

**Northern Ireland Social Care Council  
Confirmed Minutes of Council Meeting  
Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 10.00am  
NISCC Offices, Millennium House, Belfast**

**Present: Council**

Jim Perry (Chair)  
Neil Bodger  
Ruth Lavery  
Brenda Maitland  
Catherine McPhillips  
Anne O'Reilly  
Lee Wilson

**In Attendance:**

Lorraine Conlon- Dept. of Health, Government Liaison Officer (Observer)  
Colum Conway- Chief Executive  
Patricia Higgins – Director of Regulation & Standards  
Maureen Martin – Minute taker

**Apologies:**

Geraldine Campbell – Council Member  
Carolyn Ewart - Deputy Chair , Registrants' Forum  
Julie Erskine – Council Member  
Roberta Magee - Chair, Registrants' Forum

Item		Action
1.	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Geraldine Campbell, Julie Erskine, Carolyn Ewart and Roberta Magee.	

<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
2.1	None were received.	

<b>3.</b>	<b>Chair's Business</b>	
3.1	<p>The Chair formally acknowledged that the terms of office for Council members, Joe Blake, Maire McMahon and Trevor Spratt had ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and noted the thanks and appreciation of the Council for their service of nearly 10 years. A dinner for Council members and the Senior Management team has been arranged for the evening of 27<sup>th</sup> April to mark the end of their term. The Chair advised that he has formally written to all three members as an expression of thanks on behalf of the Council and the Department of Health.</p>	
3.2	<p>The Chair acknowledged the appointment of Mark Bradley to a new post with BSO as Assistant Director, FPS and advised that Mr. Bradley will retain oversight of the NISCC Annual Report and Accounts. The Chair formally recognised Mr Bradley's important contribution to NISCC and in particular noted his championship and support of the Participation Partnership.</p>	
3.3	<p>The Chair advised that his term of office as Chair of Council has been extended to the end of September 2017. The Chair thanked the GLO for her assistance in managing the recruitment exercise for a new Chair and Council members. It was noted that the interview panel will be comprised of the Chief and Deputy Chief Social Work Officers and an independent panel member. The Chair of Council will not be involved in the interview process as both posts will be appointed during one set of interviews.</p> <p>The Chair requested members to encourage applications from suitable persons and advised that both he and the Chief Executive would be available to meet with potential applicants. Information on the posts has also been disseminated through the various partnership meetings.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the recruitment process has employed</p>	

	the Guaranteed Interview Scheme approach. This scheme guarantees an interview if a disability is indicated on the application and the applicant meets the minimum requirements.	
3.4	The Chair thanked members for their attendance at the joint NISCC/CORU event on 29 <sup>th</sup> March and noted it was an interesting event with a useful exchange of information. He indicated that he had written to the Chair of CORU after the event.	
3.5	The Chair noted the upcoming Professional in Practice (PiP) Award ceremony on 15 <sup>th</sup> June at the Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh. An invitation is to be extended to the previous Chair of the PiP Partnership group.	
3.6	The Chair advised that the forms have been issued by the Department for the annual Council Member performance appraisal process. Individual performance appraisal appointments are being arranged with the Chair.	
3.7	The Chair noted that an Accountability meeting with the Permanent Secretary and Chief Social Work Officer has been arranged for 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2017.	
3.8	The Chair noted the NICON conference dates of 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2017. The Chief Executive advised that NISCC had worked with NICON around the social care element of the conference to ensure this topic is well represented.	
3.9	The Chair advised that there was no further update available on the budget.	
3.10	The Chair informed members that the Council Strategic session scheduled for 24 <sup>th</sup> May may no longer be required however members were requested to continue to hold this date until further update. It was noted that the NISCC Annual Report and Accounts are due to be adopted at the next Council meeting on 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2017.	
3.11	<p>The Chair advised that the interviews have taken place for the Fitness to Practise Committee Chairs and members and successful candidates have now been appointed.</p> <p>The Chair commented on the significant uptake in applications particularly from the social care sector and hoped that this might be indicative of a good response also to the Council Chair/member recruitment exercise.</p>	

3.12	The Chair reported the end of the 5 year appointment period of the Chair of the Degree Partnership and advised that NISCC would manage the recruitment exercise. It was highlighted that applicants are required to have a Social Work background or be a qualified Social Worker in order to fulfil the requirements of the post.	
3.13	The Chair advised that the 2017/18 Council and Committee meeting schedule has been circulated and requested members to review the dates for availability.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Chief Executive's Report</b>	
4.1.	<p>The Chief Executive spoke to the report and advised he had attended several events in the regulatory arena as facilitated by the Professional Standards Authority. This included his attendance at a PSA academic and research conference in March.</p> <p>In partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care Institute for Excellence the Chief Executive had contributed to the conference by presenting a paper on the initial development phase of the evaluation framework for roll out of registration and regulation to the domiciliary care and day care workforce in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Chief Executive commented that his presentation had been very well received and was informative for other regulators intending to roll out registration in the future. The Chief Executive agreed to circulate a summary of the presentation to Council following a suggestion from a member on the potential for a learning opportunity.</p> <p><b><i>Action: Chief Executive to circulate a summary of the Roll out of Registration and Regulation to the Domiciliary and Day Care Evaluation Framework presentation to Council members.</i></b></p>	CC
4.2	The Chief Executive formally reported that the registration of domiciliary and day care social care workers was completed as of the deadline of 31 March 2017.	

	<p>A breakdown report will be provided at the next Council meeting on the specific number of registrants and categories although it was noted that a data cleanse is required in the interim to ensure that registrants have submitted under the correct category.</p> <p>The Chief Executive underlined the importance of good engagement with key stakeholders and registrants in the roll out process.</p> <p>The Chair formally thanked all staff for reaching the target date for the roll out of registration particularly given the increase in their workload due to the process. The Chair recommended that a joint Council and staff event should be arranged in recognition of the efforts made by staff.</p>	
4.3	<p>The Chief Executive informed members that one of the members of the NISCC Registration team had very sadly passed away several weeks earlier and this had been formally marked by the organisation and condolences extended to his family on behalf of all staff.</p>	
4.4	<p>The Chief Executive reported that a new post category had been introduced in England. Nursing Associates will begin training in 2017 in a new role that will sit alongside existing nursing care support workers and fully-qualified registered nurses to deliver hands-on care for patients.</p> <p>The Nursing &amp; Midwifery Council (NMC) agreed last week that they will regulate the new role. The Chief Executive emphasised that although there is no plan to introduce Nursing Associates to the workforce in Northern Ireland, it would be useful to monitor any impact on regulation due to the potential overlap between nursing and social care work roles.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Minutes of Council Meeting held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017.</b>	
5.1	<p>The Chair requested a correction to the attendee list by the addition of the following names: Neil Bodger</p>	

	Anne O'Reilly	
	<b><i>Decision: Following the correction outlined above the Minutes of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair.</i></b>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
6.1	<b><i>Item 4.3</i></b> - The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry Report to be added to the agenda of the next Professional Strategic Issues Review Group - <b>completed</b>	
6.2	<b><i>Item 6.2</i></b> - The Chair of the Participation Partnership confirmed that a meeting will be arranged with the Director of Registration and Corporate Services to agree a letter to be written to the Chair of Council on the issue of non-remuneration of service users and carers in the Partnership.- <b>The Chair of the Participation Partnership to progress</b>	
6.3	<b><i>Item 9.5</i></b> – The Chair of Council to issue a formal letter of thanks to Ms McColgan for her long service to the PiP Partnership- <b>completed</b>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Business Matters</b>	
7.1	<i>NISCC Microsite</i>	
7.1.1	<p>The Chief Executive gave a demonstration of the NISCC Microsite to Council members. The microsite has embedded copies of the draft 2017/18 Business Plan and draft 2017/21 Corporate Plan. The Communication and Engagement Strategy will be added once it is approved by Council.</p> <p>The microsite will allow the Corporate Plan to remain a live document as outcomes will be updated throughout the year as part of the reporting process and will make it easier to make the connection between actions and outcomes.</p> <p>The Chief Executive reported that the microsite also contains a feedback tab which will allow for an improved flow of information that will help to inform the work of NISCC.</p> <p>All members noted that the microsite could be a helpful tool</p>	

	<p>for subcommittees to examine relevant objectives throughout the year.</p> <p>Members commended the creativity and innovation involved in the development of the Corporate Plan and stated that it gives a clear line of sight for staff between the organisational strategy and their day to day work.</p>	
7.2	<i>Draft Comms Strategy</i>	
7.2.1	<p>The Chief Executive spoke to the draft Communication and Engagement Strategy and advised that it had been revised following feedback:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improved links are shown between the Communication and Engagement Strategy and the Corporate Plan;</li> <li>2. The strategy emphasises the commitment to the principles of coproduction and the joint work with partnerships ;</li> <li>3. Clear objectives, key messages and establishing an effective evaluation framework are indicated.</li> </ol> <p>The Chief Executive noted that the Communication and Engagement Strategy will be reported on separately with a first report available at the end of May.</p> <p>The Chair commended the Strategy and thanked all staff involved in its development.</p> <p><b><i>Decision: Council endorsed the draft Communication and Engagement Strategy.</i></b></p>	
7.3	<i>Draft Annual Report ( w/out Accounts)</i>	
7.3.1	<p>The Chair noted that the Draft Annual Report ( w/out Accounts) had been provided for information only and reported that the final Annual Report with Accounts would be presented for adoption at the next Council meeting on 30 June. The Chair commented that any feedback on the draft Annual Report following the Council meeting would be welcomed.</p> <p><b><i>Decision: Council noted the Draft Annual Report (w/out Accounts).</i></b></p>	

8.	<b>Performance Reporting</b>	
8.1	<i>Q.4 Performance Report</i>	
8.1.1	<p>The Director of Regulation &amp; Standards spoke to the Q.4 Performance Report provided to Council for information and noted the following key information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration – due to the final phase of roll out of registration the Registration timescales and KPIs were impacted in the final quarter. This was largely due to the increased volume of registration applications received as reflected in the applications received/registrations graph included at section 1.3.</li> <li>• Fitness to Practise quarterly and end year KPIs are mainly on target. The Director of Regulation &amp; Standards reported that one hearing fell outside of the KPI due to reasons beyond the control of NISCC and one hearing held under the health procedure was not concluded within the KPI due to delays which were beyond our control;</li> </ul> <p>A member queried whether the increased awareness of the public around regulation could result in a noticeable spike in complaints. The Director of Regulation &amp; Standards advised that previous experience indicated that an increase in referrals may be expected but they were usually proportionate to the Register. A member noted that it was important to be mindful of the possible impact of public expectation around regulation and registration and to ensure that the key messages around raising concerns are well managed.</p> <p>Consideration must also be given to media handling to highlight the role of employers as the first step in managing regulation and the enforcement of professional actions and to ensure NISCC is not perceived as a complaints handling body.</p> <p><b><i>Decision: Council noted the Q.4 Performance Report</i></b></p>	



8.2	<i>Q.4 Finance Report</i>	
8.2.1	<p>The Chief Executive spoke to the Q.4 Finance Report and advised that the report contained draft figures only and the final year-end report would be made available for the Audit &amp; Risk Assurance meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p><b>Decision: Council noted the Q.4 Finance Report</b></p>	
9.	<b>Partnerships Updates</b>	
9.1	<b>Quarterly Participation Partnership Report (for information )</b>	
9.1.1	<p>In the absence of the Chair , a member of the Participation spoke to the quarterly Participation Partnership report and the following were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contribution from Participation Partnership members to a chapter in the book “Doing Relationship-Based Social Work” was noted as accessible and readable;</li> <li>• Core members of the Participation Partnership group to examine methods of engagement and the recruitment of new members;</li> <li>• Looking ahead- the Principles and values of Participation to be reviewed;</li> <li>• SMT to consider replacement in group of Mr. Bradley.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Council noted the Quarterly Participation Partnership Report.</b></p>	
9.2	<b>Action: Council noted the Participation Partnership Forum unconfirmed minutes of 27 February 2017.</b>	
9.3	<i>Workforce Development unconfirmed minutes of 16 March 2017</i>	
9.3.1	The Chair of the Workforce Development Partnership reported that the group is proceeding well with good attendance at both meetings and events and a high level of commitment by members.	

The Chair of the Workforce Development Partnership commented on the importance of the meetings as a safe forum for the discussion of key concerns for disparate employers in the voluntary, private and public sector and to highlight the similar issues that each sector is experiencing.

The Chief Executive commented that the Social Care Workforce report facilitated through the workshops run by John Compton can be considered against recommendations arising from the Expert Panel on Adult Social Care which is due to report in May. The Chief Executive advised that the Workforce Development Partnership could identify the best way to support any recommendations by the Expert Panel and examine the similarities in the key messages in of both reports.

The Chair of the Workforce Development Partnership informed members that a date for a Social Care Symposium will be arranged.

The Chair of the Workforce Development Partnership acknowledged the Value Based Recruitment Report authored by the Head of Workforce Development and commented on the importance of the report in highlighting the role of NISCC to employers.

A member commented on the negative impact of zero hour contracts on employees and employers in the social care sector. The lack of financial and job security has resulted in a drop in recruitment in the domiciliary care workforce which in turn has caused "bed blocking" as elderly/vulnerable patients are unable to be discharged due to lack of care package provision. It was agreed that in order to successfully plan recruitment and workloads, it is essential that a domiciliary care job is weighted competitively against other jobs.

The Chief Executive confirmed that employers were generally satisfied that the broad suite of qualifications for social care workers is appropriate and noted the importance

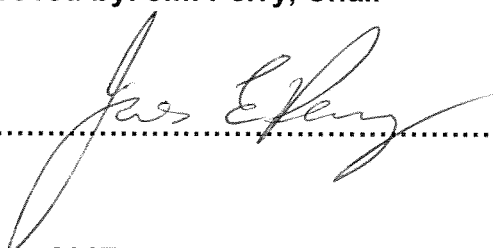
	<p>of the standardisation of staff induction and training to ensure consistency and quality.</p> <p><b>Action: Council noted the Workforce Development Partnership unconfirmed minutes of 16 March 2017.</b></p>	
9.4	<p><i>Workforce Development Draft Terms of Reference (for endorsement).</i></p>	
9.4.1	<p>The Director of Regulation &amp; Standards advised that revision of the Workforce Development Draft Terms of Reference had been an audit recommendation and had been presented for consideration and endorsement by Council. The Terms of Reference now included a governance section and has been approved by the Partnership.</p> <p><b>Decision: Council endorsed the Workforce Development Draft Terms of Reference</b></p>	
9.5	<p><i>Registrants' Forum unconfirmed minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> February and draft unconfirmed minutes of 11 April 2017</i></p>	
9.5.1	<p>The Director of Regulation &amp; Standards highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notes from joint Council and Registrants' Forum meeting have been tabled for information;</li> <li>• A joint meeting of NISCC and CORU to be progressed for Registrants' Forum to develop and build connections with equivalent colleagues in Republic of Ireland e.g. Social Workers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Council noted the Registrants' Forum unconfirmed minutes of 20th February and draft unconfirmed minutes of 11 April 2017.</b></p>	
9.6	<p><i>PiP Partnership unconfirmed minutes of 8 March 2017</i></p>	
9.6.1	<p>The Deputy Chair of the PiP Partnership advised that she will chair the PiP Partnership meetings until a new appointment to the post has been made.</p> <p>The Deputy Chair confirmed that the PiP Partnership Awards are to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> June at the Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh.</p> <p><b>Action: Council noted the PiP Partnership unconfirmed</b></p>	

	<b><i>minutes of 8 March 2017.</i></b>	
9.7	<i>Professional in Practice Draft Terms of Reference (for endorsement)</i>	
9.7.1	<p>The Director of Regulation &amp; Standards advised that the revision of the Professional in Practice Draft Terms of Reference had been an audit recommendation and had been presented for consideration and endorsement by Council. The Terms of Reference now included a governance section and has been approved by the Partnership.</p> <p><b><i>Decision: Council endorsed the Professional in Practice Draft Terms of Reference</i></b></p>	
9.8	<i>Professional Strategic Issues Review Group unconfirmed minutes 31 March 2017</i>	
9.8.1	<p>The replacement Chair spoke to the minutes of the Professional Strategic Issues Review Group unconfirmed minutes of 31 March. It was noted that additional meeting dates have not been arranged but a meeting can be convened in the event of an urgent agenda item.</p> <p>It was reported that information has not yet been received from the Department of Health on the Historical Abuse Enquiry report and this will be reviewed by the Professional Strategic Issues Review Group once released.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Corporate Matters</b>	
10.1	<i>Audit and Risk Assurance Committee unconfirmed minutes of 15 February 2017</i>	
10.1.1	<p>Minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee of 15 February 2017 were circulated and the Committee Chair referred to the main matters discussed, including the fact that “substantial assurance” had been received as a result of the most recent audit of the Risk Management system. The Chair of Council apologized to members for the fact that appropriate Audit papers had not been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><b><i>Action: Council noted the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee unconfirmed minutes of 15 February 2017</i></b></p>	

<b>10.2</b>	<b><i>Disclosure Policy ( amended- for endorsement)</i></b>	
10.2.1	<p>The Director of Regulation &amp; Standards explained that the Disclosure Policy had previously been endorsed by Council and was being presented again due to the following minor amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paragraph 9.2 - Information Disclosed Prior to a Fitness to Practise Hearing, and</li> <li>• Appendix 1 – Expiry of Undertakings</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Decision: Council endorsed the amended Disclosure Policy</i></b></p>	
10.3	<b><i>Fitness to Practise Rules ( amended- for endorsement)</i></b>	
10.3.1	<p>The Director of Regulation &amp; Standards reviewed the proposed amendments to the Fitness to Practise Rules based on their implementation and legal advice obtained as listed below:</p> <p><b>1. Page/Rule Reference - <i>Under recital of powers in contents section</i></b></p> <p><b>Proposed amendment:</b> The inclusion of a reference to section 7B of the 2001 Act to define what is meant by ‘investigation.</p> <p><b>2. Page/Rule Reference - <i>Page 39 paragraph 9 of SCHEDULE 1</i></b></p> <p><b>Proposed amendment:</b> Inclusion of an additional ground for the Council to refer a case back to the Preliminary Proceedings Committee (PPC) following a change in the circumstances of the case, where the Council believes that a consensual disposal is more appropriate and proportionate. The amendment also provides the PPC with the power to refer the case back to the Council for such a disposal.</p> <p><b>3. Page/Rule reference - <i>Page 64 paragraph 26 of SCHEDULE 2</i></b></p> <p><b>Proposed amendment:</b></p>	

	<p>Inclusion of a 'no sanction' option for the Fitness to Practise Committee upon a finding of impairment.</p> <p><b>4. Page/Rule reference - Page 69 paragraph 31</b></p> <p><b>Proposed amendment:</b>          Outlines that Committee decisions will be published in line with NISCC's Publication and Disclosure Policy to afford NISCC the right to make any necessary redactions, e.g. witness anonymity in Notices of Decision.</p> <p><b>5. Page/Rule reference - Page 81 paragraph 1 of SCHEDULE 3</b></p> <p><b>Proposed amendment:</b>          Interpretation of 'applicant' also extends to former registrants removed consensually under Rule 18.</p> <p><b>6. Page/Rule reference - Page 87 SCHEDULE 4</b></p> <p><b>Proposed amendment:</b>          This section of the Rules is no longer applicable although we will retain the details of it in the May 2016 Rules for reference.</p> <p><b>Decision: Council endorsed the amendments to the Fitness to Practise Rules subject to approval by the Departmental Solicitor.</b></p>	
11.	<b>AOB</b>	
	No items for discussion	
12.	<b>Date of next Council meeting</b>	
12.1	Friday 30 June 2017	

Minutes Approved by: Jim Perry, Chair

Signature ..... 

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017

