



Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Confirmed Minutes of Council Meeting Wednesday 30 April 2014 at 10am NISCC Offices, Millennium House, Belfast

Present

Council

Jim Perry (Chair)
Joe Blake
Julie Erskine
Trevor Spratt
Neil Bodger

Maire McMahon
Geraldine Campbell
Ruth Lavery
Miriam Karp

In Attendance

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

Members of the Public

None

Item		Action
1	Apologies for Absence	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. An apology was received from Brian Smyth and Lorraine Conlon.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Chair's Business	
3.1	The Chair reminded Members that he had previously circulated a monthly update at the end of March which kept them abreast of developments. Members were thanked for attending the staff event on 10 March 2014.	
3.1.2	The Chair informed Members of his meeting with the Minister at which a range of issues were discussed, including registration fees, the role of social care workers, the recruitment of new Council Members and the roll out of registration.	
3.1.3	Members were advised that their annual self-assessment appraisals will be carried out shortly.	
3.1.4	The Chair referred to the Patient & Client Council's online user feedback system and encouraged Members to investigate it, particularly those involved with the Participation Partnership. Siobhan Craig to forward the link to Members.	S Craig
4	Chief Executive's Report	
4.1	The Chief Executive introduced his written Report to Council drawing particular attention to item 3 in relation to the symposium for Regulatory Bodies for Health Professionals which was hosted by the PSA in March 2014.	
4.1.2	Members were informed that the main focus of the symposium was the proposed Law Commission changes to Professional Regulation in Health which were subsequently published in April 2014. The Chief Executive indicated that a proposal of interest to the Council is that the 3 Care Councils will come under the oversight of the Professional Standards	

	Authority. Such a proposal would require further discussion at Council and with the DHSSPS. Developments in relation to the implementation of the Law Commission report will be kept under review and brought to Council for consideration.	
4.1.3	The Chief Executive provided Members with information on the Northern Ireland Assembly reception for Health & Social Care Regulators in June. The event will be hosted by the GMC and take place in Parliament Buildings.	
5	Unconfirmed Minutes of Council Meeting held on Wednesday 5 February 2014 and 11 March 2014	
5.1	The following comments were received from Members in relation to the Unconfirmed Minutes of Council Meeting held on Wednesday 5 February 2014:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 10.1 – evidence of conduct performance within the Performance Management Report was requested 	Dir Reg & Stds
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 22.3 – agreed that wording needs to be amended to give clarity around the process involved in bringing the paper to Council 	Dir Reg & Stds
5.1.2	Following these amendments, the Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
5.2	Members endorsed the Unconfirmed Minutes of Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11 March 2014 which had been arranged to discuss the increase in registration fee levels. Members noted that following the meeting the Chair formally wrote to the Chief Social Services Officer indicating Council's endorsement of the fee levels which were in line with the Minister's preferred option. The agreed fee levels for 2014/15 are as follows:	
	Social Worker - £40	
	Social Care Worker - £20	
	Student - £10	
6	Matters Arising	
6.1	SfCD License (item 4.1.4) – the Chief Executive confirmed that the Partners have met and a formal agreement is currently being developed. It was agreed that the Chief Executive would bring the agreement to the attention of Council at its next meeting.	Chief Exec

6.2	NIASW Conference information (item 4.2.1) – this information was circulated to Members	
6.3	NICON Conference information (item 4.3.1) - this information was circulated to Members	
6.4	Submission re registration fee increase (item 11.1.2) – it was noted that Council met on 11 March to discuss the fee increase for the 2014/145 financial year.	
6.5	Participation Partnership recruitment (item 19.2) – it was confirmed that recruitment is ongoing. The Chief Executive and the Director of Registration & Corporate Services are taking the work of the Partnership forward in terms of a broader agenda.	
6.6	Correspondence re WHSCT Registrant (item 22.3) – this was discussed under item 5, Unconfirmed Minutes of previous Council Meeting 5 February 2014.	
7	Review of NISCC Codes of Practice	
7.1	Members were reminded that they had been given an opportunity to discuss the Review of the Codes of Practice in detail at a recent Strategic Session. The Codes of Practice were developed in 2002 on a four country basis, however, significant changes within the strategic and policy landscape for the delivery of social care had prompted a formal review of the Codes to determine their on-going fitness for purpose.	
7.1.2	The report makes a number of recommendations in relation to revisions to be made to the existing Codes as well as other actions to be taken forward by NISCC at a strategic level. The Chief Executive has met with Officials from the Office of Social Services to determine their views and to ensure that these are reflected within the new Codes.	
7.1.3	There is agreement between NISCC and the DHSSPS that there is a need for a core Code that will support practice and standards relevant to both social workers and social care workers while explicitly addressing the areas which are specific to the profession of social work.	
7.1.4	Members were informed that the next stage will be to carry out a programme of work to revise the Code and develop practice standards to support the move to “fitness to practise” before a formal launch. It was suggested that the Professional Issues Strategic Review Group meeting could perhaps consider how to take forward the engagement process as this would be important.	

7.1.5	Members thanked Helen McVicker for her work on the Review of the Codes of Practice.	
7.1.6	Members endorsed the recommendations for the revisions to the NISCC Codes of Practice.	
8	NISCC Communications Strategy 2014 - 17	
8.1	Members were reminded that they had discussed the Communications Strategy at length during a recent Strategic Session. The Chief Executive introduced the Strategy indicating that Members' feedback had been incorporated following the Strategic Session. The Strategy outlines the growth in communications and confirms it as a core activity for NISCC in its role in engaging with the public to strengthen their protection/increase professionalism of the workforce.	
8.1.2	The Chief Executive informed Members that the Communications team is now complete following the appointment of a new Communications Officer.	
8.1.3	It was noted that the reference to the Launch of the Codes of Practice in Appendix 1 should be removed as this will now take place later in the year.	
8.1.4	It was noted that information on NICON business had been circulated amongst the senior management team and that it would be helpful for Members to also receive this.	
8.1.5	Members endorsed the NISCC Communications Strategy 2014 – 17.	
9	Quarter 4 Performance Management Report	
9.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services introduced the Report which provided Council with information on NISCC's business performance during the fourth quarter of the financial year.	
9.1.2	It was noted that changes had been made to some of the performance information in relation to regulation and this, together with other performance indicators, will be developed further in the new business year.	
9.1.3	Members were informed that all objectives had been achieved except for 6.2 – to increase the financial independence of NISCC in its registration function through the implementation of agreed fee adjustment proposals by September 2013.	
9.1.4	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services drew Members'	

	attention to page 5 and the reference to the new NISCC portal which had been live since March 2014. Registrants can now apply or renew their registration online, update their contact or employment details or pay their registration fee online. Registrant Members were encouraged to use the portal.	
9.1.5	The Director of Regulation & Standards spoke to the Conduct section of the Report indicating that within strategic objective 4 there had been additional activity information built in and the registration assessment activity had been reported to identify the level of work in this area.	
9.1.6	The Director of Regulation & Standards indicated that the Quarter 4 information is based on the GMC Model of Regulation and will be discussed at the Council Strategic Session 21 May 2014.	
9.1.7	Members queried the following:	
	Page 4, item 1.1 – maintain the Social Care Register in line with the Key Performance indicators and ensure it is fit for purpose during 2013/14. The Director of Registration & Corporate Services confirmed that there was an internal audit process for this area of work.	
	Page 8, item 4.3 – to develop a plan to give effect to the legislative changes arising from the full implementation of the outcome of the Model of Regulation consultation exercise – what is the plan? The Director of Regulation & Standards confirmed that NISCC has worked with the DHSSPS to develop “drafting instructions” for amendments to the legislation. Members were informed that the Director of Regulation & Standards is a member of the Bill Amendment Team.	
	Page 10 - it was suggested that it may be helpful to have more information around the 18 month performance target outcomes, ie, what is appropriate in terms of other regulators relative to size and the nature of other organisations. The Director of Regulation & Standards confirmed this will be discussed in more detail at the forthcoming workshop.	
	Page 14 – it was suggested that information governance statistics would be further enhanced by the addition of timescales. As the information appears at present the figures do not reflect the amount of work which is being carried out. The Director of Registration & Corporate Services assured Members that the Information Governance Officer keeps in close contact with the Information Commissions Office.	
	It was noted that several minor amendments are required to be made for consistency of reporting.	

9.1.8	The Director of Regulation & Standards circulated a draft agenda for the Council Strategic Session on 21 May 2014 which will focus on the Conduct function. Members were invited to consider it and suggest additional agenda items.	Members
9.1.9	The Chair of the Audit Committee asked whether the NISCC Audit & Governance Committee is adequate to deal with governance issues in relation to Conduct. The Director of Registration & Corporate Services agreed to discuss this at the next meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee.	Dir Reg & Corp Serv
9.1.10	It was requested that % figures be included against Conduct as this will allow NISCC to identify emerging trends.	
10	NISCC Board Self-Assessment	
10.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services introduced the document. Council had previously held a Strategic Session on 12 March to review its individual self-assessments against the Board Self-Assessment Checklist. Members' comments had been incorporated into a final document and in addition, Council agreed a number of actions arising which form part of an Action Plan to be taken forward during 2014/15.	
10.1.2	Members' attention was drawn to two key impacts – the turnover of Council and the Business Performance around Conduct.	
10.1.3	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services indicated that a draft return had been submitted to the DHSSPS and following Council's endorsement a final version would then be submitted.	
10.1.4	It was agreed that the self-assessment tool has been useful and a further Strategic Session in September will consider more case studies.	
10.1.5	Members endorsed the NISCC Board Self-Assessment	
11	NISCC Sustainability Development Plan and Action Plan	
11.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services introduced the Plan and indicated that it had been developed in line with ALB priorities in collaboration with other regional organisations. NISCC's sustainability objective is to conduct its business sustainably and achieve organisational goals in a sustainable manner wherever possible.	

11.1.2	Two minor typing errors were identified and will be amended.	
11.1.2	A Member referred to the reference to carbon emissions in Priority Area Number 5 of the Sustainable Development Report, indicating that whilst NISCC has a statutory duty to listen to stakeholders'/ service user and carer feedback, it would be important to consider attendees' carbon footprint at NISCC events.	
11.1.3	Council endorsed the NISCC Sustainability Development Plan and Action Plan.	
12	NISCC Property Asset Management Plan	
12.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services introduced the Plan reminding Members that it had previously been submitted to the DHSSPS last year in line with ALB priorities.	
12.1.2	Members were informed that there was an issue throughout the HSC in terms of vacant business premises across the province. The DHSSPS plans to meet with regional organisations to discuss and agree possible solutions.	
12.1.3	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services informed Members that an Accommodation Working Group will be reconvened in 2015 to begin to reassess NISCC's accommodation needs based on the lease ending in 2016.	
12.1.4	Members endorsed the NISCC Property Asset Management Plan and it will now be submitted to the DHSSPS.	Dir Reg & Corp Serv
13	Unconfirmed Minutes of Audit & Governance Committee Meeting 26 February 2014	
13.1	The Chair of the Committee took Members through the Unconfirmed Minutes and drew their attention to item 4.1 indicating that this was a governance issue in terms of the difficulty experienced in increasing the registration fee levels. The Chair indicated that the Committee will be required to address the process supporting the setting of fee levels.	Chair Aud & Gov Comm
13.1.2	A Member of the Audit & Governance Committee informed Council Members that the Month 9 accounts had been presented to the Committee at the meeting. It was confirmed that Members agreed that the process of presentation of accounts prior to year end should continue.	

14	NISCC Policies	
14.1	<i>Fire Safety Policy</i>	
14.1.2	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services indicated that the previously endorsed Policy had been updated to reflect Fire Wardens' names and job titles. Other minor changes included Risk Management Committee being responsible for health and safety matters and underlying NISCC's commitment for all staff to receive face to face training every three years.	
14.1.3	Members endorsed the revised Fire Safety Policy	
14.2	<i>Health & Safety Policy</i>	
14.2.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services indicated that the previously endorsed Policy had been developed in line with a BSO Policy and that minor changes had been made including cross referencing the Policy with the Clear Desk Policy and KSF Health and Safety core dimension.	
14.2.2	Members endorsed the revised Health & Safety Policy.	
14.3	<i>Harassment, Bullying and Intimidation Policy</i>	
14.3.1	Members were informed that the previously endorsed Policy has been developed in line with a BSO Policy and has been revised to include minor changes, for example, amendments to job titles and terminology.	
14.3.2	The Chair drew attention to the reference to precautionary suspension on page 11 and it was agreed to amend the wording to reflect that this would be implemented as a last resort. This amendment would ensure that there was consistency throughout the Policy.	Dir Reg & Corp Serv
14.3.3	Members endorsed the revised Harassment, Bullying and Intimidation Policy.	
14.4	<i>Environment and Waste Management Policy</i>	
14.4.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services informed Members that the Policy was a new Policy developed in line with ALB priorities and part of a controls assurance requirement. The Policy will be accompanied by an annual action plan which will support the delivery of the overarching strategy and will be reported on to SMT and Council on a twice-yearly basis.	

14.4.2	Members were informed that NISCC has worked in collaboration with other organisations in order to achieve consistency throughout the Policy	
14.4.3	Members endorsed the Environment and Waste Management Policy.	
14.5	<i>Gifts and Hospitality Policy</i>	
14.5.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services informed Members that the Policy was a revision of one adapted from BSO and includes more information on what does or does not constitute a gift or hospitality.	
14.5.2	Members were informed that the Policy has been cross referenced to the NISCC Bribery Policy.	
14.5.3	Members endorsed the Gifts and Hospitality Policy.	
15	Unconfirmed Minutes of Participation Partnership Committee Meeting 17 February 2014	
15.1	The Chair of the Committee took Members through the Unconfirmed Minutes indicating that the focus of the meeting had been the Review of the Codes of Practice. In addition, there had also been a discussion on the Review of the Degree.	
15.1.2	Members were informed that two new Members had joined the Partnership – Anne Mallon and Audrey Montgomery, Council Members endorsed their Membership and induction training will follow in May,	
16	Unconfirmed Minutes of PQ Partnership Meeting 5 March 2014	
16.1	The Chair of the Partnership took Members through the Unconfirmed Minutes.	
17	Unconfirmed Minutes of Professional Issues Strategic Review Group Committee Meeting 7 March 2014	
17.1	The Chair of the Committee took Members through the Unconfirmed Minutes reflecting Dr Spratt's presentation on Early Authoritative Intervention. Members were informed that the Group also discussed its future work and possible agenda for consideration.	
18	Unconfirmed Minutes of Registrants' Committee Meeting 20 January 2014	

18.1	The Director of Regulation and Standards took Members through the Unconfirmed Minutes. A further meeting was held in March and at this meeting it was agreed that engagement with registrants needs to be addressed. The Director of Regulation and Standards indicated that a review of engagement is about to take place.	
18.1.2	A Member requested that AYE information be shared among the Council Members. The Director of Regulation and Standards agreed.	Dir Reg & Stds
19	Any other Business	
19.1	Members were reminded of two forthcoming events:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council workshop on developing the Corporate Risk Register on Wednesday 14 May 2014 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Strategic Session on Conduct on 21 May 2014 	
19.2	The Chair announced that Professional Advisor, Paul Kearney, is due to retire at the end of June 2014. A recruitment process has recently been completed; Sharon McAteer was successful in her application to become a Professional Advisor. A second successful applicant, Brenda Horgan, will replace Marian O'Rourke as Professional Advisor.	
19.3	A discussion took place around Members' use of their tablets. It was agreed that members should continue to work towards using their tablets for Council papers; however, it was also recognised that some Members are still having difficulties and it was agreed that further training would be useful before agreeing a final cut off date for receiving papers via hard copy.	
19.3.1	It was agreed that further training will be given at the Council Strategic Session on 21 May. In the meantime, those Members who are confident with their tablets will experiment with using them without also receiving papers in hard copy.	SMT
20	Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 9 July 2014	

Jim Perry
Chair
9 July 2014