

**Northern Ireland Social Care Council  
Confirmed Minutes of Council Meeting  
Wednesday 21st March 2018 at 10.00a.m  
NISCC Offices, Millennium House, Belfast**

**Present: Council**

Jim Perry (Chair)  
Neil Bodger  
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:**

None

<b>Item</b>		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and no apologies were noted.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
2.1	No Declarations of Interest were received.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Chair's Business</b>	
3.1	The Department has confirmed the appointments of a new NISCC Chair of	

	<p>Council, Paul Martin and five Council members. The Chair noted that Paul Martin was involved in the establishment of the NISCC and has extensive experience of working with the Department of Health. A further appointment of a lay Council member is due to be announced directly which will bring the Council up to full compliment. A detailed induction programme for incoming Council members has been drawn up by the Senior Management team (SMT) and the Chief Executive proposed that Council activities with all members are arranged. It was agreed that refresher training would be arranged to include existing members with the 'On Board' training provider. The Chair and SMT are scheduled to have an initial meeting with Paul Martin this afternoon.</p>	
3.2	<p>The Public Appointments Unit has not yet issued the appraisal forms for Council members. The Chair will issue his comments in advance for review by current members and the new Chair will complete the appraisal process.</p>	
3.3	<p>NISCC have taken an exhibition stand at the annual NICON conference on 17th &amp; 18th April at Le Mon Hotel and an additional delegate place is available. Members were requested to send an expression of interest to the Council Administrator.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Service Delivery Presentation</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<b><i>Item was deferred to the next Council meeting.</i></b>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Chief Executive's Report</b>	
5.1.	<p>The Chief Executive spoke to the report and the following activities were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future Search - three day collaborative event which was hosted by Professor Charlotte McArdle, the Chief Nursing Officer at the Department of Health on the 16-19th January 2018. The aim of the event was to discuss and plan how best to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Put citizens at the centre of health and social care delivery;</li> <li>2. Embody the values of co-production;</li> <li>3. Ascertain a common agenda; and</li> <li>4. Identify the way forward to make this happen.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>The report from the event, which is due to be published shortly, will contribute to the work of the Transformation Implementation Group (TIG) on Co-Production for the social care workforce. The Chief Executive noted that the report will be useful for NISCC in underpinning values on co-production particularly around the work of</p>	

	<p>the Participation Forum group. A member suggested that this could also be useful for inclusion in the new Council member induction programme from an accountability perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NISCC presented two papers at the PSA conference held at Windsor in London on the 8th-9th March. The first paper was highlighted some of the initial messages arising from the lessons learnt research from complaints made to NISCC from service users about social workers. The second paper was on the work to co-produce evidence informed improvement in social care (based on the evaluation work currently being undertaken on the rollout of regulation of the social care workforce). Both papers were very well received and will be shared with Council members once published.</li> <li>• NISCC has been working in partnership with the Department of Health and SCIE on an action research approach on the evaluation of roll out of registration to the domiciliary care workforce.</li> <li>• The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services - updated members on the ongoing values and behavior work being undertaken in NISCC which includes a rebrand of the organisation and a refurbishment to the reception area. The Customer Service team is now based in our reception area and the refurbishment will promote a high quality first impression for visitors and an example of utilising office space to support agile working.</li> </ul>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Minutes of Council Meeting of Wednesday 13th December 2017 ( for approval)</b>	
6.1	<p>The Minutes of the Council meeting of Wednesday 13th December 2017 were approved pending the following amendment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The phrase “on the fly” to be removed from section entitled Benefits to NISCC, item 4.1.1 on Page 5</li> </ul>	
6.2	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services gave an update on the action from the previous minutes to investigate the cost for the addition of a SMS 14 day alert for Employers on the SOCRATES system. The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services advised that the additional cost for SMS alert would be an extra £1200 per annum. It was agreed that this could be of added value, but further work would be required to identify the appropriate recipients and to develop a process around the usage of an Employer SMS</p>	

	alert system. A member proposed that a pilot could be trialed in one HSC Trust area.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
7.1	<p>The Chair stated that he had attended a Chairs' Forum meeting where a summary had been given on the implications of the O'Hara Report. The Chair noted that whilst the lessons learnt in the report are relevant to all agencies there are particular key messages for NISCC around the responsibilities and importance of training of Non Executives and the accessibility of the Board. The new Chair of the Chairs' Forum will carry forward discussions to address issues permeating across the Health Trusts that have been highlighted in the report.</p> <p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services noted that, as Chair of the ALBs Corporate Forum he has added lessons learnt and recommendations for ALBs from the O'Hara report onto the next agenda. The Chief Executive confirmed that additional training opportunities will be facilitated by NICON and Council members will be apprised of the dates once finalised.</p> <p>The Director of Regulation &amp; Standards highlighted that the Raising Concerns report was issued to registrants and Duty of Candour is included in the NISCC Standards, but a review will be carried out to look at what NISCC has in place to meet the recommendations coming from the O'Hara Report.</p> <p>It was suggested that a more systematic and structured approach should be taken to raise the profile of NISCC and increase the visibility of the Non-Executive Directors.</p> <p><b><i>Action: Review to be carried out on what NISCC has in place to meet recommendations from the O'Hara Report</i></b></p>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Business Matters</b>	
<b>8.1</b>	<b><i>The Inquiry into Hyponatraemia – related Deaths Report (Sir John O'Hara)</i></b>	
8.1.1	Item was discussed under Matters Arising	
<b>8.2</b>	<b><i>Finance Report - for approval</i></b>	
8.2.1	The Director of Registration & Corporate Services spoke to the Finance	

	<p>Report and requested consideration for approval by Council. The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report gave the current financial position as at the end of January 2018 as the statement for February had only been received. A small surplus of £1,652 as at the end of January;</li> <li>• It was confirmed that there will be an Apprenticeship levy impact of £9k on NISCC for 2017/18. The Apprenticeship Levy has been confirmed, following discussions with HMRC and the Department of Health (DoH), as applicable to NISCC as all HSC organisations are to be classified as one entity and therefore an annual accrual must be in the accounts. NISCC have registered the pressure of the Apprenticeship Levy with Sponsor Branch due to the lateness of the expense in the financial year and is awaiting confirmation from the DoH for RRL cover;</li> <li>• Pay is £1k underspent at month 10 (£19k underspent YTD);</li> <li>• Non pay is £41k overspent at month 10 (£128k overspent YTD) (Excludes disbursements);</li> <li>• Legal fees are overspent by £36k which is mainly due to costs coming in higher than anticipated due to a recent complex fitness to practice case;</li> <li>• The Finance Report should provide assurance of the breakeven position for this financial year. It is anticipated that RRL to meet financial pressures will be released by the end of March by the Department. All capital has been allocated and appropriate TPAs have been put in place;</li> <li>• It was confirmed that an independent audit of Fitness to Practise Committee decisions was commissioned and completed by Fieldfisher. A draft report has been received;</li> <li>• It was confirmed that the prompt payments within 10 working days compliance figure is lower than the set target of 75%. It was explained that due to the low number of monthly invoices for processing, any small delay in payment can significantly impact the overall percentage. This is to be monitored and an update given at the Council meeting in April.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: The Finance Report 2017/18 at 31 January 2018 was approved by Council</b></p>	
8.3	<b>Final Business Plan 2018/19 – for approval</b>	
8.3.1	The Policy & Operations Manager spoke to the final draft Business Plan. Apologies were noted for the incorrect email format of the draft Business	

	<p>Plan when initially circulated to Council members in advance of the meeting. The Policy &amp; Operations Manager advised that NISCC had engaged in active consultation with Council, Department of Health, staff and Trade Unions on the draft Business Plan and following feedback from Council additional information has been added to set the context around the themes. A Quality Screening exercise has been completed and an action plan drafted.</p> <p>As this is the first year of the new format of the Business Plan, this year has been used as a “testing year” to establish benchmarking and an evaluation framework which will be consolidated in 2018/19, with the outcomes aligning with the overarching Corporate Plan. The next step is for the Communication team to design and format the Business Plan. It was confirmed that various iterations of the base product will be developed for each business function. Comments were invited from members and they noted the thorough, methodical approach to the final draft of the Business Plan reflecting feedback and using clear, concise language to give clarity around the objectives and outcomes. It was highlighted that the Business Plan should be consistently reviewed throughout the year and not just at year end to ensure that it is maintained as a live document.</p> <p>Council praised the high standard of the Business Plan and thanked all those who participated in bringing the final draft to Council.</p> <p><b>Action: The final draft Business Plan 2018/19 was approved by Council</b></p>	
<b>8.4</b>	<b>Evaluation Strategy and Framework( for information)</b>	
8.4.1	<p>The Evaluation Manager spoke to the report and advised that the document details the rationale, principles and approaches underpinning the monitoring and assessment of progress towards the Strategic Outcomes in the Corporate Plan and annual Business Objectives. A summary has been included on how NISCC will report on Evaluation and disseminate the learning arising from the analysis. The following was highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Evaluation strategy is based on the current budget, but may need to be reviewed if a reduction of allocation on RRL is indicated by the Department of Health – the allocation letter should be issued by the end of March. If savings are indicated there may be elements of the strategy that NISCC cannot deliver on and an update will be given to Council;</li> <li>• It is important to give feedback to teams on what was done well and</li> </ul>	

	<p>areas for improvement. The Evaluation Manager will work closely with all teams and encourage methods of gathering feedback;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation reports will be provided for Senior Management team meetings and Council. Appendix 1 gives a sample of how the evaluation framework will be populated although this may change during the year one testing period. The percentage values for baseline and targets in the framework are highlighted in red as these areas are still to be finalised. The Evaluation Manager will confirm and report back to Council on the agreed figures;</li> <li>• Appendix 2 outlines data sources and verification against each strategic theme which helps staff to see how individual areas of work have contributed to the overall corporate achievement. Members agreed that the Evaluation framework is professional, detailed, comprehensive and captures the work of NISCC very well.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that it would be timely to provide a report on the approach and methodology to the Evaluation strategy and framework as it would give new Council members a good overview of the Corporate Plan and outcomes mapped out. Members commended the report and noted the potential for it to be a best practice model for other organisations in the future and highlighted the increased importance of effective data.</p> <p><b><i>The Evaluation Strategy and Framework was noted by Council</i></b></p>	
<b>8.5</b>	<b>Equality &amp; Disability Action Plan 2018- 2023 ( for approval)</b>	
8.5.1	<p>The Policy &amp; Operations Manager spoke to the 5 year Equality &amp; Disability Action Plan and the following was highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The previous plan expired this month and the new plan has been developed based on what has worked well over the previous 5 years. A consultation period has taken place with interested groups including Mencap, Alzheimers Society and Cedar Foundation;</li> <li>• Six objectives are set out in the plan which will be reviewed quarterly in NISCC and an update report provided to Council;</li> <li>• Engagement work will be undertaken with staff around Mental Health Awareness which is a focus for this year;</li> <li>• Any feedback received from Council members today will be reflected in the final draft plan which will then be sent through to the Equality Commission for publication.</li> </ul> <p>The Policy and Operations Manager noted that NISCC is very active around data gathering on carers through involvement with the Carers' Network and</p>	

	<p>via the 3 - 4 awareness sessions and guest speakers hosted by NISCC throughout the year. The direct nature of this engagement has proven to be a more helpful way to gather information as opposed to questionnaires.</p> <p>It was agreed that the use of technology, including Skype, could be used as a method to facilitate members of Partnership groups to attend meetings remotely, if they are not able to attend in person.</p> <p>A member drew attention to the arena of public appointments and noted that development work is needed for stakeholders around Council appointments and interviews. The Chair of the Participation Partnership advised that some members of the group are very active in presenting and would have made an excellent contribution as a Council member, but would be inexperienced around the appointment process.</p> <p>The Governance Liaison Officer noted that the Department of Health is driving better promotion around public appointments to attract people with disability.</p> <p><b>Action: Equality &amp; Disability Action Plan 2018 - 2023 was approved by Council</b></p>	
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Performance Reporting</b>	
<b>9.1</b>	<b>Q.3 Business Performance Report ( for approval)</b>	
9.1.1	<p>The Policy &amp; Operations Manager spoke to the Quarter 3 Performance Report for the period April to December 2017. It was noted that as well as the full register, key alerts and amendments to the Business Plan delivery are presented on pages 3 and 4 of the report for the attention of Council. The following was highlighted:</p> <p>3 Fitness to Practise KPIs fell below target. This has been due to a combination of a significant increase in suitability assessments for registration, in particular an increase in health declarations requiring additional medical assessment, and the closure of several long running cases involving a number of parties where there were delays in obtaining 3<sup>rd</sup> party information.</p> <p>It was agreed that the use of the word “complexity” when referring to Fitness to Practise KPIs should be reviewed to give more context as the</p>	

	<p>“complexity” could be as a result of delays around witness engagement or employer investigation.</p> <p><b>Action: Q.3 Performance Report was approved by Council</b></p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Partnership Updates</b>	
<b>10.1</b>	<b>Participation Partnership Forum unconfirmed Minutes 5 December 2017 ( for information)</b>	
10.1.1	<p>The Chair of the Participation Forum advised that a draft action plan has been drawn up for the Forum. Special mention was given, on behalf of forum members, to the Chair of Council in recognition of his work to champion the voice of service users and carers both in and outside of NISCC.</p> <p><b>Council noted the Participation Partnership Forum Unconfirmed minutes of 5 December 2017.</b></p>	
<b>10.2</b>	<b>Workforce Development unconfirmed minutes 12 January 2018 ( for information)</b>	
10.2.1	<p>Members noted the minutes of the Workforce Development Partnership and the Committee Chair noted increased engagement and attendance at the Workforce Development meetings.</p> <p><b>Council noted the Workforce Development unconfirmed minutes of 12 January 2018</b></p>	
<b>10.3</b>	<b>Registrants’ Forum unconfirmed minutes 5 February 2018 (for information)</b>	
10.3.1	<p>The Deputy Committee Chair advised that discussion had taken place on how to reinvigorate the forum as time commitment is a challenge. It was proposed that one solution may be to have a smaller core group supported by a wider engagement group and the Workforce Engagement Officer. The Communication and Engagement team will take forward work around improving engagement with registrants.</p> <p>The Deputy Chair reported that the group recognised and had discussed the challenges for staff in the residential childcare social work sector, and noted that NIPSA have discussed this with the DoH. NIASW have launched a survey to its members on violence and threats of violence to better understand the prevalence of violence and the cumulative effect of it on the workforce, and will report back to the Forum.</p>	

	<b><i>Council noted the Registrants' Forum unconfirmed minutes of 5 February 2018</i></b>	
10.4	<b><i>Professional in Practice Partnership Unconfirmed minutes 28 February 2018 ( for information)</i></b>	
10.4.1	<p>Members noted the minutes of the PiP Partnership. The Committee Chair noted that unfortunately attendance at this meeting had been affected by severe weather conditions.</p> <p><b><i>Council noted the PIP Partnership Unconfirmed minutes of 28 February 2018</i></b></p>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Governance</b>	
<b>11.1</b>	<b><i>Board Effectiveness Review and Action Plan</i></b>	
11.1.1	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services advised that the annual Board Self-Assessment Action Plan had been provided with tracked changes for members to review the proposed changes. A final draft is required by mid-May to allow for inclusion in the Governance Report. It was noted that as Internal Audit are carrying out the assessment next year a case study will be due. It was agreed that the Board Self-Assessment Action Plan will be reviewed at the next Council meeting on 23rd May.</p> <p><b><i>Action: Council members to review the updated Board Self-Assessment Action Plan at the Council meeting on 23rd May 2018</i></b></p>	
<b>11.2</b>	<b><i>Draft Board Induction Plan 2018/19 (for review)</i></b>	
11.2.1	<p>Council members reviewed the draft Council Induction Plan for new members and suggestions were invited for any additional items. The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services confirmed that the induction plan is mapped out over several months and a joint meeting of new and existing members will be scheduled.</p> <p>A reading pack has been collated and issued to new Council members to allow for advance preparation.</p> <p>A member suggested that the term “Non-Executive” should be replaced by Council member to give more clarity to the reader.</p> <p><b><i>Action: A joint On Board training session to be investigated for new and existing Council members</i></b></p>	<b>Admin</b>

11.3	<b>Audit &amp; Risk Assurance Committee unconfirmed minutes 7 February 2018 ( for information)</b>	
11.3.1	<b>The Audit &amp; Risk Assurance Committee unconfirmed minutes 7 February 2018 were approved by Council</b>	
11.4	<b>Annual Accounts Timetable (for information)</b>	
11.4.1	Council noted the Annual Accounts Timetable	
11.5	<b>Internal Audit Strategy &amp; Plan 2018 ( for approval)</b>	
11.5.1	Council approved the Internal Audit Strategy & Plan 2018	
11.6	<b>Risk Management Progress Report at January 2018 ( for information)</b>	
11.6.1	<p>The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services spoke to the Risk Management Progress Report at January 2018 and the following was highlighted:</p> <p><u>Change factors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a potential 23% increase in Fitness to Practise referrals by the end of the financial year was noted;</li> <li>• Evaluation and feedback - NISCC has been doing work to raise the profile of the Social Care workforce including hosting the Social Care Symposium.</li> </ul> <p><u>Key risk</u></p> <p>SOCRATES upgrade remains at a medium risk on the Corporate Risk register. A re run of UAT testing is in place following implementation of a new project plan after the initial UAT testing identified 200+ issues. The new go live date has been moved to the 6<sup>th</sup> July to mitigate the large social work renewal period in June.</p> <p>Following review of the Corporate Risk Register the following amendments are to be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inherent risk at Page 23 to be increased to Medium as currently too low;</li> <li>• Value of reduction and austerity environment to be added to the impact of risk at Page 28.</li> </ul> <p>Definitions to be reviewed for inconsistent terminology in the Matrix for Assessing Risk on Page 34</p> <p><b>Action: The Director of Registration &amp; Corporate Services to update the Corporate Risk Register as outlined above and circulate an updated draft to Council</b></p>	

<b>11.7</b>	<b><i>Procurement Assurance Progress Report</i></b>	
<b>11.7.1</b>	<b><i>The Procurement Assurance Progress Report was approved by Council</i></b>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
12.1	<p>As this was his last meeting, the Chair of Council thanked Council members, the Senior Management team and the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Registrants' Forum for their contribution to the organisation. Sincere thanks were extended in particular to the remaining Council members who had undertaken additional duties during the Non-Executive recruitment process.</p> <p>Members thanked the Chair for his contribution and leadership during his tenure and noted his achievements in the completion of the roll out of Registration, the new Standards of Conduct and Practice and the new Fitness to Practise model of regulation, all of which has laid a sound foundation in workforce regulation for the incoming Chair and members.</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Dates of next meeting</b>	
13.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 April 2018- Council Strategic Session</li> <li>• 23 May 2018 – Council Meeting</li> </ul>	