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**Northern Ireland Social Care Council
Registrants' Committee
Confirmed Minutes**

**16 June 2009 at 10.30am
In Grosvenor House, Belfast**

Present

Brian Smyth (Chair) (NIPSA)
Damien Campbell (UNISON)
Janette Ferguson (UNISON)

Eithne Darragh (BASW)
Damien Maguire (NIPSA)
Sam Murphy (NIPSA)

Apologies

Sharon Woods (Deputy Chair) (UNISON)
Geraldine Mullan (NIPSA)

Frank Carter (Student Representative)
Paul O'Donnell (UNISON)

In Attendance

Patricia Higgins (Director of Registration) Andre McKeown (Communications Officer)
Peggy Carlile (Secretary/Administrator) (Note Taker)

Action

(1) Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Sharon Woods, Frank Carter, Geraldine Mullan and Paul O'Donnell.

(2) Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 13 May 2009

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

(3) Matters Arising

3.1 Codes of Practice – The Chair noted that this should remain on the agenda as a standing item. The Director of Registration stated that promotional materials in relation to the Codes of Practice had been created for a domiciliary care registration pilot. She will investigate

how much it would cost to produce some of the materials, either through a printer, or in-house. It was agreed that the Director of Registration and the Communications Officer would draft an article for the July newsletter and it would be circulated to Committee Members for comments and additions.

**Director of
Registration
/Comms
Officer**

The Director of Registration reported that she has not been able to meet with the Participation Group as yet, and therefore she has been unable to further work on the strategy. However, she hopes to meet with them over the summer and will bring the strategy to the next meeting.

**Director of
Registration**

3.2 Compulsion – The Director of Registration gave a brief update on this matter. The DHSSPS is hoping to issue the consultation at the end of next month for a 12 week consultation period. She noted that the Minister agreed that the consultation will focus on the phasing in of compulsion. The DHSSPS will be consulting on the following issues:-

- Timing and staging of compulsion;
- Six month grace period;
- Method of enforcement;
- Whether registration of social care workers should be extended to five years;
- Whether social care managers should remain on a three year registration period.

The Director of Registration urged members to encourage organisations to reply, and noted that a copy of the consultation document would be sent to the Committee.

A Committee Member queried what the procedure was for complaints made against unregistered social care workers. The Director of Registration noted that the Council held this information on those people who are eligible for registration in the future. The Council notifies the individual that the complaint had been made, and provides an opportunity for the person to give additional information on the matter. She stated that complaints made against unregistered social care workers would be further investigated when they apply for registration. She noted that whilst employers were not required to inform the NISCC of complaints about unregistered social care workers, the RQIA requests that employers do so.

(4) Assessed Year in Employment

4.1 The Director of Registration noted that the closing date for the AYE survey was Friday 12 June. She reported that all surveys, with the exception of two received Monday 15 June, had been inputted into a spreadsheet to assist with analysis. She noted that a much more detailed analysis and cross referencing would need to be carried out on the data. The Director of Registration tabled a paper containing a brief, broad overview of the data as well as a copy of the questionnaire containing the raw data from the survey.

4.2 The Director of Registration went through the analysis with the Committee. The Committee discussed the results, and noted concerns regarding the caseload of AYEs, particularly in Family and Childcare. It was felt that clear guidelines were needed for employers. The Director of Registration stated that the RIT guidance was being reviewed.

4.3 The Director of Registration reported that she and Alison Kavanagh, Professional Adviser, will be meeting with the DHSSPS tomorrow to discuss the various AYE surveys. They will discuss the Circular and recommend the issuance of further Guidance. A Committee Member requested that the Registrants' Committee have a role in the discussions between the NISCC and the DHSSPS as this was a crucially important issue. The Director of Registration will liaise with the DHSSPS in relation to this.

**Director of
Registration**

4.4 The Director of Registration noted that the information will also be provided to Council, and she will provide a briefing at the Registration and Regulation of the Workforce Committee tomorrow. She will write a report over the summer for the September Committee meeting, pulling together information from the range of AYE surveys carried out by the NISCC and the DHSSPS. She also noted that she will be seeking to progress issues over the summer with the DHSSPS.

**Director of
Registration**

(5) Engagement with Registrants

5.1 The Communications Officer noted that at the last meeting she agreed to do a mock-up of the NISCC website with additions made for the Registrants' Committee. She handed out printouts of the website with the proposed changes and went through them with the Committee.

5.2 The Committee discussed the mock-up, and agreed the following changes:-

- Email message – That the sentence on what the Committee can deal with ends after “Conduct Hearing”. As well, “BASW or student representative” be added to the list of people to contact.
- Website changed to “Committee meets regularly” rather than “monthly”.
- Line added to page that all information received would be treated confidentially.

5.3 The Committee endorsed the mock-up and agreed that the website and email needed to go live as soon as possible. A summary of emails received is to go to all Committee Members the week before the next Committee meeting. It was also agreed that the website and email would be mentioned in the July Newsletter. The Communications Officer is to report back to the Committee on the number of hits the Registrants' Committee webpage receives.

**Comms
Officer**

(6) Roadshow – 7 July 2009

6.1 The Committee briefly discussed the following issues which may arise at the Roadshow:-

- Caseloads and caseload weighting;
- Guidance from NISCC;
- Concerns about professional supervision;
- AYE;
- Comprehensive spending review;
- Resource issues/PRTL;
- Codes of Practice;
- Unallocated cases.

6.2 Committee Members queried what the NISCC's stance was on a number of issues such as caseloads and the Comprehensive Spending Review, the RIT Guidance and Laming. The Director of Registration noted that there were some issues the Council could comment on, and some that they could not. She noted that there needed to be a clear understanding on the roles and boundaries of Council, BASW, and Trade Unions. It was noted by the BASW representative that BASW needed to be stronger in NI, as it was their position to provide a response to professional social work issues. The Committee agreed to raise the issue of roles and boundaries at the joint meeting with Council.

6.3 It was felt by a Committee Member that the Codes of Practice for Employers needed to be looked at, updated and made a statutory requirement. The Director of Registration reported that the GSCC were setting up a meeting with the various stakeholders to look at the recommendations of the Laming Report regarding the Employers' Code. She would advise the Committee of the outcome of that meeting.

6.4 The Chair stated that he realised that communication with registrants can be resource intensive, but he felt it was important to have timely responses to issues such as Laming.

6.5 It was agreed that the Communications Officer would produce some intermediate posters for the Roadshow. It was noted that Damien Campbell, Eithne Darragh and Frank Carter would be unable to attend the Roadshow.

**Comms
Officer**

(7) Laming Report and Department of Health's Response

7.1 It was agreed that, as the Laming Report and the Department of Health's response would require more time for discussion, it would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

(8) Joint Meeting with Council

8.1 The Committee agreed the following subjects for their discussion with Council:-

- Role and boundaries of Council, Committee, Trade Unions and BASW;
- Codes of Practice;
- Resource implications for communications with registrants and service users;
- Registrants' Roadshow;
- AYE.

(9) Workforce Development Committee

9.1 The Chair reported that he attended the Workforce Development Committee in his capacity as Chair of the Registrants' Committee. He recommended that members read the minutes of the WDC and stated that it would be worthwhile to attend. It was noted that the WDC was made up of Council Members and non-Council Members.

9.2 The Director of Registration noted that the Committee may wish to ask the Director of Education and Training to attend a future Committee meeting to discuss the Education and Training business plan.

(10) Any Other Business

10.1 BASW Member – It was noted that Ciaran Traynor will be the new representative from BASW on the Registrants' Committee. Eithne Darragh to notify him of the Roadshow on 7 July.

**Eithne
Darragh**

10.2 Conduct Hearings – It was noted that a Committee Member attended the Conduct Hearing held this morning. The Committee Member felt that it was a worthwhile experience and recommended that all Committee Members attend a Conduct Hearing if possible. The Communications Officer confirmed that the Committee Members were on the notification mailing list. She noted that Conduct Hearings could at times be cancelled before the normal seven day notification; however she can send an informal notification to the Committee to hold the date of the next Conduct Hearing.

10.3 Registration & Conduct Committee Members – It was noted that there had been four days of interviews for Registration and Conduct Committee Members and that 31 people were appointed. The Chair thanked Damian Maguire for taking the time to assist with the interviews. The Director of Registration noted that Human Resources would notify the candidates next week. She noted that there had been a lack of social care candidates for the position, and stated that there was a need to carry out a further targeted recruitment exercise.

(11) Date and Time of Next Meeting

- 11.1 Committee Members were reminded that the joint meeting with Council is Tuesday 23 June at 12.00pm, and the Registrants Roadshow is Tuesday 7 July at 1.45pm. The next full meeting of the Committee will be Thursday 3 September 2009 at 10.30am.

Brian Smyth, Chair of Registrants' Committee
Northern Ireland Social Care Council