

Professional in Practice Partnership Committee

Wednesday 3 June 2026

Via Teams

Confirmed Minutes

Attendance:

Bria Mongan
 Gloria Kirwan
 Elaine Pollock
 Tina O'Reilly
 Davy Hayes
 Eileen McKay
 Ciaran Traynor
 Debbie Grieves
 Campbell Killick
 Maura McMackin
 Emer Loughran

Chair
 External Assessor
 Head of Service: SEHSCT obo Fiona Gunn
 PiP Lead: Voluntary and Community Sector
 Head of Department (Social Work) QUB
 Assistant Director: BHSCCT
 Community and Voluntary Sector
 PiP Lead: Ulster University
 Subject Lead for Social Work: Ulster University
 Principal Consultant: HSCNI Leadership Centre
 PBNI obo Gillian Montgomery

In Attendance:

Catherine Maguire
 Gillian McAuley
 Mandy Cowden
 Heather Graham
 Nicola Lewis
 Julie Ann McCann

Head of Workforce Development: Social Care Council
 Professional Adviser: Social Care Council
 Professional Adviser: Social Care Council
 Professional Adviser: Social Care Council
 PiP Team Manager: Social Care Council (minute taker)
 PiP Team Administrator

Apologies:

Jennifer Hamilton
 Gillian McAllister
 Marita Magennis
 Adrian Nugent
 Ursula Crickard
 Stephen McLaughlin
 Lee Wilson
 Tracey Sproule
 Gillian Montgomery

Head of School: Ulster University
 Acting Deputy Director: Youth Justice Agency
 Assistant Director: SHSCT
 Head of Education Welfare Services: EANI
 Assistant Director, Children's Court Guardian Agency
 Assistant Director: WHSCT
 Assistant Director: NHSCT
 Governance SPPG
 Director of Operations: Probation Board for Northern Ireland

1.	Welcome and Apologies
1.1	The meeting commenced with a warm welcome to all attendees. Bria Mongan, who joined the Partnership for her first meeting as Chair, provided an overview of her professional background and invited introductions from all Partnership members.
2.	Declaration of Interest
2.1	None noted.
4	Chair's Business
4.1	Acknowledgement of outgoing Partnership Member The Chair informed members that this would be CT's final meeting. Members reflected on their experiences of working with CT and expressed their sincere appreciation for his significant contributions. Particular recognition was given to his dynamic and innovative approach, and the mentorship he provided within the PiP framework, especially across the community and voluntary sector. Members formally acknowledged that CT's input to the Committee would be greatly missed. However, they welcomed his continued engagement in supporting candidates with submissions going forward. Social Work Awards 2026 The Chair advised that nominations are now open for the Social Work Awards, scheduled to take place on 4 December 2026 at Belfast City Hall. Members were encouraged to consider submitting nominations in order to highlight excellence in social work and to recognise outstanding practice and achievements within the profession. EMcK highlighted the targeted efforts underway to increase nominations from the community and voluntary sector. Members were informed that further promotional activity would be circulated in the coming weeks for their awareness and engagement. EMcK noted that the closing date for nominations is 5:00 pm on 30 June 2026, noting that there would be no scope for extension beyond this deadline.

	PiP Awards Theme The Chair confirmed that the theme of this year's PiP Awards will be: <i>“Creating Safer Futures: Social Work Responses to Violence Against Women and Girls.”</i> Members acknowledged the importance and relevance of this focus topic for social work. Gillian McAuley (GMcA) agreed to revert with further details in relation to the keynote speaker.
5	Matters Arising
5.1	Approval of Minutes and Actions from previous Meeting The minutes from the March 2026 business meeting were agreed and confirmed.
5.2	IAR Mentoring Assessment Pathway GMcA provided an update and advised that the Information and Development Forum (I&D Forum) had not met since the previous partnership meeting. It was confirmed that the I&D Forum is scheduled to meet on 16 June 2026, at which point this item will be tabled for consideration. Action: GMcA to provide an update at the next meeting.
5.3	Selection Process for Judith Mullineux Award GMcA advised that the Social Care Council has now agreed an internal selection criteria and process for the Award, which is currently operational.
6	Assessment of Practice Teaching Qualifications Gained Outside Northern Ireland
6.1	GMcA provided an update on work completed to develop a new process for assessing practice teaching qualifications obtained outside Northern Ireland. A proforma outlining the process has been prepared and will be shared with the Partnership alongside the meeting minutes. It was noted that, historically, an ad hoc approach had been applied. The introduction of this new process will ensure fairness and provide a more structured and consistent approach to benchmarking against Northern Ireland standards.

	GMcA further explained that an 18-month soft pilot has been undertaken, during which 4 applicants progressed through the process to ensure alignment with NI standards. The decision making also allows for requirements that mentorship or additional support is in place where gaps are identified in applicant's practice teaching competencies. CM welcomed the development, highlighting it as a significant piece of work. It was noted that Northern Ireland maintains high standards in relation to practice teaching and is among the few jurisdictions with established standards for practice learning, providing a high level of assurance regarding the quality of student experience. TO'R commented that the process has been successful, as evidenced by an increase in the number of practice teachers progressing through the system. It was also noted that training is available for practice teachers availing of this process, or for those who have not engaged in practice teaching for a period of time, and that individuals can be appropriately signposted. Action: Proforma to be shared with the minutes for noting and dissemination within member organisations.
7	2025/26 PiP Business Report
7.1	GMcA, HG and MC presented an extensive end of year Professional in Practice business report providing a detailed account of activity across all the functions of the PiP Framework for the 2025 – 26 business year. It was noted that a detailed written report would be circulated with the minutes. The presentation covered key information and analysis for: • PiP Award enrolments • Engagement with the PiP Framework • Approved Programmes and Work-Based Learning Routes • The Individual Assessment Route and Credit Accumulation • The business of the Approval Panel, IAR Assessment Panel and Information and Development Forum • 2 PiP Mandatory Requirements Condition including Extensions. The Chair thanked the presenters for the detailed information noting that it had raised a number of areas of enquiry, before opening the floor for questions in relation to the information and data presented. Members noted the high success rates across Approved Programmes and IAR and found the presentation useful in illustrating the work of the PiP Framework. There was discussion on fluctuations in engagement figures which could potentially be attributed to workforce pressures and a lag following the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers noted that in their experience

there was a positive correlation between PiP engagement and workforce retention.

EMcK raised a query regarding the increase in deferrals of Approved Programme modules and requested further detail, including a breakdown by programme and any links to assessment methods. GMcA advised that the PiP Team would work to gather further information on this, noting that detail on assessment methods may not be available.

MM expressed thanks to MC for her support during the Leaders in Practice monitoring visit, noting that the process was rigorous and well supported, enabling effective preparation and participation.

CT highlighted issues relating to inequality and resource implications within the voluntary and community sector, particularly in comparison to statutory sectors. Concerns were noted regarding resource disparities and the affordability of Approved Programmes, as reflected in the report through lower numbers of social workers achieving awards outside of HSC Trusts.

A discussion took place regarding the rigour and governance of the approval process for WBLR Programmes in comparison with academic Approved Programmes. MC advised that a proposal will be brought to the Approval Panel to extend the approval period for WBLR Programmes from three years to five years, bringing it into alignment with Approved Programmes. GMcA provided assurances that, while there are different methods of approval with varying areas of focus, both processes are robust and ensure that required standards are met.

DG highlighted the growing importance of authentic assessment methods, particularly in light of the increasing use of AI in academic settings. She also noted the need for AI detection and plagiarism checks to be incorporated into the IAR system and processes.

DG further advised that Ulster University has introduced a new policy on extenuating circumstances, allowing students a 5 – 10 day extension for submissions rather than deferral, which may influence deferral figures in future reports.

CM emphasised the strength of partnership working and its importance in supporting social workers' learning and development through the PiP Framework. A discussion was held regarding succession planning for Partnership members. It was agreed that this could be taken forward in a future strategic session.

	Action: A future Strategic Session to be convened that looks at membership of PiP Partnership, ensuring stronger succession planning. Action: A copy of the written 2025/26 Business Report will be shared with the minutes of this meeting. Action: The PiP Team to gather and provide information on percentages of deferrals across Approved Programmes. Action: The Social Care Council to engage with comms team to promote good news stories around engagement and achievement.
8	External Examiner Report
8.1	GK give a brief verbal summary of her report. A written report will be shared with members. GK noted consistency across assessment routes, strong governance and quality assurance, and a positive strategic direction of the framework. GK highlighted areas for improvement over the coming year around AI and the importance for the partnership to be clear on how integrity is defined in relation to the work that people are asked to submit and what are the implications if there is lack of integrity. GK also noted that she will focus on the Consolidation Award, and the higher number of referrals and deferrals when reviewing submissions in 2026/27.
9	2026 PiP Award Ceremony
9.1	The PiP Awards Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, 22 September 2026 at the La Mon Hotel, Belfast.
10	AOB
10.1	No future matters where raised.
11.	Matters for Reporting to the Board
11.1	The Chair will raise key areas arising from the business report to the Board in July 2026, highlighting the scale of the PiP Framework, its importance for social work and the resourcing required across all members to sustain and develop.
12.	Dates of future meetings

12.1	• Tuesday 8th September 2026 • Wednesday 2nd December 2026

Signed:



Bria Mongan, Chair of PiP Partnership Committee

Dated:

8 September 2026

March 2026

Item	Owner	Action	Status
6.1	NL	Presentation and associated papers to be circulated with minutes.	Closed
6.1	GMcA	IAR mentoring assessment pathway to be brought to the next I&D Meeting	Open
6.1	CM/ GMcA	SR to be tabled to return and present once further on with career pathways.	Open

June 2026

Item	Owner	Action	Status
5.2	CM	Mentoring Assessment Pathway update to be provided update at next meeting.	Open
6.1	CM	Practice Teaching Paper will be shared with minutes for noting and dissemination within organisations.	Closed
7.1	CM	The Social Care Council to plan a strategic session focusing on succession planning for the Partnership.	Open
	GMcA	A copy of the written 2025/26 Business Report will be shared with the minutes of this meeting.	Closed
	NL	Gather and provide information on percentages of deferrals across Approved Programmes.	Open
	CM	The Social Care Council to engage with the comms team to promote good news stories around engagement and achievement within the PiP Framework	Open