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

**03 September 2009 at 10.30am  
In Grosvenor House, Belfast**

**Present**

Brian Smyth (Chair) (NIPSA)  
Damien Campbell (UNISON)  
Damien Maguire (NIPSA)  
Geraldine Mullan (NIPSA)

Janette Ferguson (UNISON)  
Sam Murphy (NIPSA)  
Sharon Woods (Deputy Chair) (Unison)

**Apologies**

Ciaran Traynor (BASW)

Paul O'Donnell (UNISON)

**In Attendance**

Patricia Higgins (Director of Registration)  
Alison Kavanagh (Professional Adviser)  
Peggy Carlile (Secretary/Administrator) (Note Taker)

Glenn Houston (Chief Executive, RQIA)  
Jaimie Harvey (Registration Officer)

**Action**

**(1) Welcome and Apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair noted apologies from Paul O'Donnell and Ciaran Traynor. He welcomed Glenn Houston, Alison Kavanagh and Jaimie Harvey to the meeting.

**(2) Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 16 June 2009**

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

**(3) Matters Arising**

- 3.1 Item 5.3 – The Director of Registration advised that the webpage on the Registrants' Committee is on the website. There have been no

emails as yet to the Committee. The Communications Officer will present statistics at the next meeting to show the number of times the webpage has been accessed. Committee Members were also provided with a copy of the draft newsletter and requested to forward any feedback by Friday.

3.2 Item 7 – Laming Report – The Director of Registration proposed that a lunchtime meeting be held after the next Committee meeting on 27 October. It was agreed that the Committee Meeting would start at 10.00am and finish at 1.30pm to allow discussions on the Laming Report and the Social Work Task Force Interim Report.

3.3 Item 10.1 – BASW Member – It was noted that Ciaran Traynor is to be the new BASW member.

**(4) RQIA – Presentation by Glenn Houston, Chief Executive**

4.1 Glenn Houston, Chief Executive of the RQIA gave a presentation to the Committee on the background, mission and operation of the RQIA.

4.2 The Committee held a brief question and answer session with Mr Houston, after which the Chair thanked him for his presentation.

**(5) The Assessed Year in Employment – Key Themes from Reviews**

5.1 The Director of Registration introduced the paper and went through the themes for the Committee. She noted that they included issues in respect of supervision, induction, professional development and workload.

5.2 She advised that the DHSSPS had held a workshop earlier this week, with the assistance of the NISCC, and that there had been a full attendance. She noted the workshop discussed and agreed the AYE Standards that the NISCC are proposing for employers. In relation to supervision, the workshop agreed that for an AYE this should be every two weeks for the first 3-6 months and then monthly where this is appropriate. The DHSSPS will include compliance with the NISCC Standards in the revised Circular. It is also proposed that the Circular will require ten development days for all AYE's and that all will be required to have a Personal Development Plan.

5.3 The NISCC and the DHSSPS are meeting to discuss feedback from the workshop, and finalise the content of the Circular, Standards and Guidance.

5.4 It was felt that the themes in the report could be applied throughout social work, and not just the AYE.

5.5 The Director of Registration indicated that a further 'Best Practice' workshop could be held, resources permitting, based around the new DHSSPS Circular and NISCC Guidance.

**(6) Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) – Report on Consultation Responses**

- 6.1 Alison Kavanagh, Professional Adviser, introduced the paper and highlighted the conclusions and recommendations on pages 10 and 11. She noted the concerns of respondents about the pressures of work and the ability of employers to release social workers for training. She advised that the recommendations had been agreed by the Registration and Regulation of the Workforce Committee and would be going to Council next week. The NISCC has agreed an implementation date with the DHSSPS of April 2010. The NISCC will send information about the new requirements to employers and registrants in November 2009.
- 6.2 Damien Maguire expressed disappointment regarding the acceptance of some of the recommendations. He also felt that the responses from organisations were given the same weight as those from individuals. He felt that there are major problems with people being able to undertake training. He also highlighted NIPSA's response to the consultation, and the overreliance of employers on AYE staff in Family and Child Care.
- 6.3 The Director of Registration stated that the majority of registrants successfully completed their PRTL. She also noted that the NISCC has been told by employers, including their training staff, that the requirements for those who have just completed the AYE are achievable. She noted that registration can be used as a vehicle for emphasising the importance of training for first line managers.
- 6.4 Damien Maguire noted issues in relation to Senior Practitioners and the AYE. He advised that there was a lack of acknowledgement on the level of difficulty on the ground, and stressed the need for collaborative efforts by the DHSSPS, NISCC, RQIA, the trade unions and BASW. The Director of Registration agreed the need to work in collaboration, and stated that the DHSSPS was working proactively with the NISCC to improve the AYE.
- 6.5 The Professional Adviser noted that those affected by the requirement to achieve two modules of the NI Specific Award will have until 2014. The Director of Registration stated that she will be meeting with the RQIA to discuss the new PRTL proposals and stated that the Professional Adviser is working with RQIA on the framework for their inspection regarding supervision.

**(7) Roadshows**

- 7.1 The Director of Registration and the Deputy Chair gave a brief update on the roadshow held on 7 July. It was noted that future roadshows may benefit from having a more formal agenda.

7.2 It was suggested for the next roadshow that a presentation is given on the role and function of the NISCC, and the work of the Registrants' Committee. The Committee should identify key issues for discussion at the roadshow. This roadshow should then take the form of a workshop and table discussions on issues should be facilitated by Committee and Council Members.

7.3 The Director of Registration advised that the date for the next roadshow is 19 January in the Western Trust area. The Committee briefly discussed venues, and it was suggested that Omagh may be a suitable venue for the roadshow. It was agreed that this was to go onto the agenda for the next meeting for further discussion.

**(8) DHSSPS Compulsion Consultation**

8.1 The Director of Registration advised Committee Members that the DHSSPS is consulting on Compulsion of Registration for social care workers. She requested that Committee Members alert their constituencies and noted that each organisation (NIPSA, Unison and BASW) would need to respond to the consultation.

**(9) Role and Boundaries of Council, Committee, Trade Unions and BASW**

9.1 The Director of Registration noted that this was discussed at the last Council Meeting. She advised that it was proposed that a working group be formed of two members each from NIPSA, Unison and BASW, to include one from the Registrants' Committee and an officer from the organisation, along with the Chair and Chief Executive of NISCC. The Committee agreed with this proposal.

**(10) Codes of Practice**

10.1 The Director of Registration apologised that the Communications Strategy was taking longer than expected. She noted that the Communications Officer met with the Participation Group last month to discuss the Codes of Practice, and will also attend their next meeting. The Director of Registration will bring a draft Communications Strategy to the Committee in November/December. She noted that there was an article in the forthcoming newsletter about the Codes of Practice as well as an online survey which would go live later in September.

**Comms  
Officer  
Director of  
Registration**

**(11) Any Other Business**

11.1 The Director of Registration updated the Committee on the events in the GSCC. She noted that the GSCC had a significant backlog in conduct referrals which had not been risk assessed, and as a result their Chief Executive has been suspended. She reported that the NISCC has advised the DHSSPS that the NISCC has no conduct backlog and that all referrals received are risk assessed. The

Director of Registration stated that these events may have implications for the four Councils' further development work in relation to the OSCAR registration system, as the GSCC financial resources may be prioritised towards their conduct business. The four Councils' development of online application forms may need to be delayed for this financial year.

**(12) Date and Time of Next Meeting**

- 12.1 The next meeting will take place on 27 October 2009 at 10.00am with discussions regarding the Laming Report and the Social Work Task Force Interim Report to follow over lunch.

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