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**Leaders in Social Care Partnership**  
**10am Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022**  
**Via Zoom**  
**Confirmed Minutes**

**In Attendance**

Anne O'Reilly	Chair (Board Member, Social Care Council)
Patricia Higgins	Social Care Council
Sarah Browne	Board Member, Social Care Council
Marian O'Rourke	Social Care Council
Paul Rooney	Social Care Council
Alison Simpson	Extra Care
Fiona McClean	Southern Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Jenny Johnston	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
JP Watson	Domestic Care NI
Agnes Lunny	Positive Futures
Stephen McLaughlin	Western Health and Social Care Trust
Gayle McGurnaghan	Belfast Central Mission
Leslie-Anne Newton	ARC
Clodagh O'Brien	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

**Apologies**

Dory Kidd	Harmony Community Care Services
Kirsten Hewitt	Simon Community
Pauline Shepherd	Independent Health and Care Providers
Jayne Wright	MindWise
Catherine Maguire	Northern Ireland Social Care Council

<b>Item</b>	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies as above.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes from Previous Meeting</b>	
2.1	The minutes of the previous meeting on Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
3.1	Previous outstanding actions were confirmed as completed.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Members Updates</b>	
4.1	Fiona McClean reported that in terms of staffing, the South Eastern Trust have secured more permanent roles for social workers as a result of the workforce appeal. Since the last meeting the Trust has held two recruitment days resulting in 126 applicants and 77 successful appointments.	
4.2	Agnes Lunny reported that workforce is a critical issue for Positive Futures. Agnes advised that the challenges and level of burn out of the workforce is reflected across the whole sector and is a factor in contributing to retention issues.	
4.3	Stephen Mc Laughlin reported similar workforce challenges and highlighted that there are many vacancies in critical areas in social work and social care within the Western Trust due to difficulty attracting candidates to the roles.	
4.4	JP Watson confirmed a similar report from Domestic Care NI and reported that staff are also being lost to the Trusts and agencies. JP advised that Domestic Care are undertaking an urgent recruitment exercise and trying to retain current staff without much success. This has resulted in having to recruit from overseas to fill healthcare assistant roles at a significant financial impact.	
4.5	Alison Simpson reported on loss of staff due to taking up posts with better terms and conditions with the Trusts. Alison informed the group that Extra Care has reinstated a COVID list, which had been stood down for some time.	
4.6	Clodagh O'Brien reported that the Belfast Trust is also experiencing staffing and recruitment challenges and echoed the need for pay parity.	
4.7	Leslie-Anne gave feedback on recent discussions with care providers and the Permanent Secretary. Reports indicate a rise in the number	

	<p>of vacancies resulting in increased use of agencies and hand back of support packages.</p> <p>Leslie-Anne referenced the Social Care Fair Work Forum highlighting the need for more frequent meetings and clearer progression.</p> <p>Leslie-Anne also reported that the Learning Disability Sector is currently under pressure due to there being no Learning Disability strategy in place, instead the funding is being used to manage unexpected crises as opposed to a strategic plan being implemented. Gayle McGurnaghan also echoed members comments with regards to the current mobility in employment between the Trusts and other sectors. Gayle reported on Belfast Central Mission's efforts of carrying out focus groups with staff and managers. This included addressing the wellbeing of the staff going forward as well as some intense training for line managers. Gayle also reported on long term sickness increasing with burnout being a main factor.</p>	
4.8	Jenny Johnston reflected similar circumstances and particularly commented on the sickness rate amongst staff due to work related stress. Maintaining up to date mandatory and corporate training was noted as an issue due to staff to busy work schedules.	
4.9	JP suggested that as leaders of Social Care, there should be some escalation or feedback given to the key decision makers and also to the public on the risks that the sector are facing and the lack of social care.	
4.10	Sarah Browne informed the group that what has been said at this meeting reflects the Unison survey that was completed across the four nations which highlighted a deterioration in the health and wellbeing of care staff. This included both homecare and residential based staff with a lot of that being down to stress in the workplace.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Partnership Strategic Priorities</b>	
5.1	Anne reported that the Social Care Council has been asked by NICON to represent its members on the HSC Improvement and Transformation Advisory Board, providing a social care voice. Anne also noted that along with the CEO she met with some Directors of Adult Social Care from the Trusts at the recent NICON conference to understand how this group could become engaged with the work of the Partnership. A further meeting will be arranged.	
5.2	<p>Anne presented the paper which had been prepared following a meeting of a small group of members. The paper highlights 4 key areas for further consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Commissioning</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul> <p>5.3 Anne suggested that there is an opportunity to reset relationships as the sector is finding new ways of working with new leadership and new structures. Anne informed the group that the new Permanent Secretary has set a challenge for the system around efficiency, productivity and quality and that these are the areas he will make judgements on.</p> <p>5.4 Members discussed the paper and noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce parity is an issue</li> <li>• The risk of harm</li> <li>• Harder public messaging needed about the current context of social care</li> <li>• Are we hearing about the extent of unmet need?</li> </ul> <p>5.5 Leslie-Anne noted the importance of the use of language in communication to the public and to service users to avoid raising unnecessary concern. Paul Rooney informed the group that the Social Care Council has information on those who leave the register and suggested that there is more work needed to focus on the retention of workers already in place as well as recruitment.</p> <p>5.6 Patricia noted that it will be important to build a strong evidence base to show the challenges and pressures that exist within the workforce.</p> <p>5.7 Anne asked members if they would be willing to consider asking service users to join the Council's Participation Partnership as the group provides an opportunity to represent the voice of service users and carers.</p> <p>5.8 Chair and CEO agreed that the paper would be amended to reflect the members discussion and that Social Care Council Officers will develop an action plan linked to the paper.</p>	<p>Chair and CEO</p>
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	<b>6. Social Care Campaign</b>	
6.1	<b>Presentation on the Social Care Campaign by Rita Lewtas</b>	
6.2	Agnes agreed to restart the Communications Sub Group of the Leaders in Social Care Partnership and Anne suggested that if anyone present would like to join the subgroup they should contact Agnes and Rita.	AL and RL
6.3	Gayle commented on the slide of the presentation that referred to training and advised that with the current workload being put onto the workforce, there is pressure in creating space to train staff. Gayle suggested that there should be a more realistic picture of what social care is before people come into roles and this would help with the retention of staff.	
7.	<b>Experiences of those who joined the Social Care Register as emergency workers during the COVID19 pandemic</b>	
7.1	Patricia highlighted the paper and informed the group that this was a survey which sought the views of those registrants who came onto the Register during Covid. The survey sought to understand their motivations and understand why some had left.	
8.	<b>Update on Reform of Adult Social Care programme of work</b>	
8.1	Marian reported that the Social Care Council have been making good and positive progress on the programme of work to develop career pathways in social care and that it is gathering momentum. Marian suggested that as a group it is very important to look forward strategically to the future.	
8.2	<p>Paul reported that the Workforce Development team are working on engagement work at present with progress being made with the CIP (continuous learning) framework.</p> <p>Paul informed the group about the two events for social care managers that are coming up in November in both Omagh and Belfast, and extended invitations to those who would like to attend.</p> <p>Paul advised that a reference group that has been set up for the Health and Safety Practice Certificate and he will feed back on this to members as work progresses.</p> <p>Paul advised that significant resources have been made available to the sector for training for qualifications in Social Care and acknowledged that it has been noted there is no time to train people, which is concerning.</p>	

<b>9.</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	No other business discussed.	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Date of Next meeting</b>	
	The next meeting will be Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> January at 10am.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Signed</b>	
	Anne O'Reilly	