



## **Northern Ireland Social Care Council**

### **Minutes of Council Meeting Wednesday 9 July 2014 at 10am NISCC Offices, Millennium House, Belfast**

#### **Present**

#### **Council**

Jim Perry (Chair)  
Joe Blake  
Julie Erskine  
Trevor Spratt

Maire McMahon  
Geraldine Campbell  
Miriam Karp

#### **In Attendance**

Colum Conway (Chief Executive)  
Patricia Higgins (Director Regulation & Standards)  
Mark Bradley (Director Registration & Corporate Services)  
Sandra Stranaghan

#### **Members of the Public**

None

Item		Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Ruth Lavery and Neil Bodger, Council Members. An apology was also received Lorraine Conlon, Government Liaison Officer, DHSSPS.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
2.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Chair's Business</b>	
3.1	The Chair updated Members on progress to appoint the new Council Members. It is still anticipated to make appointments by September and the Chair will keep Members informed of progress. The Chair formally acknowledged the sterling work and commitment of those Members who will be standing down later this year.	
3.2	The Chair reported that he has invited Ms Erskine to stand in as Interim Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, in the absence of the current Chair. He also noted that Siobhan Craig, Secretary to the Council, has moved to Committee within the NISCC and formally recorded his thanks for her support.	
3.3	The Chair reported back on the recent Accountability Meeting with Mr. Sean Holland, Chief Social Services Officer, which was attended by the Chair and Chief Executive who were later joined by the Director of Registration and Corporate Services (R&CS), Director of Regulation and Standards (R&S), Finance representative from the DHSSPS and Christine Smyth.	
3.4	The Chair explained that the Chief Executive gave a presentation on the roll-out of Registration. It was agreed to deliver this presentation to Council at the workshop in September. The Chair reported that the Department expressed their appreciation of the work of Council, and that the Chair was able to provide the necessary assurances to the Department on Council's business matters.	<b>CEO</b>
3.5	The financial pressures were also discussed at the meeting, including the sustainability of further financial pressures on a small organisation with a relatively small budget.	

3.6	The Chair concluded his Report by highlighting the contribution NISCC made to the National Care Home Day with Council and staff attending a number of events across Northern Ireland.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Chief Executive's Report</b>	
4.1	The Chief Executive spoke to his tabled Report highlighting in particular, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>his meeting with CORU following which it was agreed to have a joint meeting in February 2015 (to coincide with Council's meeting);</li> <li>the HSC Workforce Planning workshop being facilitated by the DHSSPS. The Chief Executive indicated that he is pressing for the wider inclusion of social care.</li> </ul>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Unconfirmed Minutes of Council Meeting held on Wednesday 30 April 2014</b>	
5.1	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed off by the Chair.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
6.1	The following items were considered – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1 <i>SfCD License</i> – this has now been brought to Council's attention;</li> <li>9.1.9 <i>Audit Committee</i> – The Director of R&amp;CS indicated that there will be a further meeting of the Audit &amp; Governance Committee in August to review the annual self-assessment checklist, the new Risk Register and Assurance Framework;</li> <li>14.3.2 <i>Harassment, Bullying and Intimidation Policy</i> – the Policy has been updated to reflect Council's comments.</li> </ul>	Director R&CS  Director R&CS
<b>7.</b>	<b>NISCC Standing Orders</b>	
7.1	The Director of R&CS explained that the Standing Orders have been revised to take account of the publication of a separate, and more detailed, Code of Conduct and Code of Accountability (agenda item no. 8 below) which were endorsed by the Audit and Governance Committee at their last meeting.	
7.2	Council endorsed the revised Standing Orders subject to amending the timescales for producing papers. It was agreed that papers will be sent to Council 7 working days in advance of Council. It was noted that exceptional circumstances will still apply from time to time. The revised Standing Orders will be re-issued to Council.	<b>SS</b>

<b>8.</b>	<b>Code of Conduct and Code of Accountability</b>	
8.1	The Director of R&CS introduced the paper and explained that following a recommendation from Internal Audit and as an output from the Board self-assessment it was agreed to produce a separate Code of Conduct and Code of Accountability. The Code had been produced in line with the Department's guidance, modified where necessary to take account of the NISCC's structure. The Audit and Governance Committee endorsed the Code at their last meeting.	
8.2	Council endorsed the Code of Conduct and Code of Accountability.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Protecting the Public – Report of the Regulation Activity 2013/14</b>	
9.1	The Director of R&S spoke to the paper and drew Members' attention to the volume of activity in relation to applications, complaints, assessments and PRTL. The Director of R&S also advised that an audit of Social Care Managers is now being carried out, and there have been some outstanding examples of learning evidenced.	
9.2	Council welcomed the Report and thanked officers for their work in this area. A Member noted the implications on the workforce and for the Degree course on the trends being picked up in relation to AYE. The Director of R&S agreed that this will be kept under review as there can be a number of factors impacting on workforce capacity including the economic climate and the out-workings of Transforming Your Care.	
9.3	A Member queried whether the number of males registered had been reviewed against the number of complaints against male Registrants. The Director of R&S agreed to review this to establish whether there are any gender specific issues arising.	<b>Director R&amp;S</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Report on Regulation of Social Work Education and Training 2013-14</b>	
10.1	The Director of R&S introduced the paper and outlined the key findings in relation to the Degree in Social Work, the Social Work Degree Partnership, Designated Practice Learning Providers and Post Qualifying Programmes.	
10.2	Council welcomed the paper and agreed it was very informative. It was noted that the Chief Executive of NISCC and the Chair of the NIDSWP meet every six months. The annual monitoring carried out by NISCC has provided assurances in relation to the quality of education and training programmes both at qualifying and post-qualifying levels. Council endorsed the paper.	

<b>11.</b>	<b>Q1 Business Plan Review</b>	
11.1	It was agreed to review the timing of the quarterly reports to balance the timeliness of these reports. It was agreed to re-issue the Quarter 1 Report to Council by end w/c 14 July with a view to reviewing its content at the September workshop.	<b>SMT</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>NISCC Efficiency Plan 2014/15 - 2015/16</b>	
12.1	The Director of R&CS explained that the Efficiency Plan is to be submitted to the Department and reflects the cash related savings delivered to date. He outlined how productivity savings would be realized through smarter use of ICT to enable resources to be re-deployed to other functions including conduct and the further roll-out of registration.	
12.2	The Director of R&CS advised that this year's budgetary allocation has not yet been confirmed and we are therefore working off an indicative allocation. He stressed that if the budgetary position changed from the working assumption this would be brought to Council's attention.	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Internal Audit Annual report and Assurance Statement</b>	
13.1	The Interim Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the paper and explained the assurance provided was a positive reflection of the work carried out in NISCC including attaining a substantive assurance in relation to Risk Management.	
<b>14.</b>	<b>BSO Shared Services Briefing Paper</b>	
14.1	The Interim Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee explained that the paper was presented for information. Council noted the paper.	
<b>15.</b>	<b>NISCC Corporate Risk Register 2013/14</b>	
15.1	The Director of R&CS stated that the Risk Register for 2013/14 has been updated and advised that a new Risk Register is being developed in a new format which will be shared with Council at a separate meeting in August. Council endorsed the Risk Register.	
<b>16.</b>	<b>NISCC Assurance Framework 2013/14</b>	
16.1	The Director of R&CS advised that the Assurance Framework for 2013/14 has been updated and that a new Framework will be tabled to Council at a meeting in August. Council endorsed the Framework.	

<b>17.</b>	<b>NISCC Annual Report and Accounts 2013/14</b>	
17.1	The Director of R&CS advised that the Annual Report and Accounts were now finalised and NISCC had broken even with a very small underspend. Council endorsed the Report and thanked all those involved in producing the Report.	
<b>18.</b>	<b>Unconfirmed Minutes of Audit &amp; Governance Committee Meeting 28 May 2014 and 24 June 2014</b>	
18.1	The Interim Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the minutes of the last two meetings, and advised that the minutes of 28 May were now confirmed. Council noted the minutes.	
<b>19.</b>	<b>Equality Progress Annual Report 2013/14</b>	
19.1	The Director of R&CS indicated that the Equality Progress Annual Report is to be sent to the Equality Commission by end August. He advised that NISCC had been working to appoint a person with a disability as part of a work placement programme and had actively participated in Epilepsy Week. He also advised that a Disability Champion has been appointed.	
19.2	The Director of R&CS advised that the outstanding action from 2013/14 (to review the Complaints Policy) will be taken forward during 2014/15.	
19.3	Council endorsed the Report.	
<b>20.</b>	<b>Unconfirmed Minutes of the Participation Partnership Meeting held on 27 May 2014</b>	
20.1	The Chair of the Participation Partnership presented the minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2014 and advised that four new members in total have been appointed to the Partnership. Council noted the minutes.	
<b>21.</b>	<b>Unconfirmed Minutes of the PQ Partnership Meeting held on 2 June 2014</b>	
21.1	The Chair of the PQ Partnership presented the minutes and highlighted the work of the three sub-groups. The Chair of the Partnership advised that it is planned to launch the new 'Professional in Practice' at the Social Work awards ceremony in October 2014 and that he will chair the event. There will be a briefing session for Council Members in advance.	
21.2	A Member queried the level of representation on the Partnership and its	<b>Chair of</b>

	sub-Committees. The Chair of the Partnership agreed to review this to ensure it was fully reflective. Council noted the minutes.	<b>PQ P'Ship</b>
<b>22.</b>	<b>Unconfirmed Minutes of the Professional Issues Strategic Review Group held on 4 June 2014</b>	
22.1	The Chair of the Group presented the minutes and noted an amendment to the attendance. The Chair of the Group stated that the Group has a role in reviewing policy issues/papers before they are presented to Council.	
22.2	It was noted that work is being progressed on reviewing the impact of the Francis Report on NISCC as a regulator. This work is being taken forward together with other similar governance and oversight publications. It is anticipated that the outcome will be a live document which will be reviewed by Council on a regular basis to enable them to monitor progress. The draft paper will be brought to Council at their next meeting.	<b>SMT</b>
22.3	Council noted the minutes.	
<b>23.</b>	<b>Review of the Degree in Social Work and Readiness to Practise Report</b>	
23.1	Paul Kearney joined the meeting. The Director of R&S introduced the papers and explained that the Readiness to Practise Report was carried out in advance of the Review of the Degree, and that the five year Review of the Degree had been a root and branch review. The Director of R&S indicated that the outcome of the Review confirmed that high quality training is delivered and there are strong regional partnerships which are working well. While there are a few areas for improvement these do not give cause for concern.	
23.2	Council welcomed the papers and indicated that they were very informative and accessible. A few suggestions were made for consideration in the Reports – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross reference the two papers so that the key findings of the Readiness to Practise Report are reflected in the Review of the Degree Report (e.g. trends/figures on AYE);</li> <li>• Reflect on the language in Readiness to Practise paper (e.g. page 43 reference to 'human trafficking');</li> <li>• Feature as a recommendation 'engaging in research';</li> <li>• Consider including a statement qualifying the statistics and trends in relation to AYE;</li> <li>• Expand on who the hard to reach service users and carer groups</li> </ul>	

	<p>are (page 19 of Review of Degree Report);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making specific acknowledgement of the work of service users and carers in supporting the Degree;</li> <li>• The curriculum should be consistent with the Social Work Strategy (page 38, Review of the Degree);</li> <li>• Reference to resilience of Social Workers should be changed to 'capability'.</li> </ul>	
23.3	Subject to these amendments, Council was content to endorse the papers.	
23.4	Council thanked Paul Kearney for his work on these papers and wished him well for his retirement.	
<b>24.</b>	<b>Any other Business</b>	
24.1	No other business was raised.	
<b>25.</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 8 October 2014</b>	

**Jim Perry**  
**Chair**