

Title: Chief Executive's Report

Date: 26th April 2023

Presented by: Patricia Higgins, Chief Executive

ACTION REQUIRED

This Paper is	For Information
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SUMMARY

This report outlines key activity undertaken during the period December 2022 to April 2023

BACKGROUND

The report gives an overview of the delivery of business to support registrants and stakeholders.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

None

ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Continued active engagement with all stakeholders to ensure the Social Care Council's business activity reflects the needs of the social work and social care workforces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

N/A

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS AND/OR LINKS HERE

Appendix I - CEO's report

Appendix I

Chief Executives Report

Board Meeting: 26th April 2023

This brief report covers the period December to April 2023.

1. Internal Matters

1.1 Move to James House

We moved into our new office in James House on 6th February. While the staff undertook a lot of work to facilitate the move, it was a smooth transition. The design of the office space was predicated on a model of flexible working and our agile working policy has enabled staff to adapt easily to the new surroundings. We are continuing to monitor the policy and will engage with staff on their experience of working in the new office environment. The Millennium House lease terminated on the 28th February 2023, however negotiations on final dilapidations costs are still ongoing and not expected to be resolved until May/June 2023. The dilapidations accrual (£130k) which the organisation has been carrying will be accrued in full into the 2023/24 financial year.

1.2 Staff Appointments

I am delighted to confirm the following appointments:

Catherine Maguire has been successful in securing the permanent post of Head of Workforce Development. Catherine has been in this post on an interim basis due to the temporary arrangements with the CEO and Director posts. We will be seeking to fill Catherine's post on a permanent basis.

Noel Keenan has also been successful in securing the Deputy Registration Manager, following the appointment of Ruth Hutchinson as Registration Manager.

1.3 Strategic Plan

Consultation on the 2023 -2027 Strategic Plan ran from 16th January – 10th March. The Senior Leadership Team held a number of meetings with a number of stakeholders to gauge their views on the new strategy. In addition, we received 150 written responses. Overall the feedback on the strategic priorities was positive, with some suggestions for amendments. The revised Strategic Plan is with the Board today for approval. A note of our actions as a result of the consultation feedback will be published on our website before the end of April.

1.4 Leadership programme

Following the successful *Supporting and Empowering You* staff development programme, we have developed a leadership programme for all of our managers –

from team leader to CEO – using Michael West’s Compassionate Leadership model. The programme will run throughout the business year and will be co-produced by staff. This is an opportunity for us to learn together and reflect on our use of the compassionate leadership model within the Council. We have asked Michael West to attend our last session to reflect with us on the outcomes of our learning.

1.5 Industrial Action

Both UNISON and NIPSA have continued with industrial action throughout this reporting period – including action short of strike and strike action. We have closely monitored the impact of this action which has been minimal for the Council.

2. External Engagement

2.1 Social care Collaborative Forum

In January NICON and the Social Care Council jointly hosted a Rapid Action Workshop to identify possible solutions to the blockages in hospital discharge. Attendees included representatives from HSC Trusts, Independent Sector social care providers, Department of Health, Public Health Agency, and digital and system design organisations. 38 participants took part in the workshop. A number of actions were agreed and arising out of the workshop the DoH undertook to work with the Social Care Council and NICON to establish a Social Care Collaborative Forum.

The DoH asked the Social Care Council to draft the Terms of Reference for the Forum using the Compact as the basis for this. The Forum will meet on 21st April and has in place 2 further meetings in May and June. Membership of the Forum is cross-sector and includes HSC Trusts, Independent sector umbrella bodies, DoH, PHA, SPPG, RQIA, NICON, the Social Care Council and service users and carers. I have been asked to co-Chair the Forum along with the Deputy Secretary, Social Care Policy,(DoH).

2.2 The Director of Registration and Corporate Services and I met with Deputy Secretary Social Care Policy (DoH), Peter Toogood. The meeting provided an opportunity to describe the work of the Social Care Council and hear from the Deputy Secretary his priorities as he enters his new role in DoH.

2.3 In January we hosted a workshop on social work in schools, in collaboration with the Education Authority. The workshop included representatives from schools, the Education Authority, Department of Education and BASW. Presentations were provided by 3 school social workers.

2.4 On 3rd – 5th May the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) is holding its 7th International Congress on Professional and Occupational Regulation in Dublin Castle. The Director of Regulation and Standards and I have been working with the CEO of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Services Workers to plan a lunchtime session at the Congress with social work regulators from across the globe. The session will focus on workforce issues and social work regulation.

In addition, the Director of Regulation and Standards is presenting along with Dr Paula McFadden from Ulster University, on *Academia and Regulation Working in Partnership, Making a Difference: The Symbiotic Value of Workforce Wellbeing Research for Regulators*. The presentation explores the origins of partnership working between the Social Care Council and Dr Paula McFadden's research on health and social care workforce wellbeing. It will include regulatory practical support for research, co-production of research priorities, including the shared development of key questions and providing an advisory role on research projects.

2.5 Council staff have participated in a number of workshops led by the Children's Services Review. In addition, the Director of Regulation and Standards and I met with the DoH to discuss the options appraisal exercise being undertaken into the future arrangements for children's services arising out of the review.

The Council also supported a piece of research led by BASWNI into the core roles and tasks undertaken by children's social workers. The research was undertaken at the request of Professor Ray Jones who was interested on social workers' views of their core roles and tasks and what tasks could be considered in the context of a skills mix approach to children's services.

2.6 A significant amount of activity has been undertaken to further develop our external workforce campaigns including new promotional assets for both social work and social care:

- Social work promotion including a campaign running throughout March to recognise March as a special month of reflection for the profession and World Social Work Day. This included sending out a communication toolkit to stakeholders, sharing our already existing resources and releasing a new reflections video series.
- A Podcast series called *Care to Chat* is in development building on the podcasts produced last year. This series is focussing on both social work and social care – following themes of a career in social work and in social care – with practitioners talking about their career journeys; social work leaders talking about leadership in social work and senior HSC leaders talking about system leadership; and a podcast on the role of the Social Care Council with the Senior Leadership Team. The podcast series is being hosted by Wendy Austin.
- We are building on the social care stories from last year – re-visiting some and developing new stories - with a focus on the role and value of social care to other professionals working with service users.
- We are also producing social work career stories and working with HSC Trusts to capture 'real' photography – showcasing the breadth of social work and also focussing on diversity in the profession. These will be utilised as part of our 2023 'Social Care – Making a Difference campaign'.
- A stakeholder engagement plan is under development to support our social care workforce objectives. This will be delivered in the Autumn 2023.

The podcasts and video stories will be available within the next few months and will be shared on our website and across our social media channels.

2.7 The Council hosted a workshop with social work leaders to explore the implementation of the Social Work Leadership Framework. The framework was developed by the DoH and has been given to the Council to lead its implementation. We are working in collaboration with the 5 HSC Trusts, and have commissioned the Centre for Effective Services to work with us to develop an implementation plan.

2.8 The Council hosted a study visit with senior representatives from the Ministry of Social Development in Jordan. We presented the work of the Social Care Council and discussed the professionalisation of social work in Jordan, including social work regulation.

3. Events Attended

3.1 During this period I attended the following events:

- Northern Ireland Leadership and Governance Conference – Chief Executives Forum and NI Public Sector Chairs Forum
- Symposium: Building and Maintaining Trust with your organisation's internal and external stakeholders – Chief Executives Forum and the British Psychological Society
- ARC strategic planning workshop
- NICON strategic planning workshop
- Northern Trust World Social Work Day event
- Northern Trust Domiciliary Care Worker Awards ceremony

3.2 Senior Staff also attended:

- Western Trust Directors Conference and SW careers booklet launch
- Southern Trust World Social Work Day event
- Belfast Trust World Social Work Day event
- South Eastern Trust World Social Work Day event

4. Meetings

4.1 During this period, I have engaged in the following meetings:

- Head of School (for social work), Queens University Belfast
- Head of School (for social work) Ulster University
- NI Public Services Ombudsman
- Strategic Planning and Performance Group, DoH, Hospital and Community Care Directorate Senior Team
- CEO's of ALB's group
- Improvement and Transformation Advisory Board, DoH
- Department for Economy - regarding Apprenticeships and Traineeships
- DoH – regarding the social care workforce strategy
- Department of Finance Innovation Lab - regarding proposals to scope new models of domiciliary care

- HSC Trust Directors of Adult Services
- City & Guilds Industry Skills Board
- Interim Adult Protection Board, SPPG
- CEORB – meeting of UK Health and social work/care workforce regulators

4.2 Upcoming meetings April and May

- Skills for Care and Development Alliance meeting (UK and RoI)
- Social Work Leadership Network meeting
- CLEAR conference

Patricia Higgins

12th April 2023