

21 May 2025

PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Social Care Council) is responsible for the regulation and registration of the Social Care workforce in Northern Ireland and is established under the Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 as a non-departmental body, sponsored by the Department of Health, (DoH). To discharge its functions effectively, the Social Care Council has established a number of Partnerships to engage its key stakeholders in the development and delivery of its business.
- 1.2 The Professional in Practice Partnership (PiP) was established by the Social Care Council in 2015, as a Committee of the Board.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The PiP Partnership is comprised of representatives of education institutions and other provider bodies providing postqualifying social work education, representatives of social work employers in all relevant sectors and the commissioner for social work training from the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG), and other relevant constituencies.

The purpose of the PiP Partnership is to support the Board in discharging its responsibilities in relation to postqualifying education and training for social workers in Northern Ireland.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 The PiP Partnership will have oversight of and will provide advice to the Social Care Council Board on the following matters:
 - Social Workers' participation in the PiP Framework;

- Oversight of programmes approved within the Approved programme route and courses within the Work Based Learning Route;
- Enrolment for professional awards;
- Progression and achievement by candidates in professional awards;
- Outcomes of annual quality assurance activity relating to the PiP Framework.

3.2 Members of the PiP Partnership will participate in:

- Validation of credit achievement and transfer to Professional Requirements;
- Approval of education and training provision within the PiP Framework;
- Assessment of submissions to the Individual Assessment Route.

3.3 Outcomes of Approval and Assessment processes will be reported to the Board.

3.4 The PiP Partnership will identify postqualifying education and training needs, gaps in provision and priorities for development and will advise the Board accordingly to ensure these are represented within the Board's corporate and business plans.

3.5 The PiP Partnership will facilitate the development of relevant provision to meet identified needs across sectors and settings.

3.6 The PiP Partnership will keep the PiP Framework under review and bring forward recommendations to the Board and the Department of Health (DoH) regarding developments or changes to the Framework, to ensure it remains fit for purpose and relevant to the development needs of social workers.

3.7 The PiP Partnership will provide advice and guidance to the Board on matters relevant to the training and development of the social work workforce.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 The PiP Partnership will consist of senior managers from the health and social care, justice, education, voluntary and community social work sectors; senior representatives from higher education institutions; social work education providers; and the professional body for social workers. Representatives from Government Departments and other relevant constituencies may be invited to attend meetings or become members of the Partnership as deemed appropriate.

4.2 The Board will seek nominations from, and sign agreements with, the relevant parties outlined at 4.1. These will be sought from representatives at Chief Executive/Director and Dean Level, or equivalent.

4.3 Membership of the PiP Partnership will be endorsed by the Board.

- 4.4 The Chair and Deputy Chair of the PiP Partnership are members of the Board appointed by the Chair of the Board. The Chair of the Board may appoint other members of the Board to sit as members of the Partnership.
- 4.5 The Chair, Deputy Chair and Members of the PiP Partnership are required to participate in an annual review, support the Terms of Reference, undertake induction and be available to support the work of the Partnership throughout the year.
- 4.6 Members of the PiP Partnership will act constructively and participate in the work of the Partnership in line with the Nolan Principles, to inform the Council's social work education and training development activities.

5. FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS

- 5.1 The PiP Partnership will meet four times per year. Additional adhoc meetings (and/or representation at other Social Care Council events) may also be required. Members are required to liaise with the Chair or the Executive Team in advance if they are unable to attend a meeting for any reason.
- 5.2 The Social Care Council will support the arrangements for the PiP Partnership meetings by providing the secretariat who will arrange for the distribution of agendas, papers and taking a note of meetings. The Director of Regulation and Standards, or their nominated deputy, will directly support the Chair in the management of the Partnership.
- 5.3 One third of the full membership will constitute a quorum for meetings.

6. REPORTING, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 6.1 Minutes of the PiP Partnership will be forwarded to the Board meeting following each Partnership meeting.
- 6.2 Members of the PiP Partnership will be required to comply with good governance practice in their undertakings with the Social Care Council, attending relevant training sessions as required and working collaboratively with the Social Care Council and other Partnership members.
- 6.3 The Terms of Reference of the PiP Partnership will be reviewed by the Board and Partnership Members on a bi-annual basis as part of their programme of work, including an assessment of the extent to which the Partnership is complying with its scope and purpose set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 above.

7. ENDORSEMENT

- 7.1 These Terms of Reference were approved by the PiP Partnership on 21 May 2025 and endorsed by the Board on 2 July 2025.