
Northern Ireland
Social
Care
Council
Culture Matters: Being Human, Being Open, Being Safe
Tracy Reid
Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Social Care Council
European Social Services Awards
INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Platinum
We promote respect
We work with integrity
We believe in partnership
We strive for excellence

Purpose of today's session

- Promoting the safety and quality agenda in social care in Northern Ireland
- Reminding ourselves as to why it is important
- Reflecting on the role of the Council in this space
- Thinking about how to build open and safe cultures

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Safe and quality care in social care means providing support that:

- **Protects** people from avoidable harm, abuse and neglect
- **Respects** rights, dignity, identity, choice and positive risk-taking
- Is **person-centred**, compassionate, effective and responsive
- Is delivered by a **skilled, registered and supported workforce** who have access to the appropriate training and supervision to undertake their role

Social Care Council

Safe and quality care in social care means providing support that:

- **Listens, learns and improves** through feedback, reflection and evidence
- Is delivered in **work place cultures** that are open, human and have a supportive governance approach
- Is **accountable** to the standards of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

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Quality and Safety Summit – 30th June 2026

Urology Services Inquiry



""Both reports set out serious and in places deeply disturbing failings in care. Taken together, they present a picture that is wholly unacceptable. They amount to a stark and sobering indictment of failures in care, in culture, in ignoring warnings, especially from family members, and in accountability. A failure to be curious and a failure to listen"





Urology Services Inquiry

"The two inquiries identified serious failures in care, culture, governance, listening and accountability, reinforcing that responsibility for safety and quality must be clearly owned by organisational leaders and Boards"

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Key Learning Message - *build cultures and systems that notice, question and act before harm and poor practice becomes embedded*

Listen	Question	Act	Learn
• **Take concerns from people, families and staff seriously**	• **Be curious about poor practice, restrictive cultures and unexplained patterns of harm**	• **Make accountability clear, strengthen oversight and intervene when standards are not being met**	• **Create an open culture where people speak up, incidents are examined and learning leads to measurable change.**

NISCC - Our Purpose

By legislation, the Social Care Council are required to protect the public and safeguard service users, through the regulation and development of the Social Work and Social Care workforce in Northern Ireland

We do this by:

- Maintaining a register of the social work and social care workforce
- Setting standards of conduct and practice for the social work and social care workforce, for registrants and employers, and managing breeches of these through Fitness to Practise where required
- Setting standards for Social Work Education

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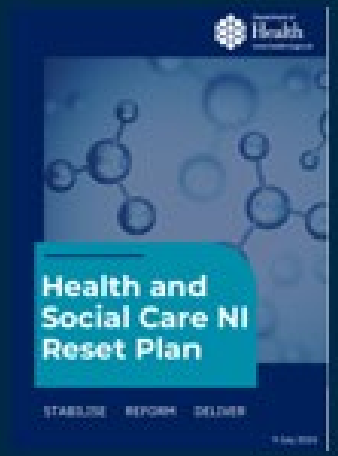
Building the Enablers for Quality and Safe Care

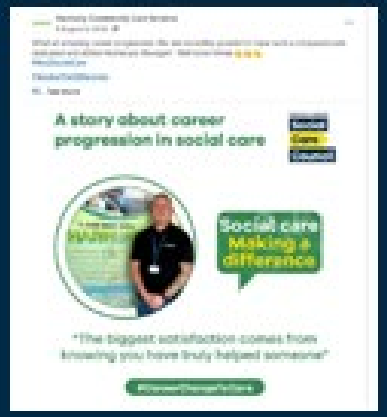


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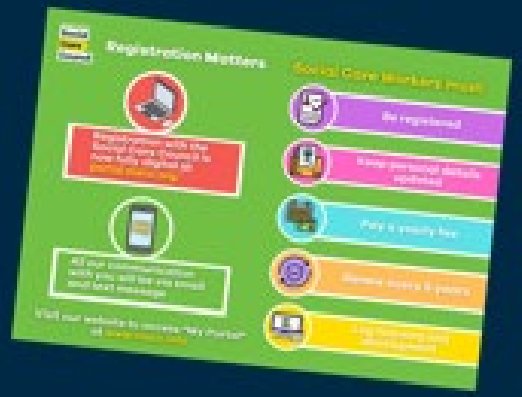
Supporting the Social Care Workforce

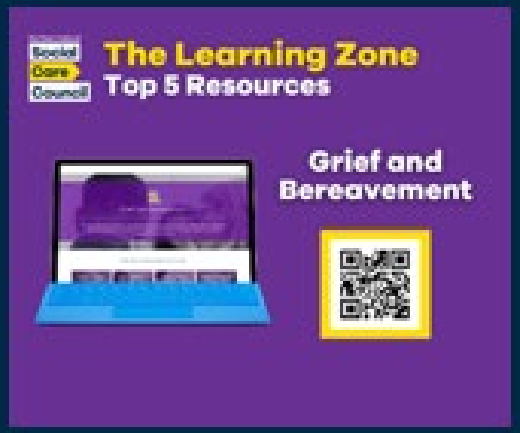












Launch of Social Care Workforce Strategy 2025







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Building Safer Cultures in Social Care in Northern Ireland



Why is organisational culture important in Social Care?

Culture is what determines whether people speak up, whether leaders listen, whether poor practice is challenged and whether organisations learn before harm occurs

- ✓There are clear evidential links between poor organisational culture and poorer outcomes for service users
- ✓Enables staff to speak out when they make mistakes or call out poor practice, thereby enabling early intervention
- ✓Prevents harm to service users and staff
- ✓Supports the retention of staff
- ✓Maintains confidence in your services
- ✓Reduces loss to your business through the cost of poor publicity, reputational damage, staff costs

What does good culture look like?

- People receiving care are at the centre
- Staff feel psychologically safe
- Leadership is visible, compassionate and accountable
- Openness is the norm, particularly when things go wrong
- Staff are valued and supported to do good work
- Curiosity replaces complacency
- Learning results in visible change

Strengthening safe cultures



Strengthening safe cultures



Key messages for Leaders to take away

- NI HSC sector has began a journey to look at its culture – get on that journey
- Your governance arrangements are only as good as the person who feels able to tell you that they have made a mistake – never forget
- Role model the behaviours that support your staff to speak up when they make a mistake or something goes wrong – be Human
- Reflect on your culture – how do you know it is good – ask your staff
- Things will go wrong and mistakes will happen – be curious

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Care to chat?

A podcast from the Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Being open, speaking up and being human – what does this all mean?



https://youtu.be/6WK8ldoNJfI?si=9Xvi-3aYGZTBQLEi

#Yes2SocialCare

Working together.
Making a difference.

Thank You!

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