



Northern Ireland Social Care Council  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor James House  
2 Cromac Avenue  
Belfast | BT7 2JA

Tel: 02895362600  
Web: [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info)

## **Leaders in Social Care Partnership**

**20 May 2025 at 10am**

**James House**

**Confirmed**

### **In Attendance**

Sarah Browne, Chair  
Catherine Maguire  
Alison Simpson  
Carina Boyle  
Claire Crawford  
Clodagh O'Brien  
Mervyn Bothwell  
Paul Rooney  
Rita McCullagh  
Andre McKeown (note taker)  
Marian O'Rourke (presenter)

Board Member, Social Care Council  
Social Care Council (NISCC)  
Extra Care  
Western HSCT (WHST)  
South Eastern HSCT (SEHSCT)  
Belfast HSCT (BHSCT)  
Social Care Council (NISCC)  
Social Care Council (NISCC)  
Social Care Council (NISCC)  
Social Care Council (NISCC)  
Delegation of Healthcare Interventions  
Sub-Group

### **Apologies**

Agnes Lunny  
Alex Bunting  
Audrey Murphy  
Caroline Bucklee  
Denise Magill  
Dory Kidd  
Elaine Armstrong  
Jayne Wright  
Jenny Johnston  
Kathryn McCann  
Kelly Devlin  
Kirsten Hewitt  
Leslie-Anne Newton  
Pauline Shepherd  
Rosie McNaughton  
Ryan Williams  
Tina O'Reilly  
William Morrow

Positive Futures  
Inspire  
MCare NI  
Northern HSCT (NHSCT)  
Triangle Housing  
Harmony Community Care Services  
Cedar Foundation  
Mindwise  
Southern HSCT (SHSCT)  
Simon Community  
Cedar Foundation  
Simon Community  
ARC  
Independent Health & Care Providers  
Cedar Foundation  
Connected Health  
Extern NI  
Inspire

| Item | Agenda   |
|------|--|
| 1.   | <b>Welcome and Apologies</b>   |
| 1.1  | The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies as above. Welcomed Claire Crawford, Interim Regulated Services Manager/Governance Lead for Learning Disability (SEHSCT) who will represent Fiona McClean who is now on a secondment.   |
| 1.2  | The Chair paid tribute to former member of the Partnership – JP Watson who passed away at Easter. He had been a longstanding supporter of the Council's Workforce Development Partnerships. The Chair commended his commitment to social care. His work to improve standards and terms/conditions for social care will be his legacy. JP's contribution will be greatly missed.  |
|      |  |
| 2.   | <b>Minutes from Previous Meeting</b>   |
| 2.1  | The minutes of the previous meeting on 08 October 2025 were reviewed and agreed as accurate. It was noted that this was the first full meeting since October. Previous meetings of the Partnership in February were used as a workshop to focus on planning and review of the partnership terms of reference.  |
|      |  |
| 3.   | <b>Matters Arising</b>   |
|      | There were two matters arising from the October meeting. These are now completed and closed – details are below:   |
| 3.1  | <p>Terms of Reference – updated terms approved by Board in April 2025 and published on the website. Next review will be due in 2 years.</p> <p>Members had the opportunity to add comments as highlighted below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review the membership to include children and young people's social care to bring additional expertise to support the subgroups.</li> <li>• CM added that as a Co-Chair of the Collaborative Forum Children's Workforce Subgroup had recently met with 'Children in NI', who can connect with the work for children's social care as their membership include around 100 organisations and/or groups</li> </ul> |

|     |   |
|-----|---|
|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members advised CM that there is a need for engagement to support or develop other subgroup areas.</li> <li>• MB commented that is an undergoing work to review current activities that are carried out by subgroups to ensure members are not over stretched and to avoid duplication. There is a proposal to merge the Workforce Strategy subgroup and Employers Advisory Group (EAG). Both groups have terms of reference and are supportive of merging. This new subgroup would report back to the Board through the Leaders in Social Care Partnership (LSCP). EAG provides strong operational connections which supports the strategic group. Further updates will be provided at the next meeting in September.</li> </ul>  |
| 3.2 | <p>Adult Protection Bill Update from March 2025 as highlighted below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bill Team continue to work on a few outstanding policy issues, however it is not expected that these issues would impact the introduction of the Bill. It is likely that the Bill will be introduced as Draft, with potential amendments on these issues to be made later, if necessary.</li> <li>• The business case has been approved by the Department. Additionally, the Department of Finance have given their approval for us to legislate. In light of current financial limitations, a further business case will need to be developed to consider an implementation plan for the draft Bill, in due course.</li> <li>• Work on the Statutory Guidance is progressing. The Guidance will be subject to a full public consultation. This is likely to take place towards the latter end of the Bill's progression through the Assembly, so that the document can take account of any amendments brought forward.</li> </ul> <p>In addition of this update CB and CM informed; that the Community and Voluntary sector has been included in the development of training plan to support implementation of the Bill.</p> <p>Roll-out and training for implementation of the new Patient Safety Incident Management System will need to involve the Independent Sector. CB agreed to follow up with Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) to ensure a collaborative approach to learning from incidents.</p> |

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
|              |  |
| <b>4.</b>    | <b>Social Care Reform Programme – presented by CM and MB</b>   |
| <b>4.1</b>   | <b>Care in Practice Update</b>   |
| <b>4.1.1</b> | <p><b>Level 2 Certificate</b></p> <p>MB and CM shared a brief update on Level 2 Certificate highlighting few points as notes below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact report from the pilot of the Level 2 Certificate in Safe and Effective Practice has been completed. Guidance to support employers and learners has been developed. These are published on the Social Care Reform webpage.</li> <li>• Care In Practice (CiP) Interactive web resource will launch at the upcoming Social Care Manager Forums on 3 and 5 June 2025. This opportunity was promoted at engagement events in early April.</li> <li>• Level 2 Certificate in Safe and Effective Practice is now available and approximately 100 people have engaged so far.</li> <li>• The certificate is not yet a mandatory requirement for registration.</li> <li>• Figures are not available as yet for completed qualifications.</li> <li>• Positive feedback from BHSCT who are using it as part of induction for new staff.</li> <li>• Follow up work will be carried out with Awarding Organisations and the Further Education representative to provide anonymised data on how many people have engaged and/or completed.</li> <li>• Engagement with training providers to build capacity for delivery of the Certificate. There is also work to be done to engage with the social care sector to identify barriers to uptake etc. This is part of Social Care Reform team engagement with front line practice. LSCEP also has a significant role in influencing implementation across the sector.</li> </ul> |
| <b>4.1.2</b> | <p><b>Qualifications Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Review of HSC Qualifications is on target. All should be completed by the end of September 2026.</li> <li>• Level 2 and 3 are completed.</li> <li>• Level 4 will be completed over the summer.</li> </ul>   |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 5 is due to start in June, with initial surveys to be sent to employers and training provider to assist with the desktop activity. This review will work to ensure there is alignment irrespective of service specialism.</li> </ul> <p>The Open University have been commissioned to conduct a survey with the children's social care workforce.</p> <p>AS recognised that Level 2 is first step on implementation of the Social Care Workforce Strategy and added that employers would welcome support on managing this.</p> <p>It was agreed that NISCC will review information available and work with partners to update as required.</p> <p>The CiP interactive web resource will go live in June and members are encouraged to share with their staff. RMcC invited members to become involved in developing guides for implementation of the CiP Framework.</p> <p>CB commented that employers will need to explore the costs of outsourcing/in house delivery for Level 2 training.</p> |
| 4.1.3 | <p><b>National Occupational Standards (NOS) review</b></p> <p><b>Updates given by MB and CM</b></p> <p>NOS review for Health and Social Care and Child Care Learning and Development (CCLD) will be completed by November 2025. In total 212 NOS are being reviewed as part of this UK-wide project. While the number of NOS have been reduced overall two new standards have been added in relation to safeguarding and digitalisation. Two face to face engagement events with employers and social care practitioners were held in April 2025 in Antrim and Portadown. Next steps include a survey/consultation for all of the workforce and interested stakeholders in Sept.</p> <p>NISCC and CCEA are working with FE to progress towards accreditation of traineeships as precursor for Level 2 Certificate. Existing traineeships are not currently regulated by CCEA.</p>   |
| 4.2   | <p><b>Social Care Workforce Strategy –Updates by CM</b></p>   |

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
|           | <p>A joint adult and children's social care workforce workshop is planned to take place at the end of May 2025 to work on an implementation plan for the workforce strategy.</p> <p>The DoH is developing a business case to support implementation of the workforce strategy.</p>  |
| <b>5.</b> | <p><b>'Making a Difference' Campaign – Updates by RMcC</b></p> <p>RMcC shared a brief update of the upcoming Social Care campaign launch as noted below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SCCF communications workstream is leading on the plan and developing an evaluation of the campaign over the last four years. Plans for qualitative engagement with those involved in the campaigns is in development. The team may be approach LSCP members for views.</li> <li>• The workstream held a workshop in January 2025 to plan the focus and messaging for the 2025/26 campaign.</li> <li>• The Campaign will use storytelling to promote understanding of the diversity of social care. This year will include those who have come into social care via volunteering and those who have come to work in social care from other countries.</li> <li>• The campaign launch is planned for the 11 June 2025 at Camphill Community Clanabogan, a supported living service outside Omagh.</li> <li>• A member of our Participation Partnership, Joanne Sansome is chairing the event. The Minister and Chief Social Work Officer will be attending. RMcC extended the invite to LSCP members.</li> <li>• Care to Chat Series 3 podcasts launched tomorrow. The first podcast focuses on SHSCT dementia support which links with Dementia Awareness week.</li> <li>• 11 podcasts are planned for this year and will be released across the summer. A carers podcasts will launch in Carers Week. It includes a service provider, a social care practitioner and a parent carer.</li> <li>• This should bring the Care to Chat series to a total of 35 podcast episodes.</li> <li>• A launch event is planned for 12 June to launch the Loneliness Resource. It will take place at the Seamus Heaney</li> </ul> |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
|            | Homeplace in Bellaghy. This resource includes a new resource for social work and an update to the social care resource.   |
| <b>6.</b>  | <b>Social Care Collaborative Forum (SCCF) and Fair Work Forum updates - presented by CM on behalf of DMcA</b>   |
| <b>6.1</b> | <p><b>SCCF updates</b></p> <p>CM shared a brief update as this was provided by DMcA for the SCCF and Fair Work Forum as below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A SCCF leadership workshop took place in November 2024 and it has reinforced the need for trust, confidence and cooperation in the support of the Adult Social Care Reform Programme. Members approved the Leadership report at the SCCF meeting on the 14th January 2025.</li> <li>• Work is now progressing to develop a 10-year strategic plan to support adult social care reform and this includes a 3-year delivery plan to align the work of the SCCF with the DoH's 2022 consultation on proposals and the ministers 3-year strategic plan for Health and Social Care.</li> <li>• A meeting on the draft 3-year plan took place at Dunsilly on the 2nd April with leaders across the Social Care sector to review and inform the plan, which will be available at the next SCCF meeting in June 2025.</li> <li>• SCCF Commissioning and Contracting workstream presented progress on the review of the Regional Care Home Contract and members were positive on delivery of the work this year.</li> <li>• SCCF Data Research and Evidence workstream has now completed its engagement and workshops with social care data leaders across the sector. A draft report and journey map for delivery will be presented at the next workstream meeting in June 2025.</li> <li>• A separate group of the SCCF now known as the Anti-Racist working group has been established and will report to the SCCF and Fair Work Forum. They have been meeting to discuss communications and support activity to prevent any re-occurrence of the racism activity that took place in the summer of 2024 towards social care practitioners.</li> </ul> |



|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 6.2 | <p><b>Fair Work Forum updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Minister has now committed £50M in the 25/26 budget to raise the non-statutory social care workforce to the Real Living Wage. It is hoped that arrangements will be in place by September 2025.</li> <li>• Fair Work Forum business case work will be used to provide evidence to support for the expenditure, including setting out the options for realising the commitment and setting the scope to maximise the impact within the funding envelope available.</li> <li>• Survey work by the Social Care Council and the DoH has now completed and findings were shared with the Fair Work Forum at their meeting on the 29 January 2025.</li> <li>• Key discussions included the affordability of competitive wages, difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, and the pressures imposed by regulatory and financial constraints with some of this linked to current commissioning rates, ability to offer a competitive Living Wage, and management of the increased National Insurance contributions. There was a strong consensus on the need for comprehensive reform—addressing both the financial and commissioning frameworks—to make the sector a more attractive and sustainable employment option.</li> <li>• The Fair Work Forum confirmed that the Real Living Wage investment applied to the Adult Social Care sector only and that there would need to be further work progressed to understand the impact on children’s social care.</li> </ul> |
| 7.  | <p><b>Delegation of Healthcare Interventions to Social Care Practitioners Employed by Trusts or Third-Party Organisations – presented by MoR</b></p>  |
|     | <p>MO’R shared a brief update on the Delegation of Healthcare Interventions to Social Care Practitioners Employed by Trusts or Third-Party Organisations as noted below;</p> <p>This work is part of a wider project to develop a Governance Framework for Multi-Professional Delegation which will specify the arrangements required to maintain an integrated approach to the appropriate delegation of tasks and duties to meet the care and service choices of people. It considers the codes and standards</p>   |



|           |  |
|-----------|--|
|           | <p>published by NISCC, NMC, RCN, NIPEC and DoH. Development of this framework will help provide consistency on the delegation of nursing and healthcare interventions across Health and Social Care. Recommendations from the subgroup include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating the draft Multi-professional Delegation Governance Framework (MDGF) for Nursing, Midwifery and Social Services, (December 2023)</li> <li>• HSC Trusts and independent care providers to use the framework to undertake the self-assessment checklist and agree an action plan to strengthen policy and organisational governance arrangements as appropriate.</li> <li>• Developing standard protocols and tools to support a regional approach to training, decision making, competency assessment, individual assessment/risk assessment, care planning, monitoring and escalation processes for delegation of healthcare interventions.</li> </ul> <p>These recommendations will be reviewed by the Task and Finish Group in June and the departmental oversight group chaired by the Chief Nursing Officer in September.</p> <p>A discussion by members followed with comments were noted; AS commented that these recommendations are welcomed and there is a need to look at perceptions of social care within HSC and what is reasonable to expect from a social care practitioner.</p> <p>CB noted the challenges of delegation when providing care for people with complex learning disability and the need to caution clinical service taking precedence over the social care needs.</p> <p>MO'R reflected on the importance of delegation focused on the needs of the individual receiving care. A regional and programme wide consistent approach to delegation will be helpful to both service users and service providers.</p> |
|           |  |
| <b>8.</b> | <b>Members Updates</b>   |
|           | No further comments added for this item.   |
|           |  |
| <b>9.</b> | <b>AOB</b>   |

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 9.1 | <p><b><u>Social Care Still Matters Report</u></b></p> <p>AMcK shared a brief update on the Social Care still Matters report as below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Social Care Council is developing a report on the characteristics of the social care register at 31 March 2025.</li> <li>• This report includes registrant demographics, employment sector and focus and will include analysis of changes in the register of the last 5 years. The report will also reference social care policy and how this connects with the wider Programme for Government objectives.</li> <li>• It is important that this report includes the views of people who use social care services and those who provide social care for them.</li> <li>• The Council are keen to involve LSCP members and Participation Partnership in writing the foreword to this report.</li> <li>• It is anticipated that the draft report will be ready for review shortly and would include a foreword based on the outcomes from the recent LSCP workshop. Members were asked to review the draft foreword and share their comments on edits.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> AMcK will share the draft report with members in the next few weeks and ask members to provide feedback on additions/edits required to reflect the focus of this partnership.</p> |
| 9.2 | <p><b><u>Curiosity in Action Social Care Partnership</u></b></p> <p>MB informed the members that 'Curiosity in Action Social Care Partnership' is running their next course in Autumn 2025. Any parties interested in becoming involved in social care research would be supported in a programme which involves 2-4 hours training per week over 12 weeks.</p>   |
| 10. | <p><b>Dates of Next Meetings</b></p> <p>Thursday 25 Sept 2025 10:00 am Online</p> <p>Tuesday 10 Feb 2025 10:00 am Online</p> <p>Tuesday 19 May 2026 10:00 am Social Care Council, James House</p> <p><i>Schedule and calendar invites have already been sent out to all members</i></p>   |
|     | <p><b>Signed</b></p>  |

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
|  | Sarah Browne |
|  |              |

### Action list – date of meeting 20 May 2025

| Listing no. | Action  | Due Date  | Owner | Status |
|-------------|---|-----------|-------|--------|
| 9.1         | To share the draft 'Social Care <i>still</i> matters' report to members to provide feedback on additions/edits required to reflect the focus of this partnership. | June 2025 | AMcK  | Open   |