

PiP Partnership Committee Agenda

Thursday, 11 December 2025

10am - 1pm Via Teams

- 1 Welcome and apologies**
- 2 Declaration of Interest**
- 3 Chair's Business**
- 4 Approval of September Minutes**
- 5 Updates from Panel Chairs**
 - **IAR Assessment Panel**
 - **I&D Forum**
 - **Approved Programmes Approval Panel**

Tea Break

- 6 External Examiner Report**
- 7 SW Leadership Framework**
- 8 Showcasing Learning**
- 9 2026 PiP Award Ceremony**
- 10 AOB**
- 11 Matters for Reporting to the Board**

Dates of future meetings:

Strategic Meeting: Thursday, 12 March 2026

Business Meeting: Wednesday, 3 June 2026

Strategic In Person Meeting: Tuesday, 8 September 2026

Business Meeting: Wednesday, 2 December 2026

Professional in Practice Partnership Committee

Thursday, 11 December 2025.
Via Teams

Confirmed Minutes

Attendance:

Roslyn Dougherty
Gloria Kirwan
Elaine Pollock
Jennifer Hamilton
Tina O'Reilly
Maura McMackin
Campbell Killick
Gillian Montgomery

Davy Hayes
Daniel Quinn
Judith Wylie
Noeleen Higgins
Marita Magennis
Eileen McKay

In Attendance:

Catherine Maguire
Gillian McAuley
Mandy Cowden
Heather Graham
Nicola Lewis
Denise MacDermott
Emma Richmond

Apologies:

Adrian Nugent
Stephen McLaughlin
Michaela Glover
Gillian McAllister
Danielle Boyd
Lee Wilson
Ursula Crickard
Ciaran Traynor

Chair
External Assessor
Interim Head of Service: SEHSCT obo Fiona Gunn
Head of School: Ulster University
PiP Lead: Voluntary and Community Sector
Principal Consultant: HSCNI Leadership Centre
Ulster University
Director of Operations: Probation Board for Northern
Ireland
Queens University Belfast
Head of Service, WHSCT obo Stephen McLaughlin
EANI obo Adrian Nugent
Professional Officer: British Association of Social Work
Assistant Director: SHSCT
Assistant Director: BHSCT

Head of Workforce Development: Social Care Council
Professional Adviser: Social Care Council
Professional Adviser: Social Care Council
Professional Adviser: Social Care Council
PiP Team Leader: Social Care Council (minute taker)
Chair of Pip Approval Panel
Chair of Information and Development Forum

Head of Education Welfare Services: EANI
Assistant Director: WHSCT
Head of Social Work Governance: SPPG
Acting Deputy Director: Youth Justice Agency
Youth Justice Agency
Assistant Director: NHSCT
Assistant Director, Children's Court Guardian Agency
Community and Voluntary Sector

1.	Welcome and Apologies
1.1	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies.</p> <p>Under AOB: GMcA noted that Noeleen Higgins had left the meeting but wanted to formally acknowledge that she will be leaving her post at BASW in the new year, and noted that this will be her last Partnership meeting. GMcA expressed thanks to Noeleen for her contribution and dedication to partnership working and wished her all the best in her new role. Partners asked that DH pass on their thanks and best wishes to Noeleen.</p>
2.	Declaration of Interest
2.1	None noted.
3.	Chair's Business
3.1	<p><u>Independent Visitor Report Update</u></p> <p>The independent visitor reports have now been finalised, and meetings have taken place to discuss and share the findings with Programme Teams. Action plans will be developed through JMGs for both programmes and reported back to the Social Care Council. Updates will be provided to Partnership as and when available.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the independent visitors and programme teams for their work and cooperation during this period and commended the NI Practice Teaching Programme on meeting the conditions set by the Approval Panel.</p> <p>Outcome letters will be issued in due course.</p> <p><u>Research Methods Meeting Update</u></p> <p>GMcA and CK provided an update on the meeting held on 8 September 2025. CK advised that while this remains a gold-standard programme, it does not fully align with the master's framework. However, numbers are increasing, and there is no immediate rush to make any changes.</p> <p>The next revalidation will include consultation to consider what a revised version might look like. Trust training teams have this high on their agenda and are actively seeking participants to complete the programme.</p> <p>A piece of work is underway to map out a pathway to gain a master's qualification. This is not straightforward, and further work is required. There is a need to highlight the significant benefits of the dissertation module to employers.</p> <p>CM took the opportunity to congratulate all Social Work colleagues on their achievements at the winter graduations.</p> <p>MM shared that the new research strategy should help feed and fuel energy around research and encouraged using this as an opportunity to engage with people.</p> <p><u>Departmental Developments</u></p>

	<p>The Chair confirmed this area remains on the agenda. Susan Ritchie (DOH) has been invited to the March 2026 Strategic meeting to provide an update on the Career Pathway for Social Work. Edel Walsh (SPPG) has been invited to the September 2026 meeting to provide an update on the Framework for Integrated Therapeutic Care (FITC).</p> <p>MC and GMcA are due to meet with Edel in January to ascertain progress and will provide an update to the Partnership in March.</p> <p>EP noted that she is also still very involved in FITC and has a meeting in the diary. She will provide an update to the Social Care Council following the meeting.</p>
4	Approval of Minutes and Actions from previous Meeting
4.1	The minutes from the September 2025 Strategic meeting were agreed and confirmed.
5	Updates from Panel Chairs
5.1	<p><u>IAR Assessment Panel</u></p> <p>HG provided an update on behalf of Lee Wilson, Panel Chair, who was unavailable to attend. At the October 2025 IAR Assessment Point, 45 submissions across a range of submission types were received:</p> <p>34 assessed as competent 5 referred 3 not assessed (due to exceeding the word count or missing submission documentation)</p> <p>HG noted that the increase in not assessed submissions highlighted the need for focused training for new PiP Reps to ensure such errors are identified earlier. The PiP Team also plan to implement additional checks on receipt of submissions to allow the candidate and agency rep as much time as possible to address any issues before allocation.</p> <p>GMcA addressed a query regarding the 10% buffer afforded to academic marking, which is in line with university policy. CK queried whether this could be applied to all IAR candidates, which was welcomed by other members. DH highlighted that applying the 10% buffer would have implications, such as the need for clear guidance on what is included in the word count and the penalties for exceeding it. GK advocated for an uncomplicated approach across the PiP Framework and EMcK noted support for a review by employers if it meant candidates had an opportunity to have their work assessed.</p> <p>Action: This will be tabled for discussion at the February 2026 Information & Development Forum.</p>
5.2	<u>I&D Forum</u>

ER, Chair of the Information and Development Forum, noted that there is a lot of activity ongoing and thanked everyone for being generous with their time. EK updated the Committee on the following pieces of work currently being undertaken by Forum members;

Domestic Violence Working Group – The group has met twice to date. Work is underway to collate resources and determine the formats for IAR submissions.

Direct Observation Working Group – A way forward has been agreed to align the direct observation with other submission types. There will be a reduction in the required word count for reflective summaries, and observations will no longer be recorded. This will be presented at the February I&D Forum, and it is hoped that these changes will help increase the use of this submission method.

Equality Statement – Work has been completed and the statement has been agreed. The February I&D meeting will confirm the statement and its placement in the IAR documentation.

AI Usage – This work is ongoing and the IAR External has agreed to provide some guidance from her experience.

PiP Support Group – This group has been designed to support PiP Reps in their roles and ER noted that it has been very beneficial. Dates are in the diary for representatives to meet, providing a forum to discuss issues and seek support.

PiP Practice Assessor Pathway – This was designed to help Practice Assessors gain PiP requirements for their assessment experience. We are awaiting candidates to test the submission as a pilot and the IAR External Assessor will provide feedback on how this can be improved and promoted.

EMcK welcomed the work on Domestic Violence and suggested materials that have been collated could be shared to help JMG chairs consider the content of Programmes.

Approved Programmes Approval Panel

GMcA provided an update on behalf of DMacD (Chair), who was unable to attend. GMcA noted that it has been a very busy period for the Approval Panel.

The Approval Panel met on the 5 November to consider the re-approval of two Programmes;

Leaders in Practice Programme - Re-Approved with 3 conditions. The Panel agreed a six-week deadline for 2 of the conditions relating to assessment methodologies, reflective practice and associated feedback. The

5.3

	<p>third condition related to compliance with annual monitoring, and as a result the programme will be expected to submit annual monitoring paperwork at the end of year one.</p> <p>Systemic Psychotherapy Programme - Re-Approved with 1 recommendation.</p> <p>This programme continues to be a period of redevelopment and has the additional challenge of being approval and validated by three Awarding bodies is required (QUB, SCC, AFT).</p> <p>GMcA also provided an update on programmes from the April 2025 Approval Panel, and their progress to date.</p> <p>Advanced Social Work with Children and Families and Systemic Practice and Family Therapy (SPFT): QUB have completed a detailed piece of work to align their consent policy with other PiP provisions. It was not possible to replicate the processes in other part of PiP because the programmes are also approved by a third awarding body (the Association for Family Therapists) however, what has been produced has been agreed as meeting the needs of PiP Approval.</p> <p>Palliative Care Programme - The Palliative Care programme have asked the Social Care Council to explore how the ROI candidates could receive their Specialist Award along with NI colleagues for completion of the programme. This has been possible in the past for an approved programme so we are exploring how we can progress this.</p> <p>GMcA concluded with details of Approval Panel work for 2026. The Approved Social Work Programme (ASW) will be presented to the Panel in April 2026. There has been no further submission from the Signs of Safety (SOS) Course. There was some discussion on the positioning of SoS within the wider training provision by employers and PiP. Employers confirmed that it remains part of the suite of training for new staff. MC confirmed it is used for PRTL audit submissions, but not frequently for IAR. EMcK noted numbers have reduced, and new staff only require the initial level training. However, there is an opportunity to achieve PiP recognition.</p>
6	External Examiner Report
6.1	<p>GK received a sample of submissions to review in order to provide quality assurance of standards across the routes to achievement within the PiP Framework.</p> <p>GK is new to the role, and this was her first time completing this review. She noted that while work was still underway to review all the submissions received early findings were very positive and It was evident that ensuring consistency in how submissions are assessed is a priority for the Partnership and this is addressed through the robust systems which are in place</p>

	<p>regarding how submissions are assessed and moderated, and also in the training and support that is provided to Assessors. Gloria highlighted that the standards were found to be comparable, if not superior, to other frameworks.</p> <p>While GK had no specific recommendations this year but she identified an opportunity for work submitted to be showcased. GK also expressed interest in discussions around AI and was impressed by the active engagement from members.</p> <p>The Chair thanked GK for her work on this report, and for her helpful comments as a result of this review. The Chair also thanked all the employer partners for their work, in creating and maintaining partnership working.</p> <p>Action: A copy of the written report will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.</p>
7.	Social Work Leadership Framework
7.1	<p>CM provided an update on the Social Work Leadership Framework which is in the final year of its implementation and explained the work of the three sub groups that have been created.</p> <p>The Employer team are exploring ways to integrate the framework more effectively.</p> <p>The Communications team has developed and published multiple resources on the NISCC Learning Zone under Leadership in Social Work in Northern Ireland. Leadership in Social Work in Northern Ireland - NISCC Learning Zone.</p> <p>The Education, Training & Research Team are currently working on ways to raise awareness and link the framework to social work education and training. GMcA will coordinate in January to compile resources into a training pack for programme providers and trainers.</p> <p>EMcK announced a new publication which will launch in the New Year and thanked the Social Care Council for supporting photography for this work.</p> <p>CM welcomed a conversation around the Leadership Framework, and how this is being implemented in employer organisations. MC noted that current PRTL submissions often demonstrate leadership but fail to explicitly recognise it as such. Work is needed to improve recognition of leadership within submissions.</p> <p>TO'R reported that following a survey carried out in the Voluntary sector findings showed limited understanding of the framework among employers. It was noted that integration with organisations and candidates is improving but still in early stages.</p> <p>CM and MMcM emphasised that those later in their careers may be new to this journey and it is important to find ways to acknowledge that professionals are leaders within their own practice.</p>
8	Showcasing Learning

8.1	<p>The Chair initiated a discussion on how the Partnership can facilitate ways to showcase learning and explained that this This topic emerged from several previous meetings and has been brought to the Partnership for consideration.</p> <p>Members were asked to consider how to showcase and promote the profession through learning and development journeys and shared examples of how work is currently shared within employer organisations.</p> <p>MMcM highlighted an example from the <i>Leading Social Work Programme</i> where social workers submitted assignments for consideration at the Social Work Research Conference.</p> <p>Catherine emphasised the need to share learning beyond conferences, reaching wider audiences.</p> <p>NH suggested showcasing NI practitioners' work via BASW platforms (e.g., podcasts, UK conferences).</p> <p>EMcK proposed a focused “Care to Chat” session about leadership across all levels, linked to PiP, involving practitioners discussing benefits and impact.</p> <p>Action: Take the “Care to Chat” idea back to the Communications team.</p> <p>Action: Social Care Council to compile and gather information on existing initiatives to provide clarity on what pathways are available to candidates.</p>
9	<p>2026 PiP Award Ceremony</p>
	<p>GMcA advised that the date for the 2026 PiP Awards Ceremony will be Tuesday, 22 September 2026. This date has been confirmed with Chief Social Worker. The venue is to be confirmed.</p>
10	<p>Matters for Reporting to the Board</p>
	<p>The Chair confirmed that she will provide an update the Board on GK's report and highlight the amount of work that is underway in all areas of PiP.</p>
11	<p>AOB</p>
11.1	<p>The Chair congratulated Diane McGarvey (PiP Agency Rep, NHSCT) for completing recently published research on post-qualifying education. The research explores push and pull factors influencing post-qualifying education and training. Members were encouraged to read the paper; a copy will be shared with the meeting minutes.</p> <p>Diane will present the research findings at a lunchtime seminar on 28 January 2026.</p> <p>Action: Paper to be shared with minutes.</p>

	<p>NH shared that there is a new UK wide special interest group for Tech and AI in social work and provide an email for anyone interested in joining rosanne.palmer@basw.co.uk</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their commitment to the work of the Partnership thought-out 2025 and wished everyone a happy, healthy and peaceful Christmas and new year.</p>
12	Dates of Meetings:
12.1	<p>Strategic Meeting: Thursday, 12 March 2026 Business Meeting: Wednesday, 3 June 2026 Strategic In Person Meeting: Tuesday, 8 September 2026 PiP Awards 2026: Tuesday, 22 September 2026 Business Meeting: Wednesday, 2 December 2026</p>

Signed: Roslyn Dougherty, Chair of PiP Partnership Committee



12 March 2026

19 February 2025

Item	Owner	Action	Status
5.1	NL	Seek nominations for a deputy from each member.	Closed
6.1	CM/NL	Key departmental members to be invited to attend the September 2025 Strategic Partnership Meeting.	Closed

21 May 2025

Item	Owner	Action	Status
6.1	NL	External Assessor report to be circulated prior to the September Partnership Meeting.	Open.

December 2025

Item	Owner	Action	Status
3.1	NL	Key departmental members to be invited to attend the March and September 2026 Strategic Partnership Meetings.	Open
6.1	NL	External Assessor report to be circulated with minutes.	Open
8.1	CM	Take the "Care to Chat" idea back to the Communications team.	Open
8.1	GMcA	Social Care Council to compile and gather information on existing initiatives to provide clarity on what can be shared with candidates.	Open
11.1	NL	Research paper to be circulated with minutes	Open