



Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Minutes of Council Meeting Wednesday 5 February 2014 at 10am NISCC Offices, Millennium House, Belfast

Present

Council

Jim Perry (Chair)	Maire McMahon
Joe Blake	Geraldine Campbell
Julie Erskine	Ruth Lavery
Trevor Spratt	Miriam Karp

In Attendance

Colum Conway (Chief Executive)
Patricia Higgins (Director Regulation & Standards)
Mark Bradley (Director Registration & Corporate Services)
Lorraine Conlon (Government Liaison Officer)
Siobhan Craig (note taker)

Members of the Public

None

Item		Action
1	Apologies for Absence	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Neil Bodger and Brian Smyth. The Chair welcomed Lorraine Conlon, Government Liaison Officer, to her first Council meeting.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Chair's Business	
3.1	The Chair indicated that he had previously circulated a written monthly update to Members. Members were informed that the Public Appointments Unit has confirmed dates for shortlisting for the recruitment of new Council Members.	
3.1.2	The Chair congratulated those who had been involved in the recent launch of the NISCC Child Development App. The Launch, which had been attended by the Minister, had been successful and received positive feedback.	
4	Chief Executive's Report	
4.1	The Chief Executive introduced his written Report to Council drawing particular attention to item four in relation to Skills for Care & Development (SfCD).	
4.1.2	Members were informed that funding which had supported the core work of SfCD is due to come to an end at 31 March 2014, leaving a 6 month gap before further funding can be secured. To facilitate this a commitment has been made between the four countries to maintain the license as a SfCD as each organisation benefits from it in terms of:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a custodian of National Occupational Standards 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative developments 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed funding 	
4.1.3	At the last SfCD meeting in January it was agreed that each country will make a financial commitment in line with the Barnett formula; NISCC's contribution will be £7k which has been formally agreed by the	

	Department in terms of the value of SfCD and UK engagement with UCAS and Sector Skills.	
4.1.4	Council endorsed the decision that the NISCC makes a financial contribution towards maintaining the SfCD license. A more formal commitment will be brought to Council at its April meeting.	Chief Exec
4.2	A Member asked what input the NISCC will be making into World Social Work Week (week commencing 17 March 2014). The Chief Executive confirmed that work is underway between the NISCC, the HSCB and the NIASW in terms of developing local events with the Trusts and voluntary sector which will showcase good practice.	
4.2.1	Siobhan Craig to forward a link to the NIASW Conference to Members for information.	Siobhan Craig
4.3	The Chief Executive updated Members on the Northern Ireland Confederation for Health & Social Services (NICON) Conference on 5/6 March 2014. Mr Conway reported that social care will be represented at the Conference and plans are underway for a joint presentation from himself, Ian Sutherland (SEHSCT) and Fionnuala McAndrew (HSCB).	
4.3.1	It was agreed that Siobhan Craig will forward a link to the NICON Conference to Members for information.	Siobhan Craig
5	Unconfirmed Minutes of Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6 November 2013	
5.1	These were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
6	Matters Arising	
6.1	Assurance Framework (<i>item 18.1.3</i>)	
6.1.2	The Chair indicated that the Assurance Framework will be discussed at the Council Strategic Session on 21 May 2014.	
6.2	NISCC Audit Committee Revised ToRs (<i>item 20.1.3</i>)	
6.2.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services confirmed that the amendment had been made to include the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee in the list of people who were eligible to request meetings.	
6.3	NISCC Policies (<i>item 24.1.2</i>)	

6.3.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services confirmed that training will be provided on the NISCC policies which had been endorsed.	
7	Developing Research in Child Welfare – Presentation by Dr Trevor Spratt	
7.1	Dr Spratt delivered a presentation which outlined issues for social policy in the area of child protection and early authoritative intervention. The presentation suggested that policy and practice in the UK culture were unusually influenced by worst case outcomes as reported by public inquiry.	
7.1.2	Research at QUB sought to both understand better the process and outcomes involved in social work with children and families. Part of this involved considering the performance of the system itself, where often more attention is given to system output measures rather than child outcome measures. Dr Spratt indicated that in order to properly gauge the effect of social work interventions it is necessary to understand more fully the effects of cumulative adversities upon the developing child.	
7.1.3	Using research undertaken at QUB, Dr Spratt demonstrated that outcomes for children and young people related to a number of adversities experienced. He drew attention to the need to look more closely at underlying risk factors which greatly increase probability of detrimental outcomes, rather than focusing, as inquiry reports tend to, on immediate antecedents.	
7.1.4	A Member asked for clarification on how research can raise awareness with a view to lengthening the life expectancy of at risk children. The Chief Executive indicated that there are developments in this area at policy level within the work around the Social Work Strategy.	
7.1.5	A Member asked whether there would be implications for the Code of Practice and should the Codes make reference to keeping up to date with best practice. The Director of Regulation & Standards confirmed that the Codes refer to maintaining skills and knowledge.	
8	Proposal on the Development of Professional in Practice	
8.1	Joe Blake introduced the Report to Members which proposed to Council the development of Professional in Practice as part of the Programme of Reform for the NI PQ Framework. Members were informed that the Proposal had been discussed with the DHSSPS and general feedback had been positive.	

8.1.2	The Director of Regulation & Standards took Members through the Proposal, indicating that the Framework is based on National Occupational Standards for Social Work and allows for a more effective audit of learning.	
8.1.3	Discussion followed and a Member referred to 2.1.3, asking whether there was a link between the PBNI model and current work within the Trusts. The Director of Regulation & Standards confirmed that there is no link at present, however, the emphasis is on maintaining standards.	
8.1.4	Members were informed that the SSSC, CCW and HCPC are supportive of the NISCC's developments and that the NISCC was seen as a leader in its field.	
8.1.5	The Chair drew Members' attention to 2.1.1.2 which referred to the new name for the Framework. The Chair confirmed that the new title has been endorsed by the DHSSPS and the Reform Partnership Committee.	
8.1.6	Council endorsed the Proposal on the Development of Professional in Practice.	
9	NISCC Business Plan 2014/15	
9.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services indicated that this had been previously discussed at the Council Strategic Session in December 2013 and endorsed with amendments. Those amendments have now been made following Members' feedback and the Business Plan was submitted to the Department before the deadline of 12 January 2014.	
10	Quarter 3 Performance Management Report	
10.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services took Members through the Report emphasising that it is under continual review and feedback would be appreciated.	
10.1.2	Mr Bradley highlighted the following:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NISCC Corporate Risk Register will be reviewed during summer 2014 • The Socrates removal issue has now been resolved • There will be a Council Strategic Session on 21 May do discuss the current Model of Regulation and the transition to Fitness to Practice Model. 	
10.1.3	It was agreed to amend the timescale on page 8 in relation to governance, however this will be discussed at the Council Strategic Session. In addition, the workshop will also cover the NISCC Assurance	

	Framework.	
10.1.4	Members agreed that it would be helpful to include the relevant action plans, ie Landscape Review and Board Self-Effectiveness, as part of the Performance Management Report.	
11	Quarter 3 Finance Report	
11.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services indicated that there was a slight overspend of £7k for the third quarter of 2013/14 and forecasts reflect a year end overspend of £65k due to the delay in the implementation of Registration Fee increases currently awaiting Ministerial endorsement. The Chief Executive has written to the Director of Finance at the DHSSPS and the DHSSPS has agreed to underwrite the deficit.	
11.1.2	Members were informed that a new submission has been made to Minister and NISCC awaits a response. The Chair will keep Members apprised of Minister's response.	Chair
11.1.3	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services reported that the prompt payment is currently reported at 91.5% cumulative at 30 days and compliance has remained consistently in excess of 96% since September 2013.	
12	Business Continuity Plan & Strategy	
12.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services introduced the Business Continuity Plan which is in place to respond to unplanned events or incidents. The Strategy will allow NISCC to relocate to premises at Knockbracken should it be required to "set up office" at other premises on a short term basis due to the unavailability of NISCC premises at Millennium House for any reason.	
12.1.2	Members were informed that a test exercise was held last week which was successful. There will be a further test exercise during the summer months for Deputy staff to ensure a full understanding of the system.	
12.1.3	Council endorsed the Business Continuity Plan & Strategy.	
13	NISCC Standing Orders	
13.1	The Director of Registration and Corporate Services indicated that these had been discussed at the Audit & Governance Meeting on 22 January 2014. Members were informed that the Standing Orders had been	

	amended to reflect the Terms of Reference for the Audit & Governance Committee in terms of its broader responsibility and in line with best practice.	
13.1.2	Council endorsed the NISCC Standing Orders.	
14	Internal Audit Progress Report	
14.1	The Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee introduced the Progress Report which had been previously discussed at the Audit & Governance Committee meeting on 22 January 2014. Members were informed that two areas had been considered within the Report – Registration Audit and Financial Systems Review.	
14.1.2	Ms Lavery confirmed that Internal Audit had provided NISCC Management with Satisfactory assurance with regard to the controls surrounding the Registration Audit and the Financial Systems Review and no priority one weaknesses had been identified.	
14.1.3	Council noted the Internal Audit Progress Report.	
16	NISCC Corporate Risk Register & Assurance Framework	
16.1	The Director of Registration and Corporate Services indicated that these had been discussed at the Audit & Governance Meeting on 22 January 2014.	
16.1.2	Council noted the NISCC Corporate Risk Register & Assurance Framework and endorsed. The Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee indicated that she was satisfied with the Risk Management process within the organisation.	
17	Unconfirmed Minutes Audit & Governance Committee Meeting 22 January 2014	
17.1	Council noted the Unconfirmed Minutes for information.	
18	NISCC Policies	
18.1	Access to Information	
18.1.2	Members were informed that this policy sets out how the NISCC staff will manage all requests for information efficiently and effectively. The policy will ensure procedures are in place to comply with requests for information through the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998 and Environment Information Regulations 2004.	

18.1.3	The Director of Registration and Corporate Services indicated that the Policy had been endorsed previously by the Audit & Governance Committee, however an amendment was made to Section 10 which allows an Internal Review to be conducted by 1 member of staff, rather than a 3 person panel, taking into account the size of the organisation. This would bring NISCC into line with smaller organisations such as the ICO themselves which only use 1 member to conduct an internal review.	
18.1.4	It was agreed to revised point 10.7 and remove the reference to the Internal Review Panel.	
18.1.5	With this amendment, Council endorsed the Access to Information Policy.	
18.2	Data Security Breach Management Policy	
18.2.1	Members were informed that the purpose of this policy is to ensure that a standardised management approach is implemented throughout the NISCC in the event of a data breach.	
18.2.2	The Director of Registration and Corporate Services indicated that this Policy had been endorsed previously by Council and by the Audit & Governance Committee; an amendment has been made to section 10 re whistleblowing. Members will receive training, however the Policy is primarily aimed at NISCC staff.	
19	Unconfirmed Minutes of Participation Partnership Meeting 16 December 2013	
19.1	The Chair of the Participation Partnership introduced the Unconfirmed Minutes for information. A Review of the work of the Group has commenced and will continue over the next few weeks. The Group discussed the Review of the Codes of Practice at a workshop in January and several invited external guests also took part.	
19.2	The Chair indicated that the Participation Partnership urgently needs to recruit new Members. Council Members and staff were encouraged to suggest possible service users. The Director of Registration and Corporate Services will also raise this at the Workshop Development Committee Workshop on 12 March.	Dir Reg & Corp Serv
20	Unconfirmed Minutes of PQ Partnership Meeting 11 December 2013	
20.1	The Chair of the PQ Partnership introduced the Unconfirmed Minutes for information. Mr Blake drew Members' attention to Mary McColgan's	

	Honours Award and indicated that the PQ Partnership proposed to formally recognise this achievement on behalf of Council. The Chair of Council confirmed that he had already written to Ms McColgan on behalf of Council to congratulate her on her Award.	
21	Unconfirmed Minutes Professional Issues Strategic Review Group Meeting 4 December 2013	
21.1	The Chair of the Professional Issues Strategic Review Group introduced the Unconfirmed Minutes for information. Ms McMahon indicated that the key issue for the Group will be to focus on the agenda and ensure that it remains linked to current issues.	
22	Unconfirmed Minutes Registrants' Committee Meeting 8 November and 20 December 2013	
22.1	The Director of Regulation & Standards indicated that the Registrants' Committee had discussed the Review of the Codes of Practice at its meeting on 29 December 2013. The Committee's comments were submitted as part of the consultation response.	
22.2	Also discussed at the meeting on 20 December was correspondence received from a WHSCT registrant with concerns around workload pressures which social workers and social care workers are facing. It was noted that this issue had also arisen during the Review of the Codes consultation workshops.	
22.3	It was agreed that the Registrants' Committee will provide Council with information on this issue.	Dir Reg & Stds
23	Any Other Business	
23.1	The Chief Executive gave a brief overview of the programme for the staff/Council event on Wednesday 12 March which will highlight the achievements from the past year along with key elements from the Business Plan. Finally it will be an opportunity to look forward to the coming year.	
23.2	Members generally agreed that they are making good progress in the use of their new tablets, however, it was agreed to circulate a hard copy of the papers for the next meeting in April.	
24	Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 30 April 2014	
24.1	The next Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 30 April. There	

will be Strategic Session on Wednesday 2 April 2014 at which the Communications Strategy and the Review of the Conduct Codes will be discussed. The Strategic Session on Wednesday 21 May 2014 will focus on the Assurance Framework and the Codes of Conduct. In addition, there will be a further one hour workshop on Wednesday 12 March 2014 to discuss the Board Self-Assessment tool. Following this there will be a lunch event for staff and Council.	
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Jim Perry
Chair