

Minutes of the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council Meeting, held on Wednesday, 6th July 2022 at 2.00 pm at The Mount Conference Centre Belfast and via Zoom.

Present: Ms B Scott, Chair
Mr K McCormick
Ms K Diamond
Ms L Houlihan
Ms B Kelly

Via Zoom: Mrs C Rice
Ms E McIlveen
Ms S Caslin

In attendance: Mrs L Kelly, Chief Executive
Ms J Jackson, Head of Corporate Services

Secretariat: Mr C Carton, Admin Support

1.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs Maria McIlgorm. Catherine Rice noted that she would have to leave early due to a prior commitment.

2.0 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

2.1 Welcome

Ms B Scott welcomed the Council Members of the NIPEC Council to the meeting.

2.2 Conflicts of Interest

It was noted that no members of the public were in attendance in person or online.

Council Members were asked if there were any Conflicts of Interest. Individual members advised of roles in other organisations, however, it was noted that there were no Conflicts of Interest from any of the Council Members in today's business.

2.3 Recruitment of New Council Members

Ms B Scott thanked those members who were available for attending the Council Workshop on 14th June and thanked all members for their contributions to the skills audit. Ms B Scott and Mrs L Kelly have presented their findings from the skills audit to Ms Jemima Keyes at Sponsor Branch and it is expected that an update will be received from the Public

Appointments Unit within the next few weeks on the recruitment process for the vacant Council positions.

Ms Scott noted that there are gaps in representation on the Council which should be filled, such as ethnic diversity, gender, and various professional areas

ACTION: Ms Scott to further update members on recruitment at the September Council meeting.

2.4 Register of Council Members Activity

Ms B Scott discussed the creation of an activity register which will note any meetings attended by Council members, any visits, conversations, or activity created on behalf of NIPEC. She advised that going forward, members would receive an email reminder ahead of each Council meeting and that the updated register would be presented at each meeting with the Council papers.

This register will help to populate the next annual report, be an indicator of NIPEC engagement, and could be used to support the case for remuneration of Council members.

Mrs B Kelly noted that there will need to be further discussion of what constitutes “NIPEC Activity,” such as promoting NIPEC while carrying out primary work in your own role. Mrs L Kelly posited that it may be useful to create a list of what is “priority work” on behalf of NIPEC.

Mr K McCormick noted that NIPEC is not listed on the NI Boardroom Apprentice programme website as a host, and suggested contacting them to seek advice on how NIPEC may become engaged with the programme. Ms K Diamond agreed that this may be a good venue for recruiting Council Members, but it requires someone to fill the “mentor” role, so it could be raised when new Council members have been recruited.

ACTIONS: Ms J Jackson to send activity register form and a reminder to Council members 4 weeks before next meeting.

NIPEC to contact Eileen Mullan from Strictly Boardroom to discuss how NIPEC could participate and benefit from the Boardroom Apprentice programme.

2.5 Update on Council Members' On Board Training

Ms B Scott reminded all members that when they joined the NIPEC Council, they agreed that they would commit to undertaking on board training within the first six months of office. Ms Scott asked for confirmation that all Council members have completed their two-part training programme.

With the exception of two Council members (Ms L Kelly and Ms E McIlveen), everyone has completed both stages of training. Those who have not are due to complete the training at the next available session in October.

Ms B Scott asked for members to confirm when training has been completed so an update can be provided to the Public Appointments Unit.

Ms B Scott also asked for confirmation to be provided that relevant members have attended the Audit & Risk Committee training, or have at least booked in for the next session. Any members who have not already completed the A&RC training (Mr K McCormick and Mrs C Rice) are currently due to do so on September 6th.

ACTION: Remaining members to confirm to Ms Scott when they have completed on board training (Ms L Kelly and Ms E McIlveen).

2.6 NMC Council Meeting 26th May 2022

Along with other stakeholders, Ms Scott and Mrs L Kelly attended a working dinner event held by the Nursing & Midwifery Council on the evening before the NMC Council Meeting. The NMC discussed their upcoming work programme for the next couple of years and Ms Scott advised that the NMC were particularly interested in engaging with NIPEC.

Ms L Kelly noted that all NIPEC Senior Professional Officers also attended the NMC meeting held the next day.

2.7 Nurse of the Year Awards Ceremony 16th June 2022

Ms Scott referred to the Nurse of the Year Awards Ceremony which was held on 16th June at the Culloden Hotel. She was delighted to have been asked to present the Kathleen Robb Award for Outstanding Contribution to Nursing, sponsored by NIPEC, to Mary Hinds.

Ms Scott proposed that as the award sponsor, NIPEC should send an official letter on behalf of the Council to congratulate Ms Hinds.

ACTION: Ms B Scott to send a letter of congratulation to Ms Hinds on behalf of NIPEC Council.

2.8 Meeting with DoH Permanent Secretary and NIPEC Council

Ms Scott updated members on the visit of Peter May, DoH Permanent Secretary, to the NIPEC Offices on Friday 1st July 2022. The meeting was intended as an introduction between NIPEC and the Permanent Secretary, and for Peter May to meet staff and familiarise himself with the work of NIPEC.

Ms L Kelly stated that that Mr May had a great understanding of the challenges faced by smaller ALB's, and noted that a conversation has been initiated with Mr May with a view to streamlining governance requirements on smaller ALBs which are significant.

NIPEC's three Senior Professional Officers also briefed Mr May on their ongoing work areas (Revalidation, Future Nurse Future Midwife, and Career Pathways).

Ms Scott advised that Mr May appeared to be very well informed and engaged with NIPEC's work around education commissioning, primary care, and best practice. Mr May has been invited to attend the July Council meeting and had been unavailable however he had indicated that he would be willing to attend a future Council meeting or workshop.

ACTION: NIPEC to reissue an invite to the Permanent Secretary to attend a Council meeting/workshop in 2022-23.

2.9 Council Workshop 7th September

Ms Scott informed members that the workshop in September would be facilitated by Mr David Nicholl, On Board Training and Consultancy, who will present the key findings and recommendations from his Independent Review into RQIA Board Resignations.

2.10 NICON Chair's Forum

Ms Scott attended the NICON Chairs' Forum on Friday July 1st 2022. This was an opportunity to meet with other organisations to discuss key issues, pressures on Trusts, and strengthen the links between NIPEC and the wider HSC team.

2.11 Management Statement Financial Memorandum (*Circulated for Noting*) / Partnership Agreement

Ms Scott noted that the memorandum had been circulated with the Council papers for noting. The document lays out NIPEC's responsibilities and how communication with Sponsor Branch and the minister should be conducted. A meeting to discuss the new Partnership Agreement Model, replacing the MSFM, was taking place on 6th July and NIPEC were being represented by Mrs Cathy McCusker (NIPEC Senior Professional Officer) due to the unavailability of Chair and Chief Executive who were attending the Council Meeting.

ACTION: Mrs C McCusker to feedback findings from the Partnership Agreement Workshop to Ms B Scott and Mrs L Kelly.

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th March 2022 (NIPEC/1/2022) were shared for consideration and approval.

Ms B Scott queried if any amendments were to be made to the record of the 9th March meeting. No changes were suggested, and Ms Scott declared that the minutes were passed as an accurate record of the 9th March Council meeting.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 Matters Arising from previous meetings were detailed in an updated Action Plan that was previously circulated.

Ms J Jackson gave a progress update on one of the issues from the Action Plan, the Online Portfolio. Ms J Jackson asked members to note that the site has been stood down however a decision still had to be made on the retention or disposal of the information on the site. An encrypted version of the information is held by the site provider, Aurion, and a full copy of the data is held on one of BSO ITS's servers.

Following discussion by members it was agreed that a paper will be prepared by Ms Jackson to present to the Council at their September meeting.

ACTION: Ms Jackson to present the paper on disposal of information held on the Online Portfolio to Council in September 2022.

5.0 CORRESPONDENCE

- 5.1 Letter dated 22nd March 2022 from Paul Montgomery, Director of Corporate Management, DoH, regarding Assembly Election Guidance **(Previously Circulated)**
- 5.2 Agreed DoH Action Plan – NDNA received 29th March 2022 **(Circulated)**
- 5.3 Letter dated 12th April 2022 from Robin Swann, MLA, Minister for Health regarding Rebuilding HSC Services **(Previously Circulated)**
- 5.4 Circulars HSC (SE) 1 & 2 2022 Senior Executive Pay Award 2018-19 and 2019-20 received 9th June 2022 **(Circulated)**
- 5.5 Invite to Council Members to attend Cyber Security Training received 15th June 2022 **(Previously Circulated)**
- 5.6 Letter dated 22nd June 2022 from Robin Swann, MLA, Minister for Health regarding Rebuilding HSC Services **(Circulated)**

Ms B Scott opened the floor for any questions regarding the above correspondence and none were put forward.

6.0 OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

- 6.1 Chief Executive's Report *(circulated)*

Mrs L Kelly updated Council Members on her report noting the following:

- Since her commencement as Chief Executive in March 2022, Mrs L Kelly has been building relationships with the NIPEC team, stakeholders, and wider national and international healthcare departments. Links have been made with NHS England and Education Scotland, with a fact-finding trip being planned to Scotland in the coming months. NIPEC have also received an invitation to participate in a joint NHS England and Scotland monthly meeting.

- Post Covid working - The senior team held a workshop in April to discuss ways to start a post pandemic response, and what the priority professional and business issues are going forward. They reviewed the draft Business Plan and prioritised key strategic agenda items for NIPEC with an adopt, adapt, or abandon approach being used.
- Recruitment – Mrs L Kelly advised that she is proceeding to recruit two permanent 8B roles to fill the two vacancies in the SPO team and potentially two fixed term 8B roles to help progress priority items on the workplan.
- Mrs L Kelly has been holding weekly handover/update meetings with the new Chief Nursing Officer, Maria McIlgorm (DoH). These meetings have provided an opportunity to share ideas for post pandemic ways of working and discuss how NIPEC and DoH can cooperate in post pandemic planning.
- Mrs L Kelly noted that she has been researching the possibility of remunerating Council members to aid in recruitment and retention.
- Digital Capability Frameworks – Joint work has been carried out between Australia and Ireland to help launch a Digital Leadership Framework. A network has been created and an implementation plan is to be developed. During discussion with both the CNO and Permanent Secretary, Mrs L Kelly highlighted how she believes that NIPEC would be strengthened if a digital post is created in the workforce, and has submitted a bid to secure funding for such a post.
- It was noted that new proficiency standards for post registration qualifications are being introduced by NMC who were due to issue the new standards in July 2022.
- International Midwives Day – NIPEC hosted the Here For Life campaign, a UK and Rol wide campaign profiling the stories and experiences of Midwives throughout the regions.
 - Florence Nightingale Commemoration Event – Mrs L Kelly attended the event in London with the CNO and Maria McIlgorm.
- Significant Meetings attended: Mrs L Kelly advised that she taken up the Chair position of the Education & Commissioning Group.

6.2 Consultation Activity Report (*circulated*)

A copy of the above Report had previously been circulated. Council Members noted the consultations listed, those NIPEC had responded to and those which officers were in the process of drafting a response to.

7.0 CORPORATE CONTROL & FINANCE

7.1 Head of Corporate Services Report

A copy of the Head of Corporate Services Report had been previously circulated.

Ms J Jackson, Head of Corporate Services Report provided a verbal update of the key issues affecting corporate services since the March 2022 Council meeting.

7.2 Report from Standing Committee

7.2.1 Confirmed Minutes of the A&R Meeting A&R/4/2021 held on the 22nd March 2022 were circulated for noting. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions, but no queries were raised.

7.2.2 Ms J Jackson noted that the Minutes of Audit and Risk Committee Meeting (A&R/1/2022) held on the 24th May 2022 which had previously been circulated as draft had been approved with no changes at the A&R committee meeting held Wednesday 6th July 2022

7.3 Financial Management Summary

7.3.1 NIPEC Opening Allocation Letter 2022-23 (*circulated*)

- Opening Allocation of £1,504,586, which includes £138,416 ring fenced for Safe Staffing.
- The Safe Staffing allocation had allowed NIPEC to appoint 2 fixed term Band 8a Professional Officers.
- A letter has since been received from the Permanent Secretary urging that new streams of recurrent expenditure should be avoided where possible and that departmental approval must be sought before committing to this type of expenditure.

7.3.2 Financial Summary of Expenditure, Month 2 (*circulated*)

- At Month 2 NIPEC were reporting a surplus of £51k and a year end projected surplus was currently standing at a surplus of £300k. However, Ms Jackson advised that NIPEC are in the process of recruiting additional fixed term posts which if successful, would commit some of the projected surplus.

7.4 Corporate Risk Register 2022-23, Version 3 (*circulated*)

Ms J Jackson advised Council Members that the Risk Register had been reviewed and approved by Business Team and presented to the Audit and Risk Committee that morning. She asked members to note the following:

- The majority of the risks have been carried forward from 2021-22.
- 8 of the 10 risks are classified as High; 4 are I.T. systems related and the remainder relate to turnover of staff and recruitment of Council members.
- Ms J Jackson also noted that members of the A&RC had identified an additional risk at their meeting in May 2022, the ongoing situation relating to HRPTS. She provided an update that a new supplier has been found to host the data centres and therefore it is expected this risk will be closed in the near future.

7.5 KPIs 2022-23 (*circulated*)

A copy of the above report was previously circulated.

Ms J Jackson drew Council Members to the Absence figure which has is just below the Red rating. However, Ms Jackson stated that due to the small number of staff in NIPEC, two absence periods have had a major impact on this figure and as these are exceptional cases of absence, she would expect that the figure will decrease over the coming months.

7.6 NIPEC Draft Business Plan for 2022-23 (*circulated*) For Approval

Chair asked for confirmation that the Council is happy approve the NIPEC Draft Business Plan for 2022-23. This was passed unanimously by all members and it was agreed that Ms Jackson should now forward the final version to Sponsor Branch.

ACTION: Ms Jackson to forward the approved Plan to Sponsor Branch.

7.7 NIPEC Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22 (*Circulated*) For Approval

Ms C Rice offered her thanks to all who had attended the Audit and Risk meeting earlier in the day, at which the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-22 were approved.

As Chair of the A&R Committee, Ms C Rice then formally presented the document to the Council for consideration. She advised that the document had been presented to the A&R Committee that morning with the draft Report To Those Charged With Governance (RTTCWG).

There were 2 priority 2 recommendations in the RTTCWG as follows;

1. A new NIPEC bank account was to be opened (NIPEC accepted this recommendation and the associated actions);
2. The turnover of Accounting Officers 2021/22, and documenting this in the draft Governance Statement. Mrs Rice confirmed that NIPEC had accepted and completed this action.

Mrs Rice concluded that the proposed audit opinion is that the Comptroller and Auditor General will certify the 2021/22 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion without modification.

The Chair then asked Ms J Jackson for a brief description of the circumstances around the priority 2 recommendations. Ms J Jackson noted that once a year she will raise the bank account as an item on the A&R Committee Agenda.

The Chair proposed that the Council accept the annual report and members approved the report.

ACTION: Ms Jackson to insert the signatures of Chair and Chief Executive and submit a signed copy to NIAO along with a signed copy of the Letter of Representation.

7.8 Audit & Risk Committee's Annual Report on Activity and Assurance to the Council for 2021-22 (*Circulated*)

Ms J Jackson noted that the report was circulated for noting by Council and contained an overview of work completed by the A&R Committee in 2021-22.

Ms B Scott stated that she would be seeking to appoint a new Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee to take over from the current Chair. She thanked Mrs Rice for holding the role and asked that she facilitate a handover period with the new Chair.

ACTION: Ms Scott to discuss with current members and appoint a new Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee. She will report to Council in September 2022.

7.9 NIPEC Accommodation (*circulated*)

Ms J Jackson referred Council Members to the previously circulated briefing paper on the James House move, then proceeded to provide a verbal update.

- Ms Jackson advised that work on the clearance of Centre House is ongoing and that the termination of the lease by 31st August 2022 was on target.
- A recent notification from the James House Project team (via DoF) had advised that due to a safety issue with some of the fireproof materials used in the construction, there would be a further delay in the move to James House of approximately eight to ten weeks from October 2022. Ms Jackson stressed that the timescale for the delay is unconfirmed.
- A temporary office has been secured in the HSC Leadership Centre which can accommodate three staff and this has been extended to December 2022 to mitigate the delay with James House.
- Ms Jackson noted that the various ALB's that are moving to James House are taking different approaches to temporary accommodation and posed the question if Council believed that there are any circumstances where it might be necessary to extend the lease to Centre House.
- Following discussion, it was agreed that the interim arrangements were sufficient and that NIPEC should proceed as agreed.
- Mr K McCormick noted his preference for a hybrid working approach, and hopes that NIPEC will continue to offer staff the option to mix home and office work. He also raised concerns that there could be further delays to completion of the office. It was agreed by Council members that they would keep the situation under review.
- Ms Jackson proposed sending a letter to Sponsor Branch on Mrs Kelly's behalf to raise concerns over license charges after five years and the fact that there is no break out clause in the new lease. The letter would request that Sponsor Branch seek advice from Health Estates around these issues before a license agreement is signed.

ACTION: Ms J Jackson to draft a letter for CEX to send to NIPEC Sponsor Branch updating them on the current status of NIPEC's move to James House and issues around the license.

7.10 NIPEC Corporate Team (*circulated/verbal update*)

Ms J Jackson updated members on the ongoing recruitment within the NIPEC Corporate Team. She confirmed that a new Band 7 Business Manager has been appointed and will commence on 1st August 2022. Further recruitment will take place over the coming months and Ms Jackson agreed to keep members informed of progress.

7.11 Equality (*Circulated/Verbal Update*)

7.11.1 NIPEC Equality Annual Progress Report 2021-22

Ms Jackson advised that this report is due to be submitted to the Equality Commission (EOC) by 31st August 2022 following approval by Business Team. The report will be presented to Council on 7th September 2022 for ratification and an update provided to EOC following that.

7.11.2 Equality and Disability 5 Year Action Plans 2023-28

Ms Jackson stated that the current Equality & Disability Action Plan is now its last year and a new 5-year Plan must be developed for 2023 – 2028 by 31st March 2023. This work is being co-ordinated by BSO Equality Unit however Ms Jackson advised that it is a statutory requirement for all ALBs to have their own 5-year plan. The draft will be presented to the September Council meeting and then issued for public consultation. Council will ratify the final version at their March 2023 meeting.

ACTIONS: Ms Jackson to ensure that the Equality Annual Report 2021-22 is reviewed and approved by BTM and submitted to EOC by 31st August 2022. The report to be included on the September Council agenda for ratification.

The draft Equality and Disability Action Plan 2023-28 to be presented to NIPEC Council at the September 2022 meeting.

7.12 Return to the Workplace and Flexible Working (*Circulated/Verbal Update*) **For Noting/Approval**

Ms J Jackson gave a brief description of the new flexible working framework which has been in place since April 2022. She summarised the key changes introduced by the Framework and advised that BSO HR are updating the current policy to incorporate the changes.

The Chair and members approved adoption of the new Framework for NIPEC and a communication is to be issued to staff advising of the change.

ACTION: Ms J Jackson to issue a correspondence to NIPEC staff advising of the organisation's adoption of the new Regional Flexible Working Framework.

7.13 Counter Fraud Service End of Year Report 2021-22 (*Circulated*) **For Noting**

Ms J Jackson advised that the report had been circulated for noting. The FLO (Fraud Liaison Officer meetings) will recommence in September, and the new Band 7 Office Manager will take up this responsibility going forward.

7.14 HSC Payroll Shared Services Data Breach (*Verbal Update*)

Ms J Jackson updated the Council on the recent data breach which had involved a member of staff who had sent work emails to a home email address which included personal identifiable information of members of HSC staff. She confirmed that no NIPEC staff had been affected by the breach.

Ms L Houlihan asked for an assurance that NIPEC have a Business Continuity Plan in place in the event of a cyber-attack. Ms Jackson confirmed that NIPEC do have a Plan in place however given the reliance on BSO for system support, regional ALBs had requested a workshop to agree a unified approach to dealing with a Cyber-attack on any of the HSC organisations. This was scheduled for September 2022 and NIPEC would then update its BCP accordingly and present it to Council for approval.

ACTION: Ms J Jackson to present the updated Business Continuity Plan to the November Council meeting for approval.

8.0 SAFETY AND QUALITY

8.1 NIPEC Professional Work Plan 2021/2022 – Business Plan objectives Progress - Monitoring Report to 31st March 2022 (*Late Mailing*)

Members noted the updated matrix and the changes in the RAG rating from the previous version.

8.2 NIPEC Professional Work Plan 2022/2023 – Business Plan objectives Progress - Monitoring Report from 1st April to 30th June 2022 (*Late Mailing*)

Mrs Kelly presented the new Workplan and advised that it had been informed by the new Business Plan for 2022-23. It contained the key priorities and timescales for the year and CNO had confirmed that it aligns with the strategic direction of the NMAHP team.

Mrs Kelly noted that NIPEC had previously used a rolling work plan, with many activities carried over from year to year with no specific timescales. However, going forward, when objectives have not been met, these will be clearly identified via the RAG rating.

Members noted the report and thanked Mrs Kelly for the development of the new plans for 2022-23.

8.3 NIPEC Communication and Engagement Summary Report - 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 (*Circulated*)

Ms L Kelly identified some key areas from the Report and stated that NIPEC plan to engage a fixed term Communications Officer who will be able to carry out a review of how engagement is managed and presented to Council.

Members noted the Report.

9.0 CHIEF NURSING OFFICER UPDATE (*Circulated*)

Mrs L Kelly provided Council Members with an update on behalf of the CNO. She advised that the CNO and Executive Directors of Nursing have worked together to create a more streamlined update and asked members to note that the update received by Council members was the first in the new format.

Members welcomed the updates in the report.

10.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

At this point, Ms B Scott as Chair gave the opportunity to raise any other business.

Mr K McCormick raised a concern that emails for the attention of Council members are being sent to non-HSC email addresses, and queried if this is potentially an information security risk. Ms B Scott agreed that she views this as a potential risk and there was discussion around how this risk could be mitigated.

ACTION: Ms J Jackson to research alternative options for Council members to receive papers and other correspondence.

11.0 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It has been agreed to hold the next meeting at 2pm on Wednesday, 7th September 2022 at The Mount Business Centre, Belfast.