

**Minutes of the Council Public/In Committee Meeting  
 Remote – Via Zoom  
 On Tuesday, 25 January 2022 @ 09:00**

	<p><b>Agenda Item - Present</b></p>	<p><b>Council Members:</b>                  Dr Jim Livingstone (President)                  Mr Jonathan Patton (Vice President)                  Mr Mark McCrudden                  Ms Alison Ragg                  Ms Carol Moore                  Prof Patrick Murphy                  Mr Brendan Garland                  Mr Philip Knox                  Ms Colleen Duffy                  Mr Barry Mimmagh                  Mr Scott Gill                  Mr Gary McMurray</p> <p><b>Visitors:</b>                  Ms Lynsey Alphonso – Boardroom Apprentice                  Ms Siobhan Carson – PSA</p> <p><b>In Attendance:</b>                  Mr Trevor Patterson (Chief Executive &amp; Interim Registrar)                  Ms Joan Duffy (Head of Business Operations)                  Mr Mark Neale (Head of Public Affairs)                  Mr Peter Hutchinson (Policy Standards &amp; Engagement Lead)                  Mr Daniel Young (Pre-Registration Lead)                  Ms June Alexander (Executive Assistant)</p>	<p><b>Apologies</b>                  Ms Sandra Cooke                  Ms Chanel Jones</p>
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1.0	Welcome & Apologies	<p>The President welcomed Council members to the meeting and also welcomed guests Lynsey Alphonso and Siobhan Carson.</p> <p>Apologies were accepted from Council members Sandra Cooke &amp; Chanel Jones.</p>	
2.0	Deputations	The President was in attendance throughout. No deputation required.	
3.0	Conflicts of Interest	In relation to Agenda Pt 7.0, Brendan Garland advised that he was a member of the Board of NIMDTA which will be merging with NICPLD. There was no conflict of interest at present but will be kept under review.	
4.0	Tabling of Any Other Business	No other business was tabled.	
5.0	Minutes & Key Actions from last meeting <b>For Approval</b>	<p><u>Minutes:</u> Council approved and adopted the Minutes of the Public meeting of 23 November 2021 as a true and accurate record of events.</p> <p><u>Actions:</u> There were no outstanding actions.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Key Decision / Action:</b> Council approved and adopted the Minutes of the Public meeting of 23 November 2021 as a true and accurate record of events.</p> </div>	<p>Proposed by: Brendan Garland Seconded by: Alison Ragg</p>

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6.0	Reaffirmation of Council E-paper decision APP-Dec21-01 <b>For Approval</b>	Council reaffirmed its decision to approve E-paper APP-Dec21-01 in relation to the co-hosting the Continuing Fitness to Practise Stakeholder Group with GPhC.  The CEO directed Council to Agenda Pt 14 for further information.  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Key Decision / Action:</b> Council reaffirmed its decision to approve E-paper APP-Dec21-01.</p> </div>	Proposed by: Barry Mimmagh Seconded by: Scott Gill
7.0	Foundation Training Year – Quality Assurance Process <b>For Approval</b>	The President thanked Daniel Young for his work on this matter.  The HPA advised that the paper presented sets out a step-by-step approach to quality assurance for Council in relation to the Foundation Training Year. Previously, the Pre-Registration programme was run in-house by the PSNI and quality assurance was also undertaken in-house. Under the new programme, NICPLD is responsible for the running of the Foundation Training Year. In this first year minor changes are being introduced whilst the programme is strengthened in the lead up to IP graduation in 25/26. From recent meetings with NICPLD, Council can be assured that there were no concerns and the programme continues to operate effectively. NICPLD are referring any issues to PSNI for guidance and support in the first year. The HBO advised that PSNI was moving at a pace with GPhC in the development of IET.  Regular, formal assurance meetings will be held with NICPLD similar to the new approach taken by GPhC in GB. An informal meeting will be held between PSNI and NICPLD to outline the broad approach to be taken for assuring the 2021/22 Foundation Training Year. This will be followed by a baseline meeting to interrogate the current NICPLD approaches to quality management and control; the identification and proposed resolution of any issues; and the proposed development of the Foundation Training Year 2022/23, wider implementation of IET and learning outcomes.	

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	<p>A check-in meeting will be held in relation to NICPLD's progress in addressing any identified challenges followed by a final meeting at which NICPLD will provide a summary of outputs from the 2021 Foundation Training Year together with learning outcomes.</p> <p>The HBO advised that, at the end of the first Foundation Training Year, a high-level report on the assurance meetings will be presented to Council and regular assurance reports will be provided. A quality assurance process for future years, particularly in relation to Independent Prescribers, will be developed and brought to Council for approval.</p> <p>The VP queried if 7.5 days' PSNI resource was sufficient for the process outlined. The HBO confirmed that it was deemed sufficient at present as the day-to-day running of the Foundation Training Year had been passed to NICPLD but that it would be revised, if necessary.</p> <p>The CEO advised that, although NICPLD run the programme, PSNI and GPhC set the Common Registration Assessment which is quality checked by external parties. A pass rate of around 85-92% will be expected and, if it was to drop significantly, that would be a red flag and would require investigation as to how it had happened. It will be a useful final check.</p> <p>The HBO advised that, from the organisation's experience, issues would be expected in the areas of educational supervisors, training sites and, at some stage in the process, the organisation will engage with students to gauge their experience of the Foundation Training Year and their interpersonal relationships with their educational supervisors.</p> <p>Council approved the proposal for an assurance framework and mechanism to provide appropriate assurances to Council about the effectiveness of the operation, management and delivery of the first year of Foundation Training by NICPLD.</p>	

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		Proposed by: Barry Mimmagh Seconded by: Colleen Duffy
8.0	<b>President's Report            For Information</b>	<p>The President advised Council of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council Recruitment:               <p>The Department had confirmed by telephone call that the recruitment exercise to replace the President and Sandra Cooke would commence at the beginning of March 2022. They may use the Reserve List from the last competition for the selection of a Lay or Registrant Member. The competition may only be for the post of President.</p> <p>The President advised that he would keep Council members updated and reminded Council that, from mid-March, Purdah will commence when the Assembly starts preparing for the elections in May 2022. It was hoped that new appointments will be made in June/July 2022.</p> </li> <li>2. Chairs' Forum:               <p>The President advised that the organisation is a member of the Chairs' Forum which comprises public sector body Chairs. There were a number of annual events and the President confirmed that he would circulate the events list to Council members as attendance some events may be useful. The first event, with a registration fee of £75, will be the Chairs' Forum Conference with a number of speakers including the First and Deputy First Ministers.</p> </li> </ol>

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		<p>The President reminded Council members that attendance at events such as this was important in terms of Council members' development and understanding but that they should be mindful of the costs to the organisation.</p> <p>3. Council meetings during C-19:</p> <p>The President advised that, due to the ever-changing circumstances and advice around C-19 restrictions, Council and Committee meetings continued to be conducted via Zoom. Only a small number of the organisation's staff were in the office at any time. Moving forward, although Council members may be keen to return to face-to-face meetings, the President asked that Council members be mindful that the presence of 14 Council members in the small building may compromise the health and wellbeing of staff members. The President and CEO would continue to monitor Public Health advice. He advised that he was interested in taking soundings from Council members in relation to meetings.</p> <p>The CEO advised that, before Christmas 2021, the Executive Team had thought that a phased return to the office would be possible in early 2022. A risk assessment was undertaken and it was considered that up to ten staff members, spread over the three floors, could safely work in the office at the same time. However, on the emergence of Omicron and following the Government advice to work from home- if you can, the Executive Team paused the requirement for staff members to attend the office on one day each week. The CEO advised that, in reality, he did not foresee staff members returning to the office working on 2-3 days each week before Easter 2022.</p>	

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		<p>Until further notice, to monitor numbers in the building and to protect everyone's health and wellbeing, staff members needing or wishing to work in the office at any time, had been asked to undertake a rapid lateral flow test and to book their office in advance of attending. The PSNI team is small and their health and wellbeing must be a priority.</p> <p>The CEO advised that one team member was unfortunately suffering from "Long Covid". It was agreed by Council members that their attendance at the offices for face-to-face Council meetings would put the organisation's staff at risk. Council also acknowledged the additional risk that this would pose for its registrant members who, if they became ill, would have to isolate for 10 days which would, in turn, have a knock-on effect on the NI Health Service.</p> <p>The President suggested that Council may choose to convene Council meetings in an alternative venue, prior to returning to face-to-face meetings in University Street, where the issue would not be as critical.</p> <p>The general consensus of Council was that Council meetings should continue to be conducted remotely and that, if the IT was available, a blended approach could be taken.</p> <div data-bbox="698 1050 1704 1264" style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Key Decision / Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The President will circulate the Chairs' Forum events calendar to all Council members.</li> <li>• Council decided to continue with remote Council meetings and, in the future, to consider the possibility of a blended approach.</li> </ul> </div>	

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9.0	<b>CEO's Report For Information</b>	<p>The CEO advised that most matters on which he was reporting were elsewhere in the agenda. He advised Council of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interim Registrar role:           <p>The CEO advised that he continued to cover the substantive Registrar's Statutory role while she was on maternity leave and that the Executive Team was assisting wherever possible, meaning resources were very stretched but managing the additional work.</p> <p>The organisation was currently in the process of recruiting an Interim Project Manager to deal with post-registration education and training, standards for RPs and SPs and the registration of pharmacy technicians.</p> </li> <li>2. Staff pressures:           <p>The CEO advised that the organisation was dealing with an unprecedented level of Fitness to Practise cases being referred to one of the two Committees. The current number equates to previous annual totals. The preparation and circulation of the requisite paperwork was priority and was adding pressure onto staff.</p> <p>He confirmed that no particular trends had been identified although lockdown but the pandemic and the pressures it placed upon the health service could possibly be an external influence. In addition, the organisation was getting cases about behaviours with and frustrations with pharmacy services. These were not usually Fitness to Practise cases but a process is in place to manage them. One of the Fitness to Practise cases involved up to 8 registrants as the investigation developed but, in the end, only 1 was identified for referral. That particular case was under investigation for around 18 months which further stretched resources.</p> </li> </ol>	

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	<p>There was a definite upturn in complaints, all of which were investigated, however small. The CEO expressed concern at an upturn in the number of health cases involving registrants some of which may be related to pressures on the profession. As no particular trend had been identified, the organisation was not in a position to do anything to address it beyond sensitivity when investigating such cases.</p> <p>The CEO agreed to present a paper, at the May Council meeting, in relation to the range of issues in Fitness to Practise cases, within the bounds of Data Protection. He added that the Executive Team would be seeking Council's assistance with the topic of Internet Pharmacies / remote supply and strengthening the guidance and that they were already talking to the Department and HSCB about.</p> <p>3. Pharmacy Technicians:</p> <p>The CEO advised that information was awaited from the CPO and it had been hoped that there would be a ministerial statement on registration of pharmacy technicians. Progress had been made but it was not yet across the line. Once the Ministerial statement was made, if it was supportive, the organisation could start to build a Pharmacy Technician Register.</p> <div data-bbox="712 1086 1682 1241" style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Key Decision / Action:</b></p> <p>The CEO will present a paper to the May 2022 Council meeting on the range of issues in Fitness to Practise cases.</p> </div>	

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10.	<b>Regulatory Reform For Information</b>	<p>The President drew Council’s attention to the consultation document that was published by the DHSC. He advised that PSNI did not feature in the consultation but, nonetheless, it was important to take note of the direction of travel that the UK government was pursuing.</p> <p>The CEO added that, although the consultation would have no impact on the organisation, it will be asked to make a response. There were many issues to be teased out at consultation including the question of whether to regulate or not a particular profession. It was widely acknowledged that such decisions were as much political as algorithm based</p>
11.0	<b>Corporate Strategy Addendum For Information</b>	<p>The Chair of the Corporate Strategy Addendum Task &amp; Finish Group, Brendan Garland (BG) presented an update report, as follows:</p> <p>He advised, by way of background, that in May 2021, Council agreed that the next long-term Strategy would benefit from a complete renewal. It was noted that new Council members should be able to contribute. Staff shortages, etc, had impacted on the ability to work on this.</p> <p>At the September 2021 Council meeting, Council decided that a limited review would take place to identify gaps and, thereafter, to create a one-year addendum to the existing Corporate Strategy. It was proposed that this would come into force in April 2022 until May 2023. A Task &amp; Finish Group was established to conduct a full review of the Corporate Strategy and to produce a 12-month addendum.</p> <p>A meeting was held with the Executive Team to identify issues that were no longer relevant, had been subject to delay or emerging priorities and the CEO gave significant help and guidance. In addition, two group-only meetings and three meetings between the CEO and BG were held.</p>

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		<p>A final paper would be presented to Council at its March 2022 meeting. In addition, the Group may benefit from Council’s input in relation to Objective 1 Goal 1 which relates to the PSA. The Group feels that the objective should remain unchanged.</p> <p>The CEO clarified that this point stated that the organisation would meet all the standards in 4 of the next 5 years – which had already been missed . He suggested that it could be reworded but the main issue was that it was no longer a goal that could be achieved and its currency had been somewhat devalued.</p> <p>BG thanked the members of the Task &amp; Finish Group, the Executive Team and the PSNI staff for their help to date.</p> <p>The President thanked the Group for all the progress they had made.</p> <div data-bbox="707 842 1675 1002" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Key Decision / Action:</b></p> <p>The Corporate Strategy Addendum Task &amp; Finish Group will present a final paper to the March 2022 Council meeting cases.</p> </div>	
12.0	<p>Council Training &amp; Development <b>For Information</b></p>	<p>The Chair of the Council Training &amp; Development Task &amp; Finish Group, Carol Moore (CM), advised Council that good progress had been made but that there was still more to do. The key actions were:</p> <p>A list of core competences had been identified as Corporate Governance; Strategic Awareness; Evaluation; Communication; and Collaborative Working. The role of Council had been discussed and teased out and, thereafter, the individual competences required. There was significant overlap which led to the list presented today. Competences will be underpinned by a list of skills required across Council and this is currently being refined and developed. It was recognised that not all members will be required to have all skills at the same level. For example, in relation to finance, Council would need a couple of</p>	

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	<p>members to be well experienced in financial management. The Group had identified three levels within the skills, being understanding, knowledge and practical application. It will develop indicators for all levels for each of the skills and this will form the basis of the skills audit which should be conducted every 2–2.5 years i.e., at the start and mid-points of the Corporate Strategy, or on the introduction of new Council members or other major change to Council.</p> <p>Consideration had been given to individual appraisal which should be undertaken on a 2-year cycle and arranged so that approximately half of Council members would be assessed in Year 1 and the remainder in Year 2. Assessments should be validated and conducted by an independent assessor. There must be absolute clarity on what the individual appraisals are measuring and there must be a strong link between the document, the Strategy and the achievement of KPIs.</p> <p>The Group also looked at Corporate Council effectiveness and more work will be undertaken on this. The first Strategy has been drawn up and further work will be undertaken.</p> <p>The VP thanked the Group for its methodical work. He noted that the Department did not allow Council to select a skills set for Council members and the Minister selects Council members. That could undermine this work and become unstuck because of the ministerial process. However, even if Council selected its member, it may still not get the required skills set and fill all gaps. However, Council members could reach the required level of skills after they were appointed. There would always be something that they would need or want to learn.</p> <p>The President question the absence of leadership from the core competences and noted that this was something to be developed by all Council members and expressed his wish for leadership to be added to the list but left it for the Group to make the final decision.</p>	

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		<p>CM assured Council that the Group would take all points into consideration. She pointed out that, while appointments to Council were made by the Department, Council could still explore desirable skills and encourage the Department, when putting forward their submission to the Minister, in relation to the skills that would be important to Council, recognising that the Department made the final decision.</p> <p>CM concluded by thanking all members of the Group for their work.</p>	
13.0	Progress against Strategy <b>For Information</b>	The CEO advised that there had been little change since the last Council meeting and referred members to the executive summary. There were no questions	
14.0	Post-Registration Education – Update <b>To Note</b>	<p>Council noted the content of the paper.</p> <p>Page 3 noted that “the CPO would welcome an update from Council”. The VP asked if that had happened. The HPA confirmed that a letter had been sent to the CPO outlining actions to date.</p>	
15.0	Any Other Business <b>For Information</b>	None.	
16.0	Date of next meeting <b>To Note</b>	The next Public Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 15 March 2022 @ 09:30.	

The Meeting closed @ 10:38