

**Northern Ireland Social Care Council  
Registrants' Forum  
Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 10:30am  
NISCC Offices, Belfast**

**Present**

Roberta Magee (Chair)  
Dillon McMahon (Positive Futures)

Damien Maguire (BHSCT)

**Apologies**

Loughlinn Duffy (SHSCT)

Andre McKeown (NISCC)

**In Attendance**

Patricia Higgins (Director of Regulation and Standards)

Brenda Horgan (Professional Advisor)

Catherine Maguire (Professional Advisor)

Jordan Adair (Minute Taker)

Item	Agenda	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcomes and Apologies</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Loughlinn Duffy and Andre McKeown.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	
2.1	The minutes from the previous meeting held on Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
3.1	The Director of Regulation and Standards confirmed that the Launch of Employers Standards was hosted by NISCC on Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> September. The event was well received. Members welcomed the revised Employer Standards, however they noted their concern about the continued cuts to budgets and the impact of this on the delivery of services and on employers' ability to meet standards.	
3.2	<u>Launch of Raising Concerns Document</u> The Director of Regulation and Standards noted some difficulty in securing a date for the launch of the document due to diary commitments. She stated that she hoped a date would be secured as soon as possible and asked members to liaise with their	

	respective organisations.	
3.3	<p><u>"What I need from my Social Care Worker" – Catherine Maguire</u>  Ms Maguire shared a draft of the leaflet "What I need from my Social Care Worker", and advised Members that the working group had met a couple of times to design the leaflet. Members agreed that they liked the leaflet and they felt that the themes were well thought out. They noted that the phrase "behave well" suggests that social care workers do not behave well while at work and recommended that it should be changed to "provide good care and carry out their job properly". They also suggested some amendments to the layout of the leaflet. Members stated that they look forward to seeing the final draft.</p>	
3.4	<p><u>GAIN Update – Brenda Horgan</u>  Ms Horgan gave a short background on guidelines NISCC have developed for social care managers, which was funded through the Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN). The guidelines focus on helping social care employers and managers optimise good behaviours and to enable them to get the best out of their staff. Ms Horgan stated that further work will be undertaken to produce the guidelines in an interactive format. Members suggested a change to some of the language used, for example, the word "capability" suggests that registrants are not able or not good enough. Ms. Horgan agreed to make necessary changes and circulate the document to Members.</p>	
3.5	<p><u>Joint NISCC/CORU Meeting</u>  The Director of Regulation and Standards asked Members if they would be interested in participating in a joint meeting with registrants of CORU – a proposal that came from the joint NISCC Council/CORU meeting. Members expressed their interest in an information sharing event.</p> <p>Members were also informed about the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) conference which will be held in Dublin from 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> July 2018. NISCC and NIASW are considering hosting a joint fringe event with colleagues in RoI to share information about what social work practice in the North and South of Ireland.</p>	
3.6	<p><u>Joint Meeting with Social Work Students</u>  Ms Maguire informed Members that QUB and UU have agreed to inform her when student representatives have been elected. A meeting with the Registrants Forum will then be arranged.</p>	
3.7	<p><u>2 Child Tax Credit</u>  Members discussed the introduction of this new policy and the issues faced by social workers in complying with their professional responsibilities. Members noted that BASW and NIASW have raised their concerns with Government.</p>	

4	<p><b>Social Care Co-ordinators – Damien Maguire</b></p>	
	<p>Mr Maguire informed Members that the role of social care co-ordinators was changing and queried whether this group of staff should be registered. The Director of Regulation and Standards confirmed that that they were not one of the groups under compulsory registration and stated that NISCC is undertaking a piece of work to scope what other groups of social care staff may be eligible for registration in the future. She agreed to include this group within the scoping work and seek clarification as to the relevance of registration.</p>	
5	<p><b>Membership and models of engagement</b></p>	
	<p>The Director of Regulation and Standards noted that some members of the Forum had left due to changes in job roles and work commitments. She stated that NISCC has commissioned a piece of work, based on a literature review, to look at best practice in Partnership work which would form the basis of discussion with the Forum about future models of registrant engagement. This work will report in March.</p> <p>In the interim Member's felt it would be important to seek to replace those who have left.</p>	
6	<p><b>Update from Forum Members</b></p>	
	<p>Mr Maguire informed Members about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent information produced by HSC Trusts has shown that sickness absence figures in Social Work appear to be showing a high incidence of reported issues related to mental health. He agreed to circulate information that he has received.</li> <li>• NIPSA have concerns about the conditions staff are working under in residential childcare. It is their view that a fundamental root and branch review needs to be undertaken of residential childcare services.</li> </ul>	DM
	<p>Mr McMahon noted that staff recruitment and retention within his organisation was an ongoing issue. He commented on the difficulty of finding suitably qualified social care staff for full time posts.</p>	
7	<p><b>Matters to be raised with council</b></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers standards and members concerns about continued budget cuts.</li> <li>• Recent information about sickness absence in social work and a high incidence of reported issues related to mental health.</li> <li>• Concerns about the pressures facing staff who work in residential child care services.</li> </ul>	

<b>8</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	Members were informed of the upcoming event, "Social Work Matters" being held on Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> December in Malone, Belfast. The Director of Regulation and Standards confirmed that an invitation to the event will be sent to Members.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Dates of Future Meetings</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017 @ 10:00 – 12:30</li><li>• Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018 @ 10:30 – 12:30</li><li>• Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018 @ 10:30 – 12:30</li></ul>	

Signed:



**Roberta Magee, Chair of Registrants' Forum  
Northern Ireland Social Care Council**