



**Northern Ireland Social Care Council
Confirmed Minutes of Council Meeting
Tuesday 5th September 2017 at 10.00a.m
NISCC Offices, Millennium House, Belfast**

Present: Council

Jim Perry (Chair)
Geraldine Campbell
Julie Erskine
Ruth Lavery
Brenda Maitland
Catherine McPhillips
Anne O'Reilly
Lee Wilson

In Attendance:

Colum Conway- Chief Executive
Patricia Higgins – Director of Regulation & Standards
Declan McAllister- Director of Registration & Corporate Services
Maureen Martin – Minute taker

Apologies:

Neil Bodger

| Item | | Action |
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| 1. | Welcome and Apologies | |
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| 1.1 | The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular formally welcomed Declan McAllister in his capacity as Director of Registration & Corporate Services. The Chair noted that the Director of Registration & Corporate Services would lead a Strategic session immediately after the Council meeting and this would be followed by a lunch to mark the meeting today as the last official Council meeting with the current Chair and | |

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| | members. | |
| 1.2 | Apologies had been received from Neil Bodger. | |
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| 2. | Declarations of Interest | |
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| 2.1 | Julie Erskine declared an interest as Chair of BSO in item 6.1.1. | |
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| 3. | Chair's Business | |
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| 3.1 | <p>The Chair explained that the Council meeting had been convened whilst quorate to allow formal Council "housekeeping" business to be officially transacted including adoption of the budget. The Chair noted that it may assist the new Chair and members to have formal Council business in place for when they take up their appointment.</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Department had approved the reason for convening an additional Council meeting.</p> | |
| 3.2 | The Chair updated members on the appointment of a new Chair and Council members and advised that interviews would be completed by the end of next week and a decision will be made by the Department of Health on how to proceed with the appointments in the absence of a Minister. The Director of Registration & Corporate Services will maintain contact with the Government Liaison officer to monitor the situation. Further discussions will take place regarding Council Sub Committees to ensure they remain quorate until new members are in place. | |
| 3.3 | The Chair noted his formal thanks to retiring Council members, Julie Erskine, Geraldine Campbell and Ruth Lavery for their commitment, service and achievements during their 10 year tenure. | |
| 3.4 | The Chair advised that the Strategic session following the meeting would be an opportunity to review learning from exiting members as well as feedback from relatively new members on their induction process. It was considered that this may be useful for the Director of Registration & Corporate Services in the development and coordination of induction arrangements of new members. | |
| 3.5 | The Chair stated that a Remuneration Committee date would be arranged by the end of September. Although the Senior Executive Pay Award Circular has not yet been received it was agreed that the meeting would be used to sign off the Chief Executive's objectives for 2016/17 and agree the objectives for 2017/18. | |
| 3.6 | The Chair reported that the NISCC/RQIA launch of the Employer Standards | |

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| | had taken place on the 4 th September and had been very well attended. | |
| 3.7 | On behalf of remaining Council members formal thanks were given to the Chair for his dedication, service and support to members during his appointment. | |
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| 4. | Business Matters | |
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| 4.1 | <i>Financial Budget 2017 – 18 (for adoption)</i> | |
| 4.1.1 | <p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services spoke to the Financial Budget 2017 – 18 report which included an update on the indicative budget for 2017 -18 and information on the current financial position as at the end of July 2017. The following was highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The payroll profile included an anticipated 1% uplift for 2017/18; • Total income of £ 3,317,950 forecast based on RRL and fee income; • Total expenditure of £3,316,669 indicating a surplus of £1281; • Establishment costs is an overall aggregate for costs including telephone, postage, hardware and SLAs; • NISCC is at a breakeven position at month 4 (July 2017); • Disbursement figures have been received from the Department since publication of the report but will have no material impact on the budget as this amount is allocated out; • Prompt payment for both 10 and 30 day time frames are above target; • £316k has been received for a SOCRATES update and an Adapt Business case for £58k is currently in progress and will be presented at Council for approval in October 2017. <p>Following a query from a member, the Director of Registration & Corporate Services stated that, due to the roll out of registration to the social care workforce, fee income may vary for another 12 months until the register is settled. The Chair noted that there are no concerns around registration fee income.</p> <p><i>Decision: Council formally adopted the Financial Budget 2017/18</i></p> | |
| 4.2 | <i>Update on NISCC (Social Care Workers Prohibition) and Fitness of Workers (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017</i> | |
| 4.2.1 | The Director of Regulation & Standards updated members on the consultation on the NISCC (Social Care Workers Prohibition) and Fitness of Workers (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 consultation | |

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| | <p>which had been carried out over the summer and advised that this had now closed and 20 responses received are currently being analysed by the Department.</p> <p>In the absence of an Assembly, the Permanent Secretary may sign off and lay the Regulations, without the need to go before the Health Committee.</p> | |
| 5. | Performance Reporting | |
| 5.1 | <i>The Regulation and Development of the Social Work and Social Care Workforce End of Year Report</i> | |
| 5.1.1 | <p>The Director of Regulation & Standards spoke to the End of Year report on the activity for the Registration, Workforce Development and Fitness to Practise functions during 2016/17.</p> <p>The report provides more detail than the Annual Report and is an infographic based document which also allows for information to be extracted for stakeholder engagement events and presented in a more user friendly way.</p> <p>The Director of Regulation & Standards noted that the report next year will be more outcomes based to reflect the Business Plan.</p> <p><u>Registration:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Registration section is largely focused around roll out of registration of Domiciliary Care, Day Care and Supported Living workers; ➤ The downward trend of graduates commencing Assessed Year in Employment (AYE) was highlighted and will be kept under review. Discussion took place around whether portfolio working for new graduates is a decision based on earning potential and flexibility of working hours of agency placement or due to a reduction in recruitment in permanent employment and the associated workload. The Director of Regulation & Standards agreed that this would be an interesting area to examine further; ➤ Further engagement work to be undertaken with employers and registrants around nonpayment of fees and removal from register. <p>Workforce Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Statistics reflect the dividends due to the increase in activity and investment into the Professional in Practice(PiP) framework; | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 100% increase in the use of credit accumulation. A feasibility study will be commissioned this year to consider a more formal link between Social Workers achievement of credits and renewal of registration; ➤ The Workforce Development Partnership has prepared a paper around Social Care and the development of the workforce and will be delivered at an upcoming Social Care symposium; ➤ A business case has been prepared for the release of capital for the Adapt learning platform. <p>Fitness to Practise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The new Fitness to Practise model has been embedded over this year and both staff and Committee members have received training including the use of the range of sanctions and consensual disposal; ➤ An increase of 1% in cases has been noted which is expected due to the increase in the register numbers; ➤ Engagement work is to be carried out with Social Care employers around thresholds for referral to NISCC and when to manage in house; ➤ The Director of Regulation & Standards flagged the increase of service user referrals to NISCC relating to Social Workers. It was noted that further engagement is required around the management of service user expectations on the role of the regulator. Discussion took place on the importance of maintaining balance between the role of workforce regulation for service users and keeping the trust of the profession/sector in the regulatory process. It was noted that a step by step self-diagnostic tool kit will be developed for the NISCC website to guide service users to the correct forum. <p>Members thanked all those involved in the preparation of the report and noted it as extremely informative and well laid out. The report was recommended for inclusion in the Council member Induction pack.</p> | |
| 5.2 | <i>Update on Roll out of Registration Figures</i> | |
| 5.2.1 | <p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services gave an update on the current roll out of registration figures and the following was highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37,000+ registrants on register as at 29 August 2017 representing a 60% increase from September 2015; • 14,000+ registrations from Domiciliary Care, Day Care and | |

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| | <p>Supported Living workers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 960 open applications on system with an estimated completion date of the end of September; • NISCC will be considered as moving to a maintenance phase of the register as of 30th September; • A scoping exercise will be commissioned to look at other support roles that may need to be encompassed under compulsory registration e.g. Social Work assistants ; • Key steps going forward are communication and engagement with employers and registrants on maintaining registration and commitment to post registration training and learning and examining options for easier payment methods including. <p>Discussion took place around the impact of Brexit on the Social Work and Social Care sector and workforce. The Director of Regulation & Standards confirmed that NISCC is already engaged with the Department and other regulators on this topic and it will be raised at the Workforce Development Partnership meetings to prompt members to provide relevant data and information. The Director of Registration & Corporate Services advised that he is attending a symposium entitled "Brexit – <i>Implications for Cross-border Health Co-operation</i>" on 8th September.</p> | |
| 5.3 | <i>Fieldfisher Fitness to Practise Audit and Action Plan</i> | |
| 5.3.1 | <p>The Director of Regulation & Standards spoke to the Fieldfisher Fitness to Practise Audit Report and Action Plan and the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Fitness to Practise (FtP) model of regulation was introduced in May 2016 and Fieldfisher were commissioned as independent auditors to audit all cases closed, in the last year, under the Consensual Disposal process and a sample of cases closed at the preliminary stage. The focus of the audit was primarily on investigation and decision making processes and outcomes , with the purpose of identifying good practice and further learning and development needs; • The overall audit report was very positive and reinforced that NISCC was on target after the first year's implementation with good quality customer service and decision making; • An action plan has been drawn up to address recommendations from the audit report and Fieldfisher will attend a post audit feedback and training session with FtP officers; • Training in Complaints Handling and Investigation for Fitness to | |

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| | <p>Practise team has been arranged with providers, Bond Solon and processes and procedures will be kept under review with regular audits recommended.</p> <p>Council members thanked the Director of Regulation & Standards for the report and noted that it provided continued assurance to Council that the organisation is highlighting potential issues and mitigating risks. Council strongly recommended that regular external audits should be implemented to ensure a high level of quality assurance is maintained.</p> | |
| 6. | Governance | |
| 6.1 | <i>Article 55 Review summary (for approval)</i> | |
| 6.1.1 | <p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services advised that the Article 55 Review executive report had been provided for information to Council.</p> <p>The full review which is being delivered to the Equality Commission was presented to SMT on 4th July and a draft has been shared with the Equality Commission with no issues currently being raised.</p> <p>The first section of the report details items for completion and time line. An overview of the findings was summarised and it was noted that no further key actions are required in relation to the composition of workforce. The gender make up within the job groups reflect that Social Care and in particular the Admin & Secretarial group in NISCC is a female dominated profession which could be related to the benefits associated with family friendly policies and flexi time arrangements.</p> <p>Actions for consideration include further work on the accuracy of employee training records and implementation of an annual review. It was also recommended that exit interviews should be carried out with employees to assist the organisation with continued practice improvements.</p> <p>Additional actions for consideration carrying out more proactive, participative work to extend the workforce profile e.g. assistance in the completion applications, attending job fairs and review the criteria in job specifications to ensure they are reflective of the role.</p> <p><i>Decision: Council approved Article 55 Review</i></p> | |
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| 7. | Date of next meetings | |
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| 7.1 | Council members noted the following proposed dates: Council meeting- Wednesday 25 th October Strategic Session- Wednesday 13 th December | |
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| 8. | The Council Strategic session commenced at 11.30a.m. | |

Approved by: Jim Perry, Chair

Signature: 

Date of Approval: 13 December 2017