

**Northern Ireland Social Care Council  
Confirmed Minutes of Council Meeting  
Wednesday 19 October 2016 at 10.00am  
NISCC Offices, Millennium House, Belfast**

**Present: Council**

Jim Perry (Chair)	Maire McMahon
Joe Blake	Catherine McPhillips
Geraldine Campbell	Brenda Maitland
Julie Erskine	Trevor Spratt
Ruth Lavery	Lee Wilson

**In Attendance:**

Lorraine Conlon- Dept. of Health - Observer  
Colum Conway (Chief Executive)  
Mark Bradley (Director of Registration & Corporate Services)  
Patricia Higgins (Director of Regulation & Standards)  
Maureen Martin- Minute Taker

**Apologies:**

Carolyn Ewart ( Vice Chair of Registrants Forum)  
Anne O'Reilly ( Council Member)

Item		Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Carolyn Ewart and Anne O'Reilly.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
2.1	None were received	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Chair's Business</b>	

3.1	The Chair reported that the Deputy Chief Social Work Officer has confirmed that the recruitment for new Council members is now in the Public Appointment Unit's timetable. The Chair will keep the Council updated with any further information.	
3.2	The Chair advised that the draft Corporate Plan has been circulated to Council members, including the input from the Council Strategic session of 30 <sup>th</sup> September. Work is ongoing and the latest draft of the Corporate Plan will be circulated in advance of the planned Council Strategic session on 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2016. The Chair requested that Council members hold the full day for this session.	
3.3	The Chair noted that the Social Work Awards will be held on 18 <sup>th</sup> November at Armagh City Hotel.	
3.4	The Chair noted that a date has been agreed for the Mid-Year Accountability meeting with the Permanent Secretary for 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2016.	
3.5	The Chair advised that a poll will be circulated to Council members to arrange a suitable date in January 2017 for the Board Self-Assessment meeting	<b>NISCC Administration</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Chief Executive's Report</b>	
4.1.	The Chief Executive advised that NISCC is involved in the proposals for the second implementation phase of the Social Work Strategy and regular updates will be presented to Council as the phase progresses.	
4.2	The Chief Executive advised that the Professional Standards Agency (PSA) have released a paper entitled "Regulation Rethought" which set out their proposals for the reform of the regulation of health care workers in the U.K. It was agreed, from a public protection aspect, that this paper should be considered initially at the Professional Strategic Issues Review group (PSIRG) and continued to be monitored through horizon scanning. A broader discussion at Council level may also be required at a later date. It was agreed that, to facilitate broader discussion, all Council members are to be notified of the PSIRG meeting when this item is on the agenda.	
4.3	The Chief Executive advised he had attended a meeting of	

	the 5 Country Regulators on 29 <sup>th</sup> September in Edinburgh. The Regulators from Scotland and Wales have confirmed that plans are in place for the roll out of registration of the homecare workforce.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Minutes of Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6 July 2016.</b>	
5.1	<p>The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair.</p> <p>A member requested circulation of minutes within 15 days of the Council meeting, in accordance with Standing Orders. It was agreed that this would be followed up by the Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services.</p>	<b>DRCS</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
6.1	<i>Item 7.4</i> - The Director of Registration & Corporate Services noted that the Annual Report and Accounts had now been laid with the Assembly and formally signed off. A published copy of the Annual Report and Accounts has been circulated to Council members.	
6.2	<i>Item 9.2</i> - The Director of Regulation and Standards advised that more detail was not available for this cohort on the reasons for the gap in Social Work degree completion and AYE figures. Future Annual Reports should be able to include this more detailed information.	
6.3	<i>Item 9.3</i> - The Director of Regulation and Standards updated that she has been unable to source available information on the number of unfilled Social Work vacancies currently in the system and advised that she will pursue this information through the Health Board .	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Business Matters</b>	
7.1	The Director of Regulation and Standards spoke to the Consultation on the Review of NISCC Code of Practice for Employers of Social Care Workers and advised that it had been presented to Council for endorsement.	

	<p>The revised document had been drafted following collaboration with a working group consisting of NISCC, RQIA and members of the Participation Partnership and Registrants' Forum. Feedback from a broader consultation resulted in only minor changes in the language used in the report.</p> <p>The Director of Regulation and Standards outlined the key changes in the document and advised that following Council approval an 8 week consultation period would be undertaken with a view to presenting the final report at the Council meeting in February 2017.</p> <p>Council members thanked all staff involved in the production of the report.</p> <p><b><i>Decision: Council endorsed the Consultation on the Review of NISCC Code of Practice for Employers of Social Care Workers</i></b></p>	
7.2	<p>The Director of Regulation and Standards spoke to the Raising Concerns Guidance report and advised that it had been presented to Council for endorsement.</p> <p>The Director of Regulation and Standards advised that the guidance report had been prepared in collaboration with the Registrants' Forum and had been reviewed by the Professional Strategic Issues Review group. Endorsement has been sought from the Trade Unions and approval has already been received from NIASW and positive feedback from NIPSA and UNISON.</p> <p>The report provides a step by step approach for registrants to raising concerns and also has a section on whistleblowing.</p> <p>It was proposed that the following amendments are made to the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 11, paragraph 3 - <i>“you may wish to consider raising your concern”</i> to be amended to <i>“ you should</i></li> </ul>	

	<p><i>raise your concern”.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 14- a more detailed explanation to be provided on Duty of Candour.</li> </ul> <p>A member requested an information session on the consultation process undertaken by NISCC in the preparation of reports and guidance.</p> <p><b>Action: follow up required on the provision of information sessions for Council members on the NISCC Consultation process</b></p> <p><b><i>Decision: The Council endorsed the Raising Concerns Guidance report pending the proposed amendments.</i></b></p>	DRCS
7.3	<p>The Director of Regulation and Standards spoke to the report on Social Work Training in England and advised that the report had been provided for endorsement.</p> <p>The Director summarised the content of the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist Social Work training programmes in Children’s services and Mental Health services have been introduced in England, including Frontline, Think Ahead and Step Up</li> <li>• Social Work education and training in Northern Ireland is generic</li> <li>• NISCC and CCW and SSSC have examined the Frontline training course against their respective social work qualifications and registration requirements and identified some deficits</li> <li>• NISCC is proposing that registration applications from graduates of the above programmes which are identified with deficits should be dealt with on a case by case basis. Applicants will be registered with restrictions on their practice to their initial specialist area of training and additional training should be undertaken and completed within the first three years of their registration.</li> </ul> <p>The Director of Regulation and Standards advised that the report has been previously reviewed at a meeting of the</p>	

	<p>Professional Strategic Issues Review group. A Memo of Understanding between the 4 UK Social Work Regulators will be drawn up following endorsement of the report by Council.</p> <p>The Chair and Council thanked the Director of Regulation and Standards for preparing the report and noted the contribution of the Professional Strategic Issues Review group.</p> <p><b><i>Council endorsed the recommendations contained within the Report on Social Work Training in England.</i></b></p>	
7.4	<p>The Director of Registration and Corporate Services spoke to the Property and Asset Management (PAM) Plan and requested endorsement by the Council.</p> <p>The Director of Registration and Corporate Services advised that the NISCC is required to produce a PAM Plan annually to demonstrate how it is managing its estates. It was noted that the format of the Plan is standardised.</p> <p>The Director of Registration and Corporate Services reported that the Flexi Scheme had been revised in consultation with staff resulting in a potential savings of 40 working days of electricity overheads and illustrates that NISCC is trying to minimise working overheads and ensure value for money.</p> <p>It was noted that the Business Case submitted to the Department to support remaining in the current accommodation highlighted the need for good transport links and accessibility for registrants and services users as well as attendees at Fitness to Practice hearings.</p> <p>The Director of Registration and Corporate Services updated Council members on the status of the NISCC accommodation and advised that following ongoing issues and negotiation between the Landlord of Millennium House and LPS, agreement had been reached for a straight five year lease at £16.50 per sq.ft. A copy of the revised lease is being prepared for signing.</p>	

	<b><i>Decision: Council endorsed the Property Asset Management Plan 2016/17</i></b>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Performance Reporting</b>	
8.1	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services summarised the NISCC Q.1 and Q.2 Financial Management Statements indicating actual expenditure against agreed budgets and noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A slight overspend of £9382 at the end of September but a breakeven position predicted for year end;</li> <li>• Salaries underspend due to expected movement in staff throughout the year. It was noted that the Planning and Contracts Manager is due to commence a new post with NIMDTA at the start of November 2016;</li> <li>• 10 day prompt payment target is 88% and this is expected to rise to 90%;</li> <li>• Variance in Goods and Services Budget over/underspend is closely monitored.</li> </ul> <p>A paper was circulated summarizing the actual RRL received and the Registration Income. This illustrates the reduction in the RRL.</p> <p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services agreed to review the wording in Standing Orders regarding the timetable for agreement of the annual budget.</p> <p>The Chair commended the Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services on the high level of reporting information contained in the reports and reported that he had personally thanked the Planning and Contracts Manager for her positive contribution to the current high level of reporting and information and this was formally noted by Council.</p>	
8.2.1	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services spoke to the Q.2 Business Performance Report and noted the following key aspects for Registration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reporting is now on a KPI rather than a volumetric</li> </ul>	

	<p>basis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reduction in registration KPI compliance was noted. The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services noted that this was due to a large influx of applications at a time of lowered staff resources. Better use is being made of the available ICT and Database, which has assisted in a speedier turnaround time and this will continue to be monitored by the Operational Management team;</li> <li>• 52% of expected figures are on the NISCC register as of the end of September. A large increase in Adult Residential Care applications has been noted but this may be due to a box ticking error by applicants and a data cleanse is being carried out to rectify the issue.</li> </ul>	
8.2.2	<p>The Director of Regulation and Standards spoke to the Quarter 2 Business Performance Report and noted the following key aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in Committee stats on Q.2 KPIs is accounted by several cases with adjournments. It was noted that many factors can impede targets including witness engagement and the investigation process.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion took place on the proportionality of the Fitness to Practise referral process for the social care workforce. A member raised a concern that as this is not a professionally qualified workforce the referral reason may not be deemed appropriate or understood fully by the Social Care worker. The Director of Regulation and Standards explained that proportionality is dealt with under Consensual Disposal and that work is ongoing with employers on the threshold level for referrals. It was agreed that further discussion to review proportionality and regulatory obligations for the social care workforce is required. This discussion is to be taken forward by the Professional Strategic Issues Review group (PSIRG).</p> <p><b>Action: Social Care workforce Fitness to Practise</b></p>	



	<b>referrals to be added to the next PSIRG agenda.</b>	<b>NISCC Administration</b>
8.3	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services spoke to the NISCC Equality Annual Progress Report.</p> <p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services advised that a draft NISCC Equality Annual Progress Report had been drafted in partnership with BSO Equality Unit and submitted at the end of August 2016.</p> <p>The NISCC successfully participated in the Equality Unit Disability Work Placement scheme during 2015/16 which led to permanent employment for the individual within the organisation.</p> <p>The NISCC continues to work with the Equality Unit to support its equality and disability action plans and the Policy and Operations manager represents NISCC on the Tapestry Network.</p> <p><b>Action: The Chair requested the circulation of the Good Relations Statement to all Council members.</b></p> <p><b><i>Decision: Council endorsed the NISCC Equality Annual Progress Report</i></b></p>	<b>DRCS</b>
8.4	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services advised that the NISCC Mid-Year Assurance Statement had been provided for information only.</p> <p>In his role as Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive will sign off the statement to attest to the continuing effectiveness of the system of internal governance.</p> <p>It was requested that the Audit &amp; Governance item is moved up the agenda for future Council meetings and the Mid-Year Assurance Statement added under this section.</p> <p><b><i>The Chair thanked the Audit &amp; Risk Committee for their input and noted the Mid-Year Assurance Statement.</i></b></p>	
8.5	<p>The Director of Regulation and Standards advised that the Quality 2020 Annual Report 2015/16 detailed how the NISCC ensures that quality is embedded throughout all aspects of the organisation and requested Board approval.</p>	

	<p>The Q2020 Unit has confirmed that they are content with the submitted report.</p> <p><b>Decision: Council endorsed the Quality 2020 Annual Report 2015/16.</b></p>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Partnerships Updates (dealt with after Item 10.)</b>	
<b>9.1</b>	<b>Quarterly Participation Partnership Report (for information )</b>	
9.1.1	<p>The Chair of the Participation spoke to the quarterly Participation Partnership report and the following were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dates circulated for the Participation Partnership Capacity Building event were not suitable for Committee members therefore an alternative dates will be circulated for January 2017.</li> <li>• Synergy Project was noted as an engagement opportunity for all Council members</li> </ul> <p>The Chair of the Participation Partnership raised concerns on the nonpayment of service users and carers for their involvement in NISCC Partnerships. It is understood that the Trusts are increasingly paying service users and carers involved in the delivery of training sessions from their PPI training budget.</p> <p>The Chair of the Participation Partnership noted that remunerating service users and carers for engaging with NISCC would reflect the value placed on their input and experience and not to do so may impact on our ability to recruit and retain members in the Partnership.</p> <p><b>Action: The Chair of the Participation Partnership will formally write to the Chair of Council to raise the issue of non-remuneration of service users and carers in the Partnership.</b></p>	<p><b>NISCC Administration</b></p> <p><b>Committee Chair</b></p>
9.1.2	Council noted the Participation Partnership Forum	

	<p>unconfirmed minutes 24 May 2016 and the Chair of the Participation Partnership advised that the minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> September meeting would be circulated. A member noted the improved visual format of the minutes and thanked those involved in the redesign.</p> <p><b>Action: Minutes Participation Partnership meeting of 6th September to be circulated to all Council members.</b></p>	NISCC Administration
9.1.3	<p>The Director of Regulation and Standards apologised that due to an administrative oversight, the incorrect version of the Workforce Development minutes of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 had been circulated and confirmed that the correct version would be issued within the next few days.</p> <p><b>Action: The correct version of the Workforce Development minutes of 1st September 2016 to be circulated to Council members, after discussion with Partnership Chair.</b></p>	NISCC Administration
9.1.4	<p>The Director of Regulation and Standards presented the Registrants' Forum unconfirmed minutes of the 20 September 2016 and noted that some items discussed at the Council meeting have been on the agenda for discussion at previous meetings of the Registrants' Forum.</p> <p>The Director of Regulation and Standards requested Council members to submit suggested content for the upcoming joint Council and Registrant workshop. Some items proposed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capacity building , which could also be a joint workshop including the Participation Partnership members</li> <li>• Registrant engagement, including the issues around this, the differentiation between Social care and Social Work, how to measure and assess meaningful engagement</li> <li>• Principles of engagement and effective communication</li> </ul> <p><b>Council noted the Registrants' Forum unconfirmed</b></p>	

	<b><i>minutes of the 20 September 2016.</i></b>	
9.5	The Chair of the PiP Partnership gave a verbal update on the PiP workshop of 7 <sup>th</sup> September 2016 and reported that the workshop had been used for as a planning day to map the link of the PiP Partnership with the overall NISCC Corporate Plan and advised that a written report will be circulated once it is finalised.	
9.6	<p>The Chair of the Professional Issues Strategic Review Group reported that the group is progressing well and has held extensive discussions on key areas, with some agenda items already identified for the next meeting. It was proposed that the work of the Professional Issues Strategic Review Group should be reflected in the NISCC Annual Report and it was agreed that this will be discussed further at a Council Strategic session. It was requested that in order to facilitate broader discussions, all Council members are to be included on the circulation list for the Professional Issues Strategic Review Group agendas for information purposes and to advise if they wish to attend meetings.</p> <p><b>Action: All Council members to be included on circulation list for Professional Issues Strategic Review Group meeting agendas.</b></p> <p><b><i>Council noted the Professional Issues Strategic Review Group unconfirmed minutes 5 September 2016.</i></b></p>	<b>NISCC Administration</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Audit &amp; Governance</b>	
<b>10.1</b>	<b><i>Audit &amp; Risk unconfirmed minutes of 12 October 2016</i></b>	
10.1.1	The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee advised that the minutes of the Audit & Risk meeting of 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2016 had been tabled for information only and had yet to be agreed.	
<b>10.2</b>	<b><i>Corporate Risk Register ( for endorsement)</i></b>	
10.2.1	<p>The Chair of the Committee introduced the Corporate Risk Register.</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Risk Register had been</p>	

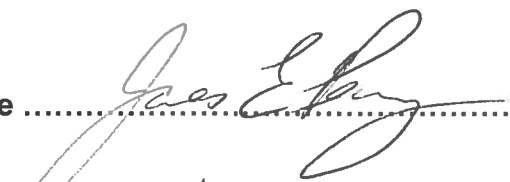
	<p>considered in depth by the Risk Management Committee and updated to take account of the Draft Programme of Government and the Bengoa Report. The Chair of Committee invited comment on the Risk Register, with a view to formal endorsement.</p> <p>The following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 7- it was highlighted that the new risk relates to the Regulations for enforcement of registration to Domiciliary and Day Care Workers and not to the Fitness to Practise regulations</li> <li>• Page 15 –the Risk Register will be updated once the new lease for NISCC office accommodation is signed.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that the Risk Register is a live document as particularly reflected by the NISCC office accommodation negotiations.</p> <p>After some further discussion and clarification members were asked to consider the Audit Committee's recommendation that the risk register be endorsed.</p> <p><b><i>Decision: The Council endorsed the Corporate Risk Register.</i></b></p>	
<b>10.3</b>	<b><i>Assurance Framework ( for endorsement)</i></b>	
10.3.1	<p>The Chair of the Committee recommended the Assurance Framework for endorsement following scrutiny at the Audit and Governance Committee meeting. Members noted the importance of this document as a key tool in the organisation's overall governance framework.</p> <p><b><i>Decision: The Council endorsed the Assurance Framework.</i></b></p>	
<b>10.4</b>	<b><i>NISCC Q.1&amp; Q.2 Contract Registers ( for information)</i></b>	
10.4.1	<p>The Chair of the Committee advised that the Q.1 and Q.2 Contract Registers had been provided for information to comply with an Internal Audit recommendation for Council to formally view the Contract Register. It was noted that these documents had received a positive response when they had been brought to the Audit &amp; Risk Committee of 12<sup>th</sup> October</p>	

	2016.  <b><i>The Council noted the Q.1 &amp; Q.2 Contract Registers.</i></b>	
<b>10.5</b>	<b><i>Internal Audit Mid-Year Report to Audit Committee ( for information)</i></b>	
10.5.1	<p>The Chair of the Committee presented the Internal Audit Mid-Year report to Audit Committee. The following was highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Priority 1 findings have been identified</li> <li>• 77% of recommendations have been fully implemented and 23 % partially implemented ( 23% equates to 4 recommendations only)</li> <li>• 2 Priority 2 findings relating to Petty Cash and Procurement Policy</li> </ul> <p>Members were advised that an action plan is in place to monitor implementation of all Internal Audit recommendations. This is regularly reviewed by the Audit &amp; Risk Committee.</p> <p><b><i>The Council noted the Internal Audit Mid-Year Report to Audit Committee.</i></b></p>	
<b>10.6</b>	<b><i>New Internal Audit Definitions and Priorities</i></b>	
10.6.1	<p>The Chair of the Committee explained that from April 2017, BSO Internal Audit will implement new definitions of assurance and audit recommendation priorities. In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This seeks to prioritise audit recommendations based on organisational priorities rather than system level. This is intended to enable management to more easily identify significant issues at an organisational level.</li> <li>• The Substantial assurance classification will be removed</li> </ul> <p><b><i>The Council noted the New Audit Definitions and Priorities paper</i></b></p>	
<b>10.7</b>	<b><i>Q.2 Information Governance Report</i></b>	
10.7.1	The Director of Registration and Corporate Services advised that although Information Governance has fallen under the	

	<p>purview of BSO from September, NISCC remains responsible for information governance and reporting.</p> <p><b><i>The Council noted the Q.2 Information Governance Report.</i></b></p>	
<b>10.8</b>	<b><i>Policies for Endorsement</i></b>	
10.8.1	<p>The Director of Registration and Corporate Services reported that the Attendance at Work Policy is a regional policy and therefore did not require substantial amendments for NISCC. The Director of Registration advised that the policy had already been through an internal consultation process and approved by the Joint Negotiation Forum (JNF) and requested formal endorsement by Council.</p> <p><b><i>Decision: The Council endorsed the Attendance at Work Policy.</i></b></p>	
10.8.2	<p>The Director of Registration and Corporate Services reported that BSO Secondment at Work Policy had been adopted by NISCC as it also covers some of the terms and conditions of the Agenda for Change.</p> <p>It was noted that although NISCC do not have a high level of secondment it was prudent to have a policy in place.</p> <p>The Director of Registration advised that the policy had already been through an internal consultation process and approved by the Joint Negotiation Forum (JNF) and requested formal endorsement by Council.</p> <p><b><i>Decision: The Council endorsed the Secondment at Work Policy.</i></b></p>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
11.1	The Director of Regulation and Standards formally advised members of the change in personnel due to the retirement of the previous Head of Fitness to Practise postholder.	
11.2	The Chief Executive noted the Ground Clearing meeting on 3 <sup>rd</sup> November and advised that that the draft Corporate Plan would be on the agenda for discussion. Council members	

	will be updated at the next Council Strategic Session on 16 <sup>th</sup> November. Council Strategic Session agenda will be finalised and the time assessed on whether a full or part day attendance is required.	
11.3	A poll for date availability for a Board Self-Assessment meeting will be circulated.	<b>NISCC Administration</b>
11.4	List of NISCC upcoming events/lunchtime seminars to be recirculated.	<b>NISCC Administration</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Date of next Council meeting</b>	
12.1	Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2017	

Minutes Approved by: Jim Perry, Chair

Signature .....  .....

Date ..... 15/02/2017 ..... .....