

Northern Ireland Social Care Council Participation Partnership

Unconfirmed Minutes
Tuesday 12th March 2024
James House / Hybrid MS Teams



March
12th





Members at the meeting:

Sarah Browne (Chair) (Board Member)
Anne Mallon (Co-Chair)
Gerard McWilliams (Co-Chair)
Declan McAllister (Director of Registration and Corporate Services)
Alan Ritchie (Member)
Susan Croy (Cedar Foundation)
Mandy Cowden (Professional Advisor)

Ronnie Patterson (Member)
Rita Lewtas (Head of Strategic Communication & Engagement)
Nicholas Campbell (Graphic Designer and Animator)
Declan Beare (Note Taker)

Apologies:

Grace Price
Marcus Duignan
Maria Somerville
Andre McKeown
Joanne Sansome
David Gillen
David Hayes

1.		<h2 style="text-align: center;">Welcome, Apologies, and Introductions</h2>	<p style="text-align: center;">apologies</p> 	ACTION
1.1	Sarah welcomed everyone and noted apologies from Grace Price, Andre McKeown, Marcus Duignan and Maria Somerville.			Chair
2.		<h2 style="text-align: center;">Previous Meeting's Minutes and Matters Arising</h2>		
2.1	Previous minutes agreed by all members and signed off.			Chair
3.		<h2 style="text-align: center;">Matters Arising</h2>		
3.1	Declan informed the group that the 1 st week of December 2024 is Homeless Awareness Week and the Council are hoping to support and event.			
3.2	Declan provided an update on the Social Care Collaborative Forum. Peter Toogood and Patricia Higgins co-chair the forum which has eight workstreams with regular progress reports provided. The next meeting is on 18 th March 2024, where each workstream is set to report on the activities delivered to date. Workstreams are still looking for some service users to get involved and if anyone is interested they can let Declan know. Declan also informed members that the Fair work forum is back up and running.			
3.3	Ronnie asked where it would be possible to raise the matter of mental health provision with the Minister. Declan reflected that the forum is picking up aspects of mental health provision which in time would be shared with the Minister.			
3.4	<p style="text-align: center;">a. Care to Chat Podcast</p> Rita updated this project and is keen to confirm plans for the podcast. Alan and Anne agreed to participate in the podcast and will also help with the content of flyers promoting the Social Care Council's work. Grace had also expressed interest in getting involved. Rita will set up a meeting with Alan, Anne and Grace.			
3.5	a. Update on Social Care Still Matters Report			

	<p>Declan informed the group that the report is now at drafting stage. We hope to be in the position to have the first draft ready very soon and we will share the report with the participation partnership.</p>	
<p>3.6</p>	<p>d. Social Care Council App</p> <p>Declan gave a short presentation on the Social Care App designs and stated that the APP will enable more users to engage with us on a regular basis. For ease of access we have introduced face ID and touch ID instead of just a password for registrants to access their account. We will also be able to send push notifications on the app which will encourage more engagement and keep people better informed.</p> <p>A number of proposed changes were presented for the App project team to consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Rita suggested Instead of 'I am a registrant', to include a hover feature to give more specific explanations on terms; for example, if they are a social worker. b) Susan commented that the App could really matter to service users because they often lack information and need more guidance about the Social Care Council and registration. Signposting in this app will be very useful. A lot of people don't know what social workers and social care workers do and this could give them a better understanding of their roles c) Ronnie noted that it's important that it's an easy read and clear for people with learning disabilities. d) Rita suggested, we should focus on gathering and grouping the most frequent queries people have so we can refer the people to the information on the new App and think about how we can best help to answer that query. e) Rita, Alan and Mandy commented that we should keep content short and clear because it can be overwhelming reading a lot of information. <p>Declan thanked everyone for their feedback and confirmed this would be shared with the project group. He explained the public can download the App on their phone through the App store or through the website and at present we have a pilot group of around 300 social worker and social care workers who will be encouraged to provide feedback as the App design progresses</p> <p>Declan agreed that when someone is under pressure, this app could help them find out more about where to go, what to do.</p> <p>Declan noted that the App is planned to Go Live in June 2024</p>	

4.



Chair's Update

<p>4.1</p>	<p>Disability consultation and climate change meeting with the Board are to be rearranged.</p> <p>Public Health Agency Personal Public Involvement (PPI) are running a series of Spring Tuesday seminars. Declan Beare sent out the details previously. Sarah joined one which was about what it means to have the Executive back on board. The one next week is on co-production. If anyone is interested in attending contact Declan Beare and he will send the details around again.</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Action – Declan Beare</p>
<p>4.2</p>	<p>Anne McGlade is establishing a new Council committee for research and is hoping to have a stakeholder event at the Council and would be keen to get some feedback from service users. If anyone is interested please let us know and we will pass on the information, the date is 16th May and will be a couple of hours. The aim is to establish a new committee which will be responsible for creating a new research strategy and to sharing research opportunities.</p>	

5.



Co-Chairs Update


- a. Impact meeting
- b. Human rights resource pilot launch



<p>5.1</p>	<p>Gerard gave an update on working with the Open University in relation to the consultation for the social work degree. Gerard is also involved in a number of workstreams with the Social Care Collaborative forum. He is also working with Queens University engaging with nursing students around technology, accessibility and barriers they may face.</p>	
<p>5.2</p>	<p>Anne updated on her involvement with the School of Nursing and Midwifery talking about her role as an older carer.</p> <p>Anne is attending a meeting on 15th April on the future of social care with the 4 nations.</p>	

6.



Members Updates

<p>6.1</p>	<p>Alan updated on being at the Workforce Strategy event in Lisburn on 25th January 2024 where a 26 page draft report with strategic priorities and actions was shared. Alan’s impression was positive, except that all the actions are dependent on funding from the Department of Health. The pay and finance need to be right before trying to deliver many of the report actions. Alan reflected that you don’t want to create expectations and then not be able to deliver because of a reliance on funding which may not be there. Alan also joined an online meeting about the HSC workforce which was interesting where they were discussing a new career pathway in England. Alan reflected that it should all be consistent across the UK.</p> <p>Susan provided an update on the Cedar user forum; they have 49 service users in the forum, across NI. She noted that this enables Cedar to get the views of people with a range of challenges including disabilities. The forum is currently looking at service pathways to support CEDAR in delivering services to service users. Three women who are involved in the forum have been nominated for awards which is a great achievement. Susan also reflected that it was great to see disability awareness being shared too.</p>	
<p>6.2</p>	<p>Susan is also involved in a book launch team titled, ‘We Are Braver Together’ -Stories of Caring. The organisation is American and they are launching it internationally. Susan will share this when it is available, in May potentially.</p>	
<p>7.  Social Work Degree engagement</p>		
<p>7.1</p>	<p>Tricia Devlin joined the meeting virtually and gave a presentation on the Review of the Degree in Social Work. Every 5 years the Council must complete a review of the degree to ensure it keeps pace with service needs which includes acknowledging what is working well and what isn’t. The review also includes identification of we need to build into the degree programme to ensure it is meeting the learning needs of students. Tricia stated that the reform team membership includes Joanne</p>	

<p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p> <p>7.4</p>	<p>Sansome. Tricia is happy for this presentation to be shared with the group.</p> <p>The review team want to make sure the programmes meet the requirements, that students are equipped to meet emerging need and that the curriculum supports the development of practitioners with a strong professional social work identify working in interdisciplinary contexts.</p> <p>The final thing for the review team is to look at whether the programmes equip students in practice in a post pandemic environment. Also, there are other actions relevant to the 5-year review of the degree which may be identified during the course of the work.</p> <p>Progress on the degree work is ongoing: there have been focus groups with practice teachers, AYE social workers, lecturers, service users and carers and students. All have had an opportunity to give input to the review of the degree. There have also been a number of surveys sent out, for students, first line managers and practice teachers.</p> <p>Tricia summarised some emerging themes which can be viewed in the shared presentation</p> <p>Anne noted that she was pleased to see an emphasis on care and passion as attitude goes a long way and the review sounds very positive.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	 <p>Break</p>	
<p>9.</p>	 <p>Engagement Plan for service users and carers in the Participation Partnership</p>	
<p>9.1</p>	<p>Rita reported that two discussions around engagement have been completed with the Partnership and the Registrants Forum. As part of the presentation Rita reflected on the 5 Principles which have been identified within a draft engagement strategy;</p>	

- a) Accessibility, standards to meet as an organisation. We need to make sure it is easy to engage with us and we are an accessible organisation. This includes writing in a more accessible way.
- b) Openness – important to state clearly how open we are as an organisation. We are honest and transparent in how we engage and also state that we are open to change.
- c) One size does not fit all – We recognise that not one type of engagement suits everyone. Our engagement activity reflects this and is broad and nimble to ensure it is meaningful, effective, ongoing and measurable. Ronnie noted engagement that suits everyone is important.
- d) Meet people where they are at – our engagement is two way and we are approachable, ensuring we empower others to influence our work to the benefit of the community. This also includes removing barriers should they occur.
- e) Inclusivity – Rita suggested that this word might change to make it more accessible, but its meaning is about ensuring the entire community is included and using many different methods to try and reach them all.

9.2 Sara and Gerard suggested changing this and possibly using ‘opportunity for all’.


9.3 Rita informed the group that underneath these principles there will be work going on to put into action the activities of the engagement strategy and we want to make sure we get this right.

9.4 Anne reflected the importance of the strategy supporting everyone to express their views and ideas and the Council listening and doing something about them. Gerard also responded that it was important to empower voices. Ronnie also reflected that the NI government also

<p>9.5</p> <p>9.6</p> <p>9.7</p>	<p>needs to improve their engagement by supporting people with disabilities in NI as the rest of the UK better.</p> <p>Rita, Alan and Gerard reflected on how the principles could be actioned and shared and that it was important not to over commit to promises that could not be kept. Rita agreed to share these principles with the group for feedback.</p> <p>Susan also reflected on Cedar’s engagement strategy and how it is set every year and importance of the ‘What’s the why behind them, what are these pillars trying to achieve. Are we doing what we’re saying what we are going to do and what’s the why for doing it.</p> <p>Ronne also agreed to play his film next time for the Partnership forum.</p> <p>Rita thanked the Partnership for their engagement on the accessibility element on the principles and strategy and confirmed that further progress will be brought back to the Partnership for their review</p>	
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<p>10.</p>	 <p>Collation of activity of the participation partnership members</p>	
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<p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p>Mandy shared a template which will be used to record Participation Partnership members’ involvement and activity in Social Care Council workstreams.</p> <p>Gerard asked if he can meet with Mandy as he has a spreadsheet of all the work he is in that could be included.</p> <p>Declan Beare to send out to the PP forum.</p> <p>Mandy mentioned a research article from Social Work with Older People (SWOP) that asked older people what they wanted from social workers. She will circulate to the group as it links with what we have talked about. Declan Beare to share out with everyone.</p>	
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<p>11.</p>	<p>Social work awards</p>	
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11.1	<p>Mandy updated the forum on the Social Work Awards and advised that there are ongoing issues with funding currently so we do not have a finalised date in 2024.</p> <p>Susan suggested that Belfast would be more accessible; however it is recognised that each Trust delivers the awards and it is the turn of the Western Trust.</p>	
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Dates of next meetings

- 4th June 2024

Approved by:	
Signature:	
Date of Approval:	

ACTIONS LIST

ACTION

Completed



12th March 2024



1.	Rita to have a call with Grace, Anne and Alan to discuss podcast	Rita	
2.	Declan to send around principles of the engagement plan	Declan B	
3.	Declan to send out invites for spring Tuesday	Declan B	

4.	Mandy and Gerard to discuss Gerard's spreadsheet of activity log.	Mandy	
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