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

**04 March 2009 at 10.30am
In Millennium House, Belfast**

Present

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

Damien Campbell (UNISON)
Damien Maguire (NIPSA)

Apologies

Paul O'Donnell (UNISON)
Eithne Darragh (BASW)
Sam Murphy (NIPSA)

Frank Carter (Student Representative)
Brian Smyth (Chair) (NIPSA)

In Attendance

Patricia Higgins (Director of Registration)

Peggy Carlile (Secretary/Administrator)
(Note Taker)

Action

(1) Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Deputy Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the following apologies:-

Brian Smyth (Chair), Eithne Darragh, Paul O'Donnell and Frank Carter.

(2) Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 19 February 2009

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

(3) Matters Arising

- 3.1 Joint Council/Registrants' Committee Meetings – The Director of Registration reported that the Council Chair has proposed that the first joint meeting be held on 23 June and the second in the latter part of the year with the new Council Chair. The Committee agreed that the date was suitable. The Director of Registration will confirm the date with the Chief Executive and advise the Council Chair.

**Director of
Registration**

(4) NISCC Business Plan

- 4.1 Copies of the latest draft of the Business Plan 2009/2010 and the final draft of the Corporate Plan 2009/2012 were given to Committee Members for their information. The Director of Registration informed the Committee that the Corporate Plan was a three year plan which the NISCC were required by the DHSSPS to write each year, and forms the basis for the yearly Business Plan. This year the Business Plan for 2009 is a more strategic document than it has previously been; the Operational Plan, which is currently being written, will contain the detailed workplan for the organisation.

(5) Workstreams/Subgroups

- 5.1 The Director of Registration informed the Committee Members of recent and current working groups of the Registration and Regulation of the Workforce Committee, such as the Fees Working Group. She will identify what working groups exist in the Education and Training Directorate and report back to the Committee at the next meeting.
- 5.2 The Committee briefly discussed working groups and what involvement Members would have. The Director of Registration confirmed that Council will be asking the members of the Registrants' Committee for nominations for future working groups, where appropriate.

**Director of
Registration**

(6) Promotion of Codes of Practice

- 6.1 The Deputy Chair noted that promotion of the Codes of Practice had been briefly discussed at the last meeting. The Committee briefly discussed the issue. It was felt that many registrants do not use the Codes of Practice in their day to day jobs. The Director of Registration noted that the four Care Councils had undertaken a 'light touch' review of the Codes. This review had found that the Codes were fit for purpose, but there was a widespread lack of knowledge of the Codes.
- 6.2 The Director of Registration stated that she had agreed to do an Action Plan on the promotion of the Codes of Practice for the Registration and Regulation of the Workforce Committee. She will bring a brief paper to the next meeting of the Registrants' Committee for discussion. This will help to inform the Action Plan.

**Director of
Registration**

6.3 The Director of Registration noted that the Council had worked closely with employers in preparation for the registration of domiciliary care workers. This included the development of promotional material for the Codes of Practice. The Committee briefly discussed how best to promote the Codes, i.e. roadshows, posters, etc. However, the Director of Registration informed Members that the NISCC would need to request additional resources from the DHSSPS to implement a promotional strategy.

(7) Assessed Year in Employment

7.1 The Committee briefly discussed the Assessed Year in Employment. The Director of Registration noted that the NISCC is the only Council which requires the AYE. The SSSC requires newly qualified social workers to complete additional PRTL in their first year.

7.2 The Director of Registration noted that the NISCC has a responsibility to ensure consistency across employers. A review of the AYE was recently carried out, and a seminar on Best Practice held last summer. She noted that the NISCC was aware of the issues of supervision and the allocation of work to newly qualified social workers. A Committee Member felt that it was imperative that a standard for AYE is set and employers held to that standard.

7.3 Concerns were raised about the amount of paperwork that some Trusts require both newly qualified social workers and managers to undertake to complete the AYE, as well as the time needed to fill this paperwork out. Concerns were also noted about the amount of misinformation which was circulating in relation to the AYE.

7.4 Committee Members also raised concerns about supervision and induction. It was felt that supervision should be at least one and a half to two hours per session, and held every two weeks, for the first three to four months initially, and then as needed.

7.5 The Director of Registration stated that she was aware of a number of issues around the AYE. She stated that the Council are going to survey all AYE registrants in relation to the following:-

**Director of
Registration**

- Supervision – frequency and length;
- Caseloads;
- Training – amount and when;
- Where they work.

She will also raise the issue of new guidelines for employers with the RQIA and the DHSSPS.

**Director of
Registration**

7.6 The Committee noted that they were supportive of the survey and felt that it would be helpful to note that support in covering correspondence.

(8) Roadshows

8.1 The Deputy Chair noted that the Registrants' Committee were interested in the roadshows and when these would take place.

8.2 The Director of Registration reported that she had spoken with the Council Chair and the Chief Executive in relation to the format of the proposed roadshows. It was suggested that a Council Meeting be held in the morning, with a joint open forum in the afternoon with the Council and the Registrants' Committee. This would be held up to four times per year in different areas of Northern Ireland to allow registrant participation.

8.3 The Director of Registration will discuss this in more detail with the Chief Executive and report back to the Committee at the next meeting. **Director of Registration**

(9) Communication with Students

9.1 In the absence of Frank Carter, Student Representative, this matter has been deferred to the next meeting.

(10) Any Other Business

10.1 None.

(11) Date of Next Meeting

11.1 The next meeting will be Tuesday 7 April 2009 at 10.30am.

Sharon Woods
Deputy Chair of Registrants' Committee
Northern Ireland Social Care Council