

Minutes of the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council Meeting, held on Wednesday, 28th June 2023 at 2.00 pm in 4th Floor Conference Room, James House, 2-4 Cromac Avenue, Belfast BT7 2JA

Present: Bronagh Scott
Kieran McCormick (Via Teams)
Karen Diamond
Siobhán Caslin
Ciara Scannell
Emma McIlveen
Eilidh McGregor
Gary Mitchell
Amit Bhagwat
Nirmala Bhogal
Katrin Lehmann
Sharon McRoberts
Janine Stockdale

In attendance: Mrs Linda Kelly, Chief Executive
Ms Jill Jackson, Head of Corporate Services
Ms Fiona Bradley, Senior Professional Officer

Apologies: Brenda Kelly

Secretariat: Ms Jill Jackson, Head of Corporate Services

1.0 APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted that Mrs B. Kelly had sent apologies for the meeting.

2.0 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

2.1 Welcome members of the Public

The Chair advised that no members of the public were in attendance at today's meeting.

2.2 Council Members - Conflicts of Interest

Several members declared potential interests as follows:

- Sharon McRoberts informed the meeting that she had been working with BSO Recruitment Shared Services on a service improvement initiative and had just completed her report and presented to BSO Senior Team;
- Kieran McCormick reminded members that he is the owner of a healthcare recruitment agency; and

- Karen Diamond notified that she is related to a member of NIPEC's senior professional team.

It was agreed that none of these presented any conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda items to be discussed at today's Council meeting.

2.3 Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) ex-officio membership of Council

At the March 2023 meeting, members were informed that a letter had been sent to CNO from NIPEC's Chair seeking advice on how to progress the matter of her ex-officio membership. CNO had previously indicated that she believed that her membership was a potential conflict of interest due to the fact she was also the Head of NIPEC's Sponsor Branch.

Chair informed members that a response had been received from CNO on 5th April 2023 confirming her withdrawal as an ex-officio member. She also confirmed that the Standing Orders would be updated to reflect the change and presented to the September Council meeting for ratification.

2.4 New Council Committee: Professional & Business Committee Terms of Reference

Chair presented the Draft Terms of Reference (TORs) for the new Committee. She explained that she believed that by establishing this Committee, Council would have more time to scrutinise the development of the annual business plan and the professional work programme and would be provided with more assurance on this element of NIPEC's work. In effect, this Committee would provide oversight to Council on the management of professional work.

Chair asked members if they were content to agree the TORs and if they had any comments. Amit Baghwat enquired if the Committee would be inward looking or externally focussed and Chair confirmed that as the Committee would concentrate on the achievement of NIPEC's objectives, it would be more inward looking.

Kieran McCormick welcomed the greater focus on the professional work and endorsed the establishment of the Committee. This was seconded by Sharon McRoberts who confirmed that she agreed with the establishment of a Professional Committee and that there was nothing in the draft TORs that would cause her concern.

Members approved the draft TORs and the proposal that these would be kept under review by the Committee and any amendments would be brought to a full Council meeting for ratification.

2.5 Membership of Council Committees

During a series of 1:1 and introductory meetings with members in May and June, Chair had discussed membership of NIPEC's Committees going forward. She circulated a list containing proposed membership as follows:

Audit & Risk Committee: Kieran McCormick (Chair), Siobhán Caslin, Brenda Kelly, Katrin Lehmann and Amit Baghwat;

Remuneration Committee: Bronagh Scott (Chair), Karen Diamond, Emma McIlveen and Sharon McRoberts; and

Professional & Business Committee: Gary Mitchell, Nirmala Bhogal, Eilidh McGregor, Janine Stockdale and Ciara Scannell.

Several members raised the use of the terminology “professional and lay member” - for NIPEC purposes, “professional” relates to nursing and midwifery registrant members while “lay” relates to everyone else regardless of their profession. There was discussion around using alternative wording for “lay” such as “Public Interest member” however it was confirmed by Chair that this was the terminology used in NIPEC’s founding legislation. It was agreed that this issue could be discussed at a later date.

Chair asked members to consider the proposed membership and if they wanted to discuss it further to contact Jill Jackson who would set up individual meetings. It was agreed that if no queries were raised with Chair, that the proposed membership would be formally ratified at the September 2023 Council meeting.

ACTION: Head of Corporate Services to ensure that Council Committee Membership is included on the September agenda for ratification.

Members also agreed that the newly appointed members of the Professional & Business Committee would meet before the September Council meeting to vote a Chair and agree a timetable and agenda for meetings.

ACTION: Professional & Business Committee to meet before the September Council meeting to vote a Chair and agree a timetable and agenda for meetings.

2.6 Update from NIPEC Year End Accountability Meeting: 28 June 2023

Chair informed members that Linda Kelly, CEX, and herself had met that morning with Peter May, DoH Permanent Secretary, and Maria McIlgorm, CNO. They both confirmed that the meeting had gone very well and that Peter May was very interested in the work NIPEC is doing and further work NIPEC could potentially carry out going forward for the Department, with a specific focus of the discussion on multi-professional education and the system wide transformation agenda.

2.7 Boardroom Apprentice 2023

Council had previously agreed that they would like to participate in this scheme in 2023 by supporting an Apprentice. An application had been submitted for an Apprentice and a recruitment exercise took place in June 2023 which NIPEC had promoted on their website.

Chair advised members that NIPEC had been successful in being allocated an Apprentice who would commence formally in September 2023. An induction meeting would be set up with Chair and the CEX to welcome the new Apprentice and members would be introduced at the September Council meeting.

Kieran McCormick asked that NIPEC's social media options be used to publicise this appointment as it was a very good news story for NIPEC and members agreed.

ACTION: An introductory meeting and Induction process to be organised for NIPEC's Apprentice with Chair and CEX in August 2023.

2.8 Remuneration of Council Members

Chair reminded members of the progress to date on this matter. A paper had been prepared and presented to Sponsor Branch in December 2022 seeking permission from DoH to set aside monies from NIPEC's budget to remunerate Council members.

Given the financial restraints in HSC in 2023-24, the efficiencies of £125k already deducted from NIPEC's opening allocation and the likelihood of further efficiencies being sought, Chair proposed that we pause this process and review again in 2024.

Members agreed with Chair's proposal.

2.9 Draft Partnership Agreement

Chair reminded members that the Partnership Agreement was being developed across HSC organisations to replace the previous Management Statement Financial Memorandum. NIPEC's draft had been considered by Council at a workshop in September 2022 and the final draft ratified at the Council meeting in December 2022 after which the draft was submitted to Sponsor Branch for review and comment.

Chair confirmed that Sponsor Branch have reviewed the draft and accepted all the recommendations made. The document was then submitted by Sponsor Branch to the DoH Governance Unit who are reviewing the draft and will seek approval from the Department of Finance (DoF) for final sign off. It is anticipated that DoF will return the final draft by the end of August 2023 when it will be presented to Council for final ratification. Chair confirmed that part of the September workshop will be allocated to

studying/reviewing the document in order to allow members who commenced in February 2023 to review the document and its purpose.

ACTION: Draft Partnership Agreement to be included on the agenda of the September Council workshop for members to review progress.

2.10 NIPEC Conference: 4th October 2023

Chair asked the Chief Executive to share details of the conference with Council members.

Linda Kelly advised that development of a programme for the day is well underway and that members would receive an invite in the near future. The Conference will focus on the establishment of NIPEC, what the organisation has achieved to date and what future plans may include. There will also be an awards ceremony to recognise the contribution of those registrants who have contributed to NIPEC's work over the 21 years since its inception.

Members asked if there are plans to live stream the event, Mrs L Kelly advised that this was not planned however a recording will be made and will be available after the event.

2.11 Register of Council Members Activity

The Chair thanked Council members for submitting their quarterly updates to Ms Jackson in order to get a flavour of activities Council members are involved in.

Council members noted the Register of Council members activity.

3.0 Minutes of Previous Council meeting on 15th March 2023

Chair asked Kieran McCormick, Interim Chair in March, to present the draft minutes. Mr McCormick confirmed that he had read the draft minutes and was content to recommend these for approval.

Katrin Lehmann and Ciara Scannell requested an amendment to the draft which had recorded the former as attending the meeting by Teams and the latter in person when it should have been the reverse. Several members also requested if the draft minutes could be uploaded to Decision Time once ready rather than waiting for these to be distributed with the September papers.

Subject to the amendment requested above, Council members approved the minutes from the previous Council meeting on Wednesday 15th March 2023.

ACTION: Draft minutes to be uploaded to Decision Time once ready rather than waiting for these to be distributed with the September papers.

4.0 Matters Arising

Ms Jackson gave an update in relation to the matters arising and members noted the progress to date.

5.0 Correspondence

- 5.1 Correspondence from the Chief Nursing Officer and Assistant Director of Nursing, PHA: Delivering Care Policy Framework Review, issued 20th March 2023 **(Circulated for noting)**
- 5.2 Communication issued by HSC Trusts: Ceasing the use of Agency Nurses/Midwives employed by off-contract Recruitment Agencies in HSC organisations in NI, issued 21st March 2023 **(Circulated for noting)**
- 5.3 Departmental Circular: Counter Fraud responsibilities of all HSC and NIFRS employees, issued 21st April 2023 **(Circulated for noting)**
- 5.4 Departmental Circular: Annual Theft and Fraud Report 2020-21, issued 16th May 2023 **(Circulated for noting)**

Council members noted the correspondence.

6.0 Operational Performance and Service Improvement

6.1 Fiona Bradley: Maternity Support Workers

Mrs Bradley updated members on a project she had led which was established to review the maternity support workers education programme and to develop resources to support the workers undertake their role. A copy of the presentation had been shared with members with their Council papers.

Council members congratulated Fiona and the midwifery team who had participated in the project on this essential work.

6.2 Chief Executives Report

The Chief Executive stated that she assumed members had read the report which contained some of the key highlights of her work and NIPEC's priorities since the last meeting.

Council members noted the Chief Executives report.

6.3 Consultation Activity Report

The Chief Executive advised that activity had slowed down on consultations since the last meeting.

Council members noted the consultation activity report.

7.0 Corporate Control and Finance

Report from standing Committee:

7.1.1 Confirmed Minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee held on 14th March 2023

Council members noted the approved minutes.

7.1.2 Draft Minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee held on 23rd May 2023

Ms Jackson confirmed that these minutes were approved at the Committee meeting held on 27th June 2023.

Council members noted the approved minutes.

7.2 Finance

7.2.1 NIPEC's Opening Allocation Letter 2023-24 and Confirmed Budget Position

Ms Jackson referred to the budget paper presented to NIPEC Council in March 2023 and asked members to note that a 5% efficiency had been applied to NIPEC's allocation for 2023-24 (compared against the 2022-23 position) plus an additional £50k saving, bringing the total savings to £125k. The Chief Executive confirmed that NIPEC had planned for efficiency savings and assured members that she believed NIPEC can meet these savings and that any potential risks to the organisation's breakeven position would be highlighted to Council immediately.

Members noted NIPEC's opening allocation.

7.2.2 Financial Summary of expenditure 2023-24, Month 02

Ms Jackson gave an update on the financial position at Month 2. NIPEC were showing an expected surplus position of £25k for the year and the Month 2 full year forecast position shows a surplus of £13k.

Nirmala Bhogal queried the variance in the General Services line and asked Ms Jackson if an explanation could be provided for this.

ACTION: Ms Jackson to provide an explanation to Council members for the variance in the General Services cost centre.

Council members noted the Month 2 financial position.

7.3 Corporate Risk Register 2023-24, Version 2

Ms Jackson advised that at the Audit & Risk Committee in May 2023, members had raised queries around Risk 2, Ability to Achieve Financial Breakeven, and indicated that members believed that there were more controls in place than had been included.

Ms Jackson confirmed that further detail had been included and this version had been approved at the Committee meeting held 27th June 2023. She asked if members had any further queries or comments.

Council members approved the Corporate Risk Register 2023-24, Version 2.

7.4 Final KPI's 2022-23

Ms Jackson asked members to note that this was the final position in the 2022-23 KPIs. She highlighted the fact that NIPEC had slightly missed the absence target figure of 3.5% with a final figure of 3.95%. All other targets had been met.

Council members noted the Final KPI's 2022-23.

7.5 Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23

Chair asked the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, Kieran McCormick, to present this item to Council.

Mr McCormick advised that the document had been presented to the Audit & Risk Committee at their meeting on 27th June 2023 together with a draft copy of the NI Audit Office's '*Report to those charged with Governance*' (RTTCWG). In the draft RTTCWG, there were a number of recommendations made, summarised as follows:

1. Remuneration Report disclosures and the need for a regional HSC approach to publishing these;
2. Employment Contracts – it was recommended that these are held centrally going forward;
3. Direct Award Contracts – it was recommended that a correspondence be issued to staff reminding them of their obligation to ensure contract arrangements are in place in advance of commitment to expenditure;
4. NIPEC's Bank Account.

Mr McCormick asked members to note that all recommendations were classified as Priority 3: issues of a more minor nature which represents good practice. He also confirmed that the proposed audit opinion is "*that the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) will certify the 2022/23 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification.*"

Mr McCormick then asked if members had any questions and if they were happy to approve the Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23.

Council members approved NIPEC's Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23.

7.6 Audit and Risk Committee's Annual Report on Activity and Assurance 2022-23

Ms J Jackson stated that the report was circulated for noting by Council and contained an overview of work completed by the A&R Committee in 2022-23.

Council members noted the report for 2022-23.

7.7 Equality

7.7.1 Draft Equality & Disability Action Plan 2023-28

Ms Jackson reminded members of the public consultation ongoing and confirmed that several of NIPEC's Council members had attended these events. She confirmed that the final draft report would be presented to Council in September 2023 for approval before being submitted to the Equality Commission before 30th September 2023.

7.7.2 Equality Annual Progress Report 2022-23

Ms Jackson advised that this report is due to be submitted to the Equality Commission (EOC) by 31st August 2023 following approval by Business Team. The report will be presented to Council in September 2023 for ratification and an update provided to EOC following that.

8.0 Safety and Quality

8.1 NIPEC Professional Work Plan 2022-23 progress monitoring report from 1st January to 31st March 2023

The Chief Executive updated members on the final position with achievement of objectives and focussed on the 3 Red ratings. She explained that these were largely due to a project not starting on time, difficulties in securing Trust staff availability and the retirement of the lead of one of the projects.

Mrs L Kelly confirmed that these objectives had been carried forward to 2023-24.

Council members noted the Report and thanked Mrs L Kelly and her team for their work on achieving so many objectives.

8.2 NIPEC Professional Work Plan 2023-24 progress monitoring report April to June 2023

Mrs L Kelly confirmed that 32 of the objectives were on target and that 7 had not yet commenced. She also confirmed that once the new Professional and Business Committee is established that these objectives would be scrutinised there and would allow more time for discussion on specific projects.

Members highlighted a number of areas which needed updated including Careers Pathways: Delivering Care.

Council members noted the Report

8.3 DoH Covid-19 Public Inquiry Group

Ms Jackson provided an update from the DoH Covid-19 Public Inquiry Group. HSC organisations had received a Solicitor's briefing in relation to Module 2C (NI) which would deal with core political and administrative decision making. The King's Counsel had stated that the Inquiry will examine whether and to what extent the power sharing model of government affected decision making during the pandemic. The Inquiry will also be investigating the extent of cooperation between the NI government and ROI during the pandemic.

Council members noted the update on the DoH Covid-19 Public Inquiry Group.

9.0 Any Other Business

Kieran McCormick asked members to join him in congratulating Dr Gary Mitchell for his appointment to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to Nursing and Dementia Care in June 2023.

Members congratulated Gary and Chair asked for the minutes to record this achievement.

The Chair concluded business and advised that the date of the next Council meeting was 20th September 2023 at 2.00pm.