



Northern Ireland Social Care Council
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Leaders in Social Care Partnership
2:00p.m. on Tuesday 7th June 2022
Via Zoom

Confirmed Minutes

In Attendance

Anne O'Reilly	Chair (Board Member, Social Care Council)
Alex Bunting	Inspire Wellbeing
Alison Simpson	Extra Care
Amanda Williamson	Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Catherine Maguire	Social Care Council
Christine Green	Social Care Council
Dory Kidd	Harmony Community Care Services
Fiona McClean	(Deputy – Theresa McKee South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Iain Gough	(Deputy – Jenny Johnston) Southern Health and Social Care Trust
JP Watson	Domestic Care NI
Marian O'Rourke	Social Care Council
Mervyn Bothwell	Social Care Council
Meta Keenan	Social Care Council
Patricia Higgins	Social Care Council
Paul Rooney	Social Care Council
Sarah Browne	Board Member, Social Care Council
Tina O'Reilly	Extern

Apologies

Agnes Lunny	Positive Futures
Claire Trainor	Social Care Council
Eileen Dunlop	Four Seasons Healthcare
Gayle McGurnaghan	Belfast Central Mission
Jenny Johnston	Southern Health and Social Care Trust (Deputy attended)
Leslie Ann Newton	Association for Real Change NI (ARC)
Leslie McGarrity	Domestic Care NI
Pauline Shepherd	Independent Health and Care Providers
Theresa McKee	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (Deputy attended)

Item	Agenda	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and noted apologies as above.	
2.	Minutes from Previous Meeting	
2.1	The minutes of the previous meeting on Thursday 31 st March 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
3.	Matters Arising	
3.1	Chair acknowledged continued workforce pressures from recruitment, retention, and low workforce morale, offering this meeting as an opportunity to take stock and reflect on progress being made in key areas for social care workforce policy and service transformation.	
3.2	Chair expressed congratulations on behalf of all members to Patricia Higgins on her appointment as Chief Executive of the Social Care Council.	
4.	Members Updates	
4.1	Dory Kidd: It is extremely important that all these issues are fed back to the Department of Health. Harmony Care continues to experience workforce and service delivery challenges. Morale however does appear to be lifting. Contracts for 15 minute calls continue and are now pressured by the increase in fuel prices and travel time with increased traffic.	
4.2	Iain Gough (on behalf of Jenny Johnston): For SHSCT, recruitment continues as the main challenge with vacancies remaining static. It is difficult to find people with any level of experience. Increased cost of fuel is impacting on domiciliary care provision. There is a need for both short term and long term solutions.	
4.3	JP Watson: Domestic Care is experiencing similar recruitment challenge at a time increased commissioning need for home care. Recruitment focus has moved to overseas candidates – particularly for nursing staff. Planning and management of services in the absence of a confirmed budget is challenging. . Rising cost of fuel is specifically impacting on home care. Despite a lot being done to meet challenges and develop the workforce, we appear to be ‘standing still’.	
4.4	Tina O’Reilly: Extern and the 3 rd Sector are having similar issues with recruitment and retention. There is a crisis in terms of getting shifts covered. Lower salaries in competition with statutory providers often means missing out on new recruits. Sickness levels are also an issue. There are also positive developments as services open up for example, 3 rd Sector has the opportunity for 5 places on the Open University Social Work Degree. Applications close this Friday and there has been a good level of interest.	

4.5	Chair: These comments fit with career pathways we are looking at and shows importance of promoting social care as a career choice.	
4.6	Fiona McClean: SEHSCT is experiencing similar recruitment issues. having advertised posts a number of times with little interest. Recruitment days and social media campaigns are being tried.	
4.7	Amanda Williamson: NHSCT would echo other comments. New staff are being recruited, but with an ageing workforce frontline services lose staff as fast as they gain. Staff are tired and sickness levels are higher than normal, possibly a result of people working extra to cover gaps; thus, raising concern about health and wellbeing.	
4.8	Chair: It is important to support and maintain the current workforce; build resilience.	
4.9	Alex Bunting: The experience at Inspire endorses the need to properly resource supports for staff mental health. There are increased demands for services without increased staffing. Inspire fully agrees with concerns about being compassionate and respecting stress points.	
4.10	Chair: Thanked to everyone for their comments. This helps with current themes within social care and informs the messages that we pass on to key influencers.	
5.	Update on Social Care Campaign Year 2	
5.1	<p>Patricia Higgins: The Social Care Council delivered a successful social care promotion campaign 'Making a Difference' which was shared across social media/newspapers and radio last year. The campaign will run again this year with new stories, videos, seminars and podcasts. Claire Trainor, Head of Strategic Communications has led on this project, working closely with social care workers and managers. Particular thanks goes to JP Watson for helping prepare the 2022 materials. Patricia shared a video update from the Head of Communications on 2022 campaign plans.</p> <p>Patricia encouraged members to use and share the tools and resources developed by the Social Care Council.</p> <p>Action: Link to the video on the Social Care Council social media to be shared with group members after the meeting. https://youtu.be/TBK8twnCHzU</p>	AMcK
6.	Presentation on the development of career pathways for social care workers	
6.1	Marian O'Rourke: The Workforce Sub Group, chaired by Alison Simpson has oversight of the work of the Project Tea to develop a	

framework for social care that will support career pathways, underpinned by qualifications and training that are relevant to the learning and development needs of the social care workforce. The team has engaged widely with managers, staff, commissioners and educators to establish which qualifications and development opportunities best support the workforce skills and knowledge at a range of levels, or areas of expertise.

- 6.2** Paul Rooney: Explained that career pathways are based on a trellis approach, which incorporate formal qualifications alongside training that is developed and accredited to support learning and development when/where it is needed. The ambition is to have a Continuous Learning Framework which provides an agile and responsive model that allows people to move into the pathway at different levels. This approach can support career development of people who come to work in Health and Social Care as mature workers and bring with them existing skills and knowledge. .

Plans for the pathway include developing qualifications to meet skills/knowledge right through to Levels 5-7. The project aims to maximise accessibility to qualifications and minimise duplication of training, recognising prior learning as much as possible. Paul added that the Care in Practice Level is important, accrediting previous training and experience to blend practical and academic learning. Feedback has shown that not everyone will want to be an Advanced Practitioner or Manager but, this pathway provides scope for a range of ambitions.

- 6.3** Meta Keenan: Discussed the research undertaken to develop the pathways. Initial scoping found a vast range of qualifications across the registered workforce. To identify the most relevant qualifications 300+ managers have been surveyed and smaller group discussions. The research provided valuable insight into what is required to support induction and mandatory training. The recent Accredited Training Project received an overwhelming response from employers and staff, showing a clear need to support the workforce to enhance and upskill.

Meta explained that the team had used a 'Miro board' to collaborate on the work. This has helped keep the work interactive and track changes. Access can be arranged for members to view. Development of social care 'personas' has helped map qualifications and learning needs to roles. This work identifies the basics of what was required for someone to be able to deliver core functions and roles in any part of the sector.

- 6.4** Mairead Harkin: Provided further detail on the 'Design-Thinking' Methodology, which is offered a non-linear, flexible and people-centric approach. This involved end users (Staff and Service providers) in designing something to fit them now and in the future. The approach

engages front line staff and managers to define learning needs, design solutions and test to see if it works.

6.5

Paul Rooney: Commented that the project aimed to reflect some of the characteristics from the existing Social Work CPD Framework; seeking to consolidate the skills of the workforce. One theme that came back strongly from the working groups was the importance of coaching and mentoring; developing expertise in-house for people to fulfil enhanced roles. He also noted the need to address the problem whereby people start their career in social care and it then is a stepping stone to other HSC careers such as social work or nursing. A focus will be to retain people who have been working in social care for 10 - 15 years who want to move forward, working alongside other professions with, delegated functions. Ownership by the sector is important including incorporating value based relationships. Supporting a culture for a skilled and compassionate workplace was explored in a presentation and webinar from Prof Michael West from Kings Fund for the Social Care Managers Forum and a wider audience.

6.6

Mervyn Bothwell: Updated the group on the Accredited Training Project and shared an Impact Infographic summarising the allocation of £158k to accredited training funded by the Department of Health to develop capacity and capability in the social care workforce. The initiative was managed by the Social Care Council from November 2021-March 2022, with applications from social care organisations in the private, voluntary and independent sectors approved to support the development of social care registrants at different stages in their career pathway. (Statutory sector organisations already have access to funded training).

£155,850 was allocated to 30+ Organisations to fund 209 Applications to participate in 5 Accredited Training Programmes.).

Funding applications were managed in in three rounds. An additional 287 applications for Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care (NI) were received and will be retained in the hope that a further funding stream will be made available from DoH later in 2022.

Further evaluation will be completed through surveys and focus groups with candidates and managers. The team encourages more engagement with 'Train the Trainer' provision which will support sustainable workforce development and provide savings for an organisation in terms of external training costs. Motivating factors and barriers to this training will be explored with managers as part of the evaluation.

6.7

Chair: Thanked the Team for the presentation. She stated that the Care in Practice approach is practical and has strength in being grounded in employment. key stakeholders and workers. She invited

	<p>all those present to consider what next will come in the 12- 18 months- and what benefits will this create as we move forward.</p>	
6.8	<p>JP Watson: Commended the team on a sound and well researched proposal to develop a Career Pathway that is most welcome for social care. He noted that there are lots of questions in terms of how this will look in practice; how does it link to reward to remunerations. He also queried how this will sit with the very flat commissioning plan for social care so that it can benefit those dedicating their career to Health and Social Care. He suggested that it maybe need mapped to Agenda for Change; or could there be benchmarks with other careers?</p>	
6.9	<p>Sarah Browne: Agreed with the comments from JP and added that she was impressed with the developments for the Career Pathway. She was struck by the Impact Report for the Accredited Training Project, which demonstrated a significant amount of training achieved for a relatively small amount of money. She noted the number of people who could not be funded in this phase and questioned how they can be supported to access this type of training. The presentation on the Career Pathway shows how important it is for people to have opportunities to grow and thrive and qualifications like those funded by the project offer the perfect opportunity.</p>	
6.10	<p>Patricia Higgins: Responded to query about further training, advising that the Social Care Council has made a bid to the DoH requesting further funding for accredited training. There is a meeting scheduled with DoH shortly and resources like this will be included in the discussions.</p>	
6.11	<p>Chair: Added that some of the questions raised are about developing capacity and sharing learning. This approach to training, along with the Career Pathway trellis is ambitious and visionary. The Partnership Members will need to consider where this should be taken in terms of influencing the sector and policy makers.</p>	
6.12	<p>Patricia Higgins: Responded that part of the Social Care Council's remit from the DoH is to share thinking on workforce development and bring together leaders from social care to help shape the transformation of adult social care. These themes of influencing and informing are included in the DoH Reform of Adult Social Care consultation and the feedback will be helpful in terms of planning and commissioning. The next steps will include discussions on how commissioning contracts reflect workforce development needs. It also is likely that this will re-link the model of value based recruitment, which is highlighted in the consultation.</p>	
6.13	<p>Dory Kidd: Commented that people are often stuck at a particular Band or Level, doing extra work that is not recognised. The information about 'Levelling Up' will be very useful to share with DoH.</p>	

6.14	Patricia Higgins: Advised that the information about levels and responsibilities links well with the work of the DoH Fair Work Forum.	
6.15	Chair: Agreed that the time is right to take this information to the Forum who can use it to influence policy development.	
6.16	Alison Simpson: Reflected that when the Workforce Subgroup had started, the pandemic came and upped the momentum for social care. The DoH took a greater interest in social care and a Career Framework. Career structure is much needed so that social care has a chance to develop. The sector is growing rapidly and needs many more workers; therefore, qualifications cannot be allowed to create a barrier to newcomers. The Project Team has worked collaboratively across the sector to ensure ownership. Development of the Career Pathway is a not a quick-fix, but it will support and help the sector in the long term. In the meantime, if a funding stream for Accredited Training can be sourced from DoH, it would help social care keep going in the interim .	
6.17	Chair: Thanked everyone for all their work on the Career Pathway. Action: Accredited Training Infographic to be shared with group members after the meeting.	AMcK
7.	Health and Social Care Workforce Study – Report 4 & OSCAR Policy Briefing	
	Marion O’Rourke: Presented the recent report from the UK Health and Social Care Workforce Study to cover the period: Nov 2021 – Feb 2022. This study aims to gather demographic and work-related information from a cross-section of HSC workforce across UK on the challenges faced while working during COVID-19, including employer support and ways to improve this. It also seeks to assess wellbeing, quality of working life and levels of burnout and to learn what coping strategies are used for work-related stress and what effect they have on wellbeing, quality of working life and levels of burnout. The next phase of consultation is underway, with UK-wide survey opened in May 2022. Further details are on the Social Care Council Website ‘News’ section. Members are encouraged to promote the survey to their staff. Action: Presentation and report to be shared with group members after the meeting.	AMcK
8.	AOB	
	No other business discussed.	
9.	Date of Next meeting	
	The next meeting will be Tuesday 20 th September at 10am.	

	Approved by:	
	Anne O'Reilly	
	Signature:	
	Anne O'Reilly	
	Date of approval:	
	26/10/2022	