

Northern Ireland

Social

Care

Council

**Northern Ireland Social Care Council
Confirmed Minutes of Council Meeting
Wednesday 17th April 2019 at 10.00a.m
NISCC Offices, Millennium House, Belfast**

Present: Council

Paul Martin (Chair)

Neil Bodger

Sarah Browne

Roslyn Dougherty

Gerry Guckian

David Hayes

Christine Hunter

Jacqui McGarvey

Brenda Maitland

Catherine McPhillips

Lee Wilson

In Attendance:

Patricia Higgins - Interim Chief Executive

Declan McAllister- Director of Registration & Corporate Services

Helen McVicker – Head of Fitness to Practise – for item 8.1.1 only

Maureen Martin – Council Secretary

Marian O'Rourke – Interim Director of Regulation & Standards

Claire Trainor, Communications & Engagement Manager

Observer:

Fiona McMahon, Board Apprentice

Apologies:

Noelle Barton, Council member – did not attend

Carolyn Ewart, Deputy Chair of Registrants' Forum

Roberta Magee , Chair of Registrants' Forum

Anne O'Reilly, Council member

Item		Presenter
1.	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	Apologies were received from Carolyn Ewart, Noelle Barton, Roberta Magee and Anne O'Reilly.	Chair
2.	Declarations of Interest	Chair
2.1	No Declarations of Interest were received.	
3.	Chair's Business	Chair
3.1	<p>The Chair noted key meetings since the last Council meeting on 16 January 2019:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chair and the interim Chief Executive have attended introductory meetings with Directors of Social Work in the Northern and South Eastern Health & Social Care Trusts. 2. The Chair and the interim Chief Executive engaged with N.I Guardian ad Litem Agency (NIGALA) and it was agreed that the Social Care Council would assist in future workforce development. 3. The Chair and the interim Chief Executive attended a meeting with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA). Collaborative working around responsible information sharing was a key message arising from the meeting. Annual information from RQIA on the level of compliance with the Code of Practice for Employers of Social Care would be useful to the Social Care Council. In response to a query, the interim Chief Executive noted that identifying gaps between the RQIA and Social Care Council employer lists could assist to minimise unregistered social care staff. The Interim Director of Regulation & Standards advised that she had attended a recent meeting with the Director of Assurance, RQIA and it was agreed that opportunities will be created for the Social Care Council to meet with the RQIA around inspections, compliance levels and to identify common themes. The Interim Director of Regulation & Standards noted that the 	

	<p>Social Care Council worked with RQIA to develop recruitment guidance and RQIA will monitor and feedback on this. Focus this year will be on Learning and development particularly around development of a Personal Development Plan (PDP).</p>	
3.2	<p>The Chair encouraged members to read the recently launched publication “Social Work through the Troubles”. The Communication & Engagement Manager informed the Council that UTV are televising a series of programs that tell the personal stories of people who worked throughout the troubles across a variety of sectors; teaching, social work, paramedics, doctors, entertainers and proprietors. Some of the contributors to the publication have given content for the episode on social work and a debriefing is planned at a later date to give an opportunity for these contributors to engage.</p>	
3.3	<p>The Chair confirmed that the Department of Health has officially issued reappointment letters to 4 Non-Executive Directors</p>	
3.4	<p>The Chair and the interim Chief Executive are attending a pre Landscape Review scoping meeting has been confirmed for 13 May and a range of high level delegates from across the Health & Social Care Trusts, Department of Health and the Social Care Council Chair and Executive team are attending a Landscape Review preparatory workshop on 20 May.</p>	
3.5	<p>The Chair and the interim Chief Executive will attend the annual Accountability meeting with the Chief Social Services Officer, DoH on 5 June and members will be kept informed.</p>	
3.6	<p>The Chair noted that the annual appraisal process for Non-Executive Directors is due to be completed in May/June and members will be contacted once the Public Appointments Unit has issued the formal notification and the appraisal forms for completion.</p>	
4.	Service Delivery Presentation – Logo and Digital Presence	
4.1	<p>The Communication and Engagement Manager introduced a short video presentation that had been shown at a recent internal launch on the brand repositioning. The video emphasised the key message that the Social Care Council regulates and sets and supports standards of practice. The core values of the</p>	

	<p>organisation of respect, integrity, partnership and excellence should underpin the daily work of every staff member in the delivery of service.</p> <p>It was noted that the colour palette had been refreshed and a digital piece on the website is being progressed and will include consultation with users and carers on their engagement and user experience.</p> <p>The interim Chief Executive advised that internal work will be ongoing on the delivery of key messages. It was emphasised that the truncated name of the organisation as the “Social Care Council” will be promoted for use, however formal documents will continue to record the legislative title of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council. The Communications and Engagement Manager confirmed that work has also commenced with service users and registrants to promote the name of the organisation.</p> <p>On behalf of Council members, the Chair thanked all those involved in the brand refresh process.</p> <p><i>Action: The Communications & Engagement Manager will produce a short information leaflet on the brand reposition for use externally by Council members</i></p>	
5.	Interim Chief Executive’s Report (to note)	
5.1	<p>The interim Chief Executive invited questions or comments on the report which outlined engagement and activity of the in the last quarter.</p> <p>The following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interim Chief Executive gave an overview of the System Dynamics Modelling which had been commissioned as part of the Social Care Transformation program: • A booking to be made for one of the Council members to attend the NICON conference on 16th & 17th May, if there is availability remaining; • The Head of Fitness to Practise will prepare a report for 	

	<p>Council on return from the CLEAR conference in September 2019;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interim Chief Executive is working with Directors of Nursing, Social Work and Adult Services to develop a multi professional overarching governance framework around delegation for nurses. <p>Action: Council noted the Interim Chief Executive's Report</p>	
6.	Minutes of Council Meeting of Wednesday 16th January 2019 (for approval)	
6.1	The Minutes of the Council Meeting of Wednesday 16th January 2019 were approved.	
7.	Matters Arising	
7.1	None	
8.	Business Matters	
8.1	<i>Summary of Changes and Business Plan 2019/20 – Paper C1 & C2 (for approval)</i>	
8.1.1	<p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services spoke to the draft Business Plan 2019/20.</p> <p>The document identifies all changes from the last Council Strategic session and incorporates feedback and input from previous consultation with the Council, staff and service users and carers. The Business Plan is presented annually and is set against the strategic themes of the overarching 4 year Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the tracked changes in the draft indicated a responsiveness to the feedback and input from Council;</p> <p>The Chair requested individual comment from each Council member on the updated draft of the Business Plan and the following comments were noted:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The document presents clear and concise business objectives and indicators of success; • Very positive plan and incorporated all changes requested and responsive to feedback from members whilst maintaining overall impact of document; • The Business Plan is a continuum of previous Business Plans and shows a record of reflection and improvement along with the ,progression, achievements and challenges of the organisation; • A short explanation on the work of each of the Council Subcommittee would be useful; • An explanation, on what the Council is would be a useful inclusion, under terms and definitions. The Director of Registration & Corporate Services noted that use of the word “Board” may help to differentiate between the Social Care Council and the Council. Clarification will be sought from Sponsor Branch on the correct terminology. • The Workforce Development Operational Plan will take forward a rolling project on Values Based Recruitment (VBR); • Use of the word “co-production” to be checked to ensure it is used in the correct context; • A reference to e-learning be included on Page 2 to support the development of qualifications for Social Care workers; • Use of “NISCC” to be replaced with “the Social Care Council “throughout the document. <p>The Chair thanked members and staff for their valuable contribution to the development of the Business Plan and advised that, subject to the amendments proposed, the Business Plan will be submitted to the Department of Health for approval.</p> <p><i>Action: Council approved the Business Plan subject to the amendments proposed.</i></p>	
8.1.1	<i>Fitness to Practise Activity Report (to note)</i>	
8.1.1.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services reported that the position paper had been presented to comply with a recommendation from the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee to bring a risk around Fitness to Practise resources to the attention of Council. The paper highlights the challenges in the delivery of	

	<p>the Fitness to Practise function due to the significant increase in activity following the rollout of registration to Social Care workers. The Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee noted that risks are not usually escalated directly to Council and the minutes of the last Committee meeting of 6 February will reflect constructive and challenging discussion around this risk. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to provide Council with a Position Paper on the Fitness to Practise resource risk together with the mitigating action which is underway. A member reiterated concerns that negative reputational impact could result from any adverse repercussions due to reduced Fitness to Practise resources.</p> <p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services confirmed that whilst all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are currently being met the key issue is the long term sustainability of resource if Fitness to Practise activity continues to increase. The interim Chief Executive noted that although there have been more appropriate referrals to Fitness to Practise team , more work is to be undertaken with employers around the referral threshold.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the report should be considered as an early warning and stated that explanations from the Executive team should provide assurance to Council going forward and the Strategic session in May will provide an opportunity for more detailed discussion.</p> <p>Action: Council noted the Fitness to Practise Activity Report.</p>	
8.2	<i>Finance Report to February 2019 (for approval)</i>	
8.2.1	<p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services gave an overview of the Finance Report to February 2019 and the following were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The year to date position for the Social Care Council at month 11 (February 2019) is on target for breakeven; • Pay is £11k underspent at month 11; • Underspend in non pay of £11k due to savings in printing, stationery, admin, legal and committee fees; • Prompt payment is on target with KPIs for 10 and 30 days met. 	

	<p>In relation to budget planning, the Director of Registration & Corporate Services advised that an opening budget allocation letter for 2019/20 has been received from the Department of Health (DoH). The letter shows an indicative allocation reduction of 2% in Revenue Resource Limit (RRL) and an additional 1% absorption for the 2019/20 pay award. The DoH have requested submission of a Savings Delivery Plan by 30 April 2019 to show how the Social Care Council will deliver the reductions.</p> <p>Early indications are that a 3% reduction in allocation would place the Social Care Council in a detrimental position to deliver on its statutory function. It was noted that there has not been any complex Fitness to Practise cases this year resulting in a reduction in legal costs this year however this may not remain the same in 2019/20.</p> <p>The Senior Leadership Team will be engaging with Sponsor Branch on the Social Care Council activity and financial pressures for 2019/20 followed up with a meeting with the Director of Finance at the Department of Health in advance of the ground clearing meeting in May 2019</p> <p>The final budget 2019/20 will be brought to the Council meeting of 26th June for approval. Any exceptional concerns on not being able to deliver on the budget will require discussion with the Department of Health.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the Executive team will respond to the request from the Department of Health for the Savings Delivery Plan and will keep the Council updated.</p> <p><i>Action: Council approved the Finance Report to February 2019</i></p>	
8.3	<i>Risk Assurance Framework (for approval)</i>	
9.	Policies for Approval	
9.1	<i>Whistleblowing Policy</i>	
9.1.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services (DRCS)	

	<p>introduced the regional Whistleblowing Policy and requested approval from the Council. The DRCS advised that the policy has been previously approved through the Senior Leadership team and Trade Unions Following a short discussion it was agreed that Council would endorse the policy pending the removal of the word “volunteers” at section 3.2. Council requested an amendment to include “Northern Ireland “in the name of the organisation on the cover and throughout the document.</p> <p>A Council member highlighted the need for detailed training for the Whistleblowing Champion role and a meeting is to be arranged with the DRCS to discuss the advocacy role in more detail.</p> <p><i>Action: Council approved the Whistleblowing Policy subject to amendments</i></p>	DRCS
9.2	Fraud Policy Statement and Response Plan	
9.2.1	<p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services (DRCS) introduced the Fraud Policy Statement and Response Plan.</p> <p>The DRCS advised that the policy has been previously reviewed and approved by the Senior Leadership team and the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and recommended to Council for approval.</p> <p>Following discussion the following amendments were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Northern Ireland “ to be inserted into the name of the organisation on the cover and throughout the document; • An additional line to be inserted to highlight that the Chair of ARAC is given a timely notification of an allegation of fraud and is kept informed at each stage; • A glossary of terms, definitions and acronym to be included with policy documents. <p><i>Action: Council approved the Fraud Policy Statement and Response Plan subject to amendments</i></p>	Admin
10.	Performance Reporting	

10.1	<i>Performance Report to February 2019 (to note)</i>	
10.1.1	<p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services reviewed the Performance Report and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of February 2019 (month 11), all 41 objectives were on track to meet the year end outcomes; • Initial feedback shows that change controls carried out on SOCRATES has helped to progress a significant number of applications from 'on-hold', as the categories of application status are being re-ordered in the system. <p>A Council member proposed insertion of the word '<i>developed</i>' to clarify the statement on Page 7 - 'Action plan for findings from internal audit against PSA standard</p> <p>Action: Council approved the Performance Report to February 2019 subject to amendment.</p>	
11.	Governance	
11.1	<i>Review of Board Effectiveness (for approval)</i>	
11.1.1	<p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services gave a brief overview of the Board Self-Assessment 2019 paper. The annual Board Governance Self-Assessment was carried out in January 2019 and the Council identified its strengths and areas where improvement action was required. The Board Self-Assessment 2019 paper presents the findings of that exercise together with an action plan. The following were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the majority of Council Members and the Chair are recently appointed and the interim Chief Executive position were identified as red flags; • members are to be more involved in shaping a development and learning program and a system is to be put into place to better identify Board development opportunities; • an effective way to maximise and support the meaningful engagement of members at events should be developed; • an accurate volume of information is issued to members in advance of each Council meeting. 	

	<p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services invited Council to review and approve the self-assessment and action plan 2019/20.</p> <p>Council members agreed to the following insertions proposed by the Board Apprentice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1 (Page 54) - “.... to take account of the diversity and lived experience of the membership of the Board” • Action 5 (Page 55) - “ in part to increase the Board’s understanding of the context and impact of social care” <p>Action: Council approved the Board Self-Assessment 2019 and Action Plan 2019/20 subject to the agreed amendments</p>	
11.2	<i>Audit & Risk Assurance Committee unconfirmed minutes 6 February 2019 (for information)</i>	
11.2.1	<p>The Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee reviewed the minutes of the meeting of 6 February 2019 and the following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New external auditors, PWC, in place for a five year contract; and • Risk register will be reviewed at the next meeting <p>Action: Council noted the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee unconfirmed minutes of 6 February 2019</p>	
11.3	<i>Terms of Reference for Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (for approval)</i>	
11.3.1	<p>The Director of Registration & Corporate Services informed Council that Audit & Risk Assurance Committee has made a number of small changes to the Terms of Reference, primarily to reflect updates to their work programme. It was noted that ‘Social Care Council’ will replace ‘Northern Ireland Social Care Council, throughout the document.</p> <p>Action: Council approved the Terms of Reference for Audit & Risk Assurance Committee</p>	
12.	Partnership Updates	

12.1	<i>Participation Forum unconfirmed minutes of 22nd March 2019 (for information)</i>	
12.1.1	<p>The Chair gave an overview on the work of the Participation Forum and the following were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workshop has been arranged for the Participation forum members to review the effectiveness of the work of the forum 2018/19, review the terms of reference and develop an action plan for the next year; A focus this year will be on the promotion of Plain English and reducing the usage of acronyms across the Council; • Members of the Participation Forum welcomed the opportunity to participate with Council and staff around the draft Business Plan. It has been requested that forum members are more informed in advance of future Business Plan sessions • The Participation Forum has three new members and one more who is in the process of joining. It was noted that a previous member had to withdraw from attending meetings but is committed to the group and where able, wishes to contribute to specific pieces of work. <p>Action: Council noted the Participation Forum unconfirmed minutes of 22 March 2019.</p>	
12.2	<i>Workforce Development unconfirmed minutes of 26th March 2019 (for information)</i>	
12.2.1	<p>In the absence of the Chair of the Workforce Development Partnership, the interim Chief Executive invited comments on the minutes.</p> <p>It was noted that the focus of the Partnership is to build capacity around leadership and the group is to revisit the Terms of Reference and Logic Model.</p> <p>Action: Council noted the Workforce Development unconfirmed minutes of 26 March 2019.</p>	
12.3	<i>PIP Partnership unconfirmed minutes– (for information)</i>	
12.3.1	The Chair of the PiP Partnership updated members and noted in particular that conflicting information regarding the cessation of the Approved Social Work Program at Queen’s University Belfast.	

	The interim Chief Executive confirmed that she will write to Queen's University Belfast to clarify the information. Action: Council noted the PiP Partnership unconfirmed minutes of 27 February 2019	Chief Executive
11.	AOB	
11.1	New ID badges for Council members to be created for members using existing photos on file.	
11.2	A Council member noted for reference, the possibility of a deficit of Social Workers in the future and queried whether this should be monitored by the Social Care Council. The interim Chief Executive advised that workforce planning for Social Work is being implemented by the Department of Health and the Social Care Council will be providing sessional Professional Advisors to work with them in this area.	
12.	Date of next meeting (s)	
12.1	The next Council meeting is at 10.00a.m on Wednesday 26 th June 2019.	

Signed by Paul Martin, Chair of the Social Care Council

Date: 26th June 2019

Signature

