



Northern Ireland Social Care Council
7th Floor, Millennium House
19-25 Great Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 7AQ

Tel: 028 9041 7600
Fax: 028 9041 7601
Textphone: 028 9023 9340
Web: www.niscc.info

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

**13 May 2009 at 10.30am
In Millennium House, Belfast**

Present

Brian Smyth (Chair) (NIPSA)
Damien Campbell (UNISON)
Damien Maguire (NIPSA)
Sam Murphy (NIPSA)

Sharon Woods (Deputy Chair) (UNISON)
Frank Carter (Student Representative)
Geraldine Mullan (NIPSA)

Apologies

Eithne Darragh (BASW)
Paul O'Donnell (UNISON)

Janette Ferguson (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 Deputy Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Eithne Darragh, Janette Ferguson and Paul O'Donnell.

(2) Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 07 April 2009

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

(3) Matters Arising

3.1 Assessed Year in Employment (AYE) – The Director of Registration reported that the AYE Survey has been sent out with a closing date of 12 June. She noted that the DHSSPS had been happy with the

survey, with only minor additions. She requested that the Committee encourage those on the AYE to complete the survey and return it. Committee Members welcomed the news, and agreed to encourage and endorse AYE's to return the survey.

- 3.2 The Director of Registration noted that the Chief Executive had written to employers asking them to encourage their employees to return the survey,
- 3.3 The Director of Registration reported that both she and Alison Kavanagh, Professional Adviser, met with the DHSSPS last week regarding the AYE. It was acknowledged that there were issues in practice, and it was agreed the information collated by both the NISCC and the DHSSPS would be reviewed to identify any improvements in guidance to employers and registrants. The Department would also consider whether there were any implications for the existing circular.
- 3.4 The Committee agreed that this would be discussed at the next meeting.

(4) Promotion of the Codes of Practice

- 4.1 The Deputy Chair reported that she met with the Director of Registration, Sam Murphy and the Communications Officer on Monday 11 May to discuss the promotion of the Codes. The Director of Registration apologised for tabling the paper, as it followed on from Monday's meeting.
- 4.2 The Committee discussed the paper and agreed with the recommendations in relation to short term and longer term promotional activities. The Committee identified the following issues:-
- The fact that registrants do understand the value of the Codes of Practice and their use once reminded of this – therefore it is important that a promotional strategy is undertaken with registrants.
 - It would be useful to look at how other regulators promote Codes of Practice.
 - Learning from conduct hearings should be integrated into a promotional strategy.
 - Concerns were raised about the use of the Employers' Code of Practice, and the recommendations of the Laming report and the Department of Health's response were noted. It was also noted that the Council will be discussing this report in due course.
- 4.3 The Committee discussed the following options for promotion of the codes:-
- Article in the NISCC Newsletter "Have you read your Codes of Practice?"

- Identification of social work and social care fora in Trusts and other organisations where information could be disseminated.
- The Director of Registration will raise the issue of the Codes of Practice in her meetings with the HSC Trusts' Governance Leads.

4.4 The Committee agreed the following:-

- The Director of Registration is to meet with the Participation Group to gather the views of service users and carers.
- The Director of Registration to discuss with the Chair and Chief Executive opportunities to provide information at social work and social care fora.
- The strategy is to be taken to the Registration and Regulation of the Workforce Committee for approval.
- Article to be written for the summer Newsletter, the Committee will assist in this.

(5) Engagement with Registrants

5.1 The Chair and Deputy Chair stated that they felt it was important to take engagement with Registrants forward, however they recognised the resource limitations of the NISCC and the Committee.

5.2 The Committee discussed the use of the NISCC website. It was suggested by the Communications Officer that a page on the NISCC website be dedicated to the Registrants' Committee, with copies of its approved minutes. It was suggested that the following message be added to the webpage in the meantime: "Further information to follow regarding contact details for the Registrants' Committee".

5.3 The Committee discussed the resource and time implications of an email address for communication with registrants. It was suggested that a standard response could be set up regarding what issues the Committee can assist with and how and when it would respond and advising registrants to speak with their trade union or professional body if appropriate.

5.4 The Communications Officer agreed to undertake some preparatory work to develop a mock-up of the Registrants' page on the website and bring this to the next Committee for further discussion.

**Comms
Officer**

(6) Roadshow – 7 July 2009

6.1 The Director of Registration confirmed that the roadshow would be held on 7 July 2009 at 2.00pm in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry. She has discussed the roadshow with the Chief Executive and the Chair, and they have agreed the following format:-

- A brief introduction from the Chair of Council;
- A brief introduction from the Committee Chair;
- Question time.

6.2 The Director of Registration stated that a flyer would go out to all social workers and social care workers living in the Southern Trust area. She asked the Committee Members to disseminate to their constituents. The Director of Registration and the Communications Officer are to design the flyer to be sent out.

**Director of
Registration
/Comms
Officer**

6.3 The Committee agreed to bring back to the next meeting a list of questions or issues which may be raised at the roadshow to facilitate the management of the meeting and to get the best use out of the day.

6.4 It was noted that Geraldine Mullan and Frank Carter would not be able to attend the roadshow. It was suggested that the Committee may wish to discuss how to manage effectively their attendance at future roadshows.

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

7.1 The Director of Registration noted that the Department of Health's response to the Laming Report has just been received, and she had not yet had a chance to read it in detail. She noted that the Codes of Practice and training were main issues and the response contained messages which the Committee would wish to look at.

7.2 The Committee briefly discussed the Report and Department of Health's response and their impact on Northern Ireland. The Director of Registration agreed to circulate a list of bullet points drawn up by her and the Director of Education and Training.

**Director of
Registration**

7.3 Damien Maguire agreed to circulate an article from the Times Online regarding the Laming Report.

**Damien
Maguire**

7.4 The Committee agreed to discuss this at their next meeting. It was felt that the Committee would need to agree its stance on the Report and response for their meeting with Council on 23 June.

(8) Any Other Business

8.1 Joint Meeting with Council on 23 June 2009 – It was noted that the joint meeting with Council would start at 12.00pm, with lunch to follow. The Committee would discuss on 16 June items for the joint meeting, such as compulsion, AYE, Codes of Practice, Laming Report. The Committee would also like to discuss compulsion at their next meeting.

8.2 ISA – It was noted that ISA would have an impact on future registrations. The Director of Registration noted that it would come into force in October 2009, with identified groups to start registration with the ISA in July 2010. She noted that Alison Kavanagh was the NISCC's liaison with ISA, and that she could come and speak with the Committee at some point if they wished.

8.3 It was noted that the Director of Education and Training has agreed to attend a meeting of the Committee and speak regarding education developments in NISCC.

8.4 Future meetings – The Committee discussed the frequency of future meetings, and noted the following dates:-

16 and 23 June	3 September
7 July	27 October

The Committee agreed to discuss further dates at the September meeting.

8.5 RQIA – The Director of Registration noted that Glenn Houston, Chief Executive of the RQIA, has agreed to speak with the Committee at the September meeting. The Director of Registration will write to him to invite him to the meeting.

**Director of
Registration**

8.6 RIT – A Committee Member noted that it would be important for the Registrants' Committee to give their opinion on proposals which are being developed by RIT. It was noted that the Chief Executive is a member of the RIT Project Reference Group, providing input on behalf of the NISCC.

8.7 Council Minutes – It was requested that approved Council Minutes be emailed to Committee Members. It was agreed that Peggy Carlile would forward these as soon as they were approved.

**Peggy
Carlile**

8.8 Article on GSCC – Damien Maguire noted that an article was recently published by LCG indicating that the GSCC had held 35 conduct hearings where social workers were “struck off”. He was concerned about this use of language, and agreed to circulate the article.

**Damien
Maguire**

8.9 PRTL Survey – The Director of Registration gave a brief update on the survey. She noted that the survey went out last week to social work registrants, and that Committee Members should have it shortly. She encouraged all Committee Members to return it.

(9) Date of Next Meeting

9.1 The next meeting will be 16 June 2009 at 10.30am.

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