmurry Manor reports it was also emphasised that there should be clarity and assurance on the escalation process to Board level.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Executive noted that the Council only has a legal obligation to consult in the areas of Training and Education however there was merit in taking forward consultation on the policy as an exercise. A clear decision making process on publication is in place and the Board can challenge any non-disclosure decisions if needed. Interim Suspension information is not included so as to not prejudice the case.</p>	

	<p>Following discussion, it was agreed that the Fitness to Practise Disclosure and Publication Policy would be shared with the Registrants' Forum and Participation Partnership before being brought to the next Board meeting for approval.</p> <p><i>The Interim Director of Regulation & Standards provided an update from the Regulatory Committee Manager on Fitness to Practice Disclosure Policy for the 9th December 2020 Board Meeting; the explanation as to why we do not include information on interim suspensions; Interim Suspension information is not included so as to no prejudice the case.</i></p> <p>Decision: Fitness to Practise Disclosure and Publication Policy to be shared with the Registrants' Forum and Participation Partnership before being brought to the next Board meeting for approval.</p>	
9.	Governance	
9.1	<i>Audit & Risk Assurance Committee minutes of 10th June 2020 – Paper F for information</i>	
9.1.1	<p>The Committee Chair noted that the minutes presented are a record of the June Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and the noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-year Assurance Statement is recommended for approval by the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee and the document reflects the Committee's tracked changes; • Following debate, ARAC agreed to incorporate a regular/annual review of the corporate strategic risks against objectives as it was not considered that the Committee had the authority to override if mitigation is not possible due to third party involvement; • ARAC discussed the fee deferral risk and process to manage; • ARAC approved the Report to those Charged with Governance as part of the Annual Accounts process; • Satisfactory assurance received from Internal Audit and 17 recommendations have been fully implemented and 6 partially implemented. A benchmarking report by Internal Audit across all HSC bodies indicates that the Council are at the top of the table and are only one of four organisations without limited assurance or have received Priority 1 recommendations; • ARAC are satisfied with outcome of the Data Breach and 8 of the 14 recommendations have been completed and the remainder are ongoing. <p>Decision: The Board noted the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee minutes of 10th June 2020</p>	
9.2	<i>Mid-Year Assurance Statement - Paper H for information</i>	

9.2.1	Decision: The Board noted the Mid-Year Assurance Statement	
9.3	<i>Risk Progress Report - Paper I for information</i>	
9.3.1	Decision: The Board noted the Risk Progress Report	
9.4	<i>Report to Those Charged with Governance - Paper J for information</i>	
9.4.1	Decision: The Board noted the Report to Those Charged with Governance	
10.	Subcommittees	
10.1	<i>Leaders in Social Care Partnership draft minutes 15th September 2020 - Paper K for information</i>	
10.1.1	<p>The Committee Chair reviewed the Leaders in Social Care Partnership draft minutes of 15th September 2020. The Chair thanked the Committee Chair for the work of the Partnership on the development of the social care compact between the government and the social care sector.</p> <p>Decision: The Board noted the Leaders in Social Care Partnership draft minutes of 15th September 2020</p>	
10.2	<i>Registrants' Forum draft minutes 22nd September 2020 - Paper L for information</i>	
10.2.1	<p>The Interim Director of Regulation & Standards introduced the Registrants' Forum draft minutes of 22nd September 2020 and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members had given feedback at the last meeting on the mood of the workforce in light of the current second surge of COVID and their concerns around mixed messages on the way forward; • Social work student representative had reported a good sense of engagement in relation to the social work degree; • Discussion had taken place on the role and purpose of the Council and what the organisation can do to support the workforce around their identified issues. The Forum will be engaged on the development of the new Corporate Plan and the outcomes of the Landscape Review; • Membership of the forum to be reviewed to ensure adequate registrant representation and how key messages are being disseminated by the Council and via internal communications systems in social care organisations; • A joint Registrants' Forum/Participation Partnership workshop to be arranged to look at a program of work and identify key priorities. The original Registrants' Forum roles/responsibilities paper from 2013 to be revisited in advance of work assigned from the corporate planning process <p>Action: A joint Registrants' Forum/Participation Partnership workshop to be arranged to look at a program of work and</p>	
		DR&S

	<i>identify key priorities.</i>	
	Decision: The Board noted the Registrants' Forum draft minutes 22nd September 2020	
11.	Landscape Review	
11.1	<p>The Interim Chief Executive thanked Board members for their input on the Landscape Review report which will be helpful to inform future discussion. The Chair and Senior Leadership team had agreed that more time was needed to review the detail of the report around the four key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Options for the future strategic direction of the Social Care Council – lead: Interim Chief Executive 2. Role of the Board- lead: Chair 3. Resources – lead: Director of Registration & Corporate Services 4. The relationship with RQIA – lead: Interim Director of Regulation & Standards <p>Four Task and Finish groups for the above areas will be established with 3 Members and one lead official. Members and Board Apprentices were requested to send their two preferred areas of work to the Board Secretary by Friday 17th October. Collective discussion will take place following the meetings of the Task and Finish groups. The final composition of the Task and Finish groups will be agreed by the Chair and members notified week commencing 26th October.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the DRCS will facilitate the Board Strategic session on 11th November.</p> <p>Action: Board Members and Apprentices to send 2 preferred Task and Finish groups to Board Secretary by Friday 17th October for final agreement by Chair</p>	
12.	Any other Business	
12.1	Ministerial updates on the central management group and emergency planning to be shared with the Board going forward and members were invited to send any comments/questions to go to the Chair.	
12.2	The Chair thanked the Senior Leadership team and all those involved in the drafting and presentation of the Board papers.	
13.	Dates of next meetings	
13.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Strategic Session - 10.00a.m on Wednesday 11th November • Board meeting - 10.00a.m Wednesday 9th December 	

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

Date: 9th December 2020

Signature: 

ACTION LIST

Wednesday 14th October 2020

ITEM	ACTION	OWNER	PROGRESS
3.1	NICON sessions recommendations to be collated and viewing links shared	Board/SLT	Open
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	Open
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	Open

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

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