

# Patient and Client Council

**Your voice** in health and social care

## MINUTES (Open Session)

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### The 91st Council Meeting of the Patient and Client Council

#### Zoom meeting

18<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**Closed Session 09:45 – 10:00 am**

**Open Session 10:00 – 12:30pm**

#### Present

Ms Christine Collins (Chair)

Cllr Martin Reilly

Mr Patrick Farry

Mr Alan Hanna

Mr Paul Douglas

Mr Bill Halliday

Ms Joan McEwan

#### Attendees

Ms Meadhbha Monaghan, Head of Operations PCC

Ms Lesley Mitchell, (HSC Leadership Centre Associate)

Ms Ruth Barry, Senior Policy Impact and Influence Manager

Ms Rosemary Taylor, Senior Governance Manager

Mr Chris Turkington, Business Support Manager (Finance)

Ms Carol Collins, Business Support Manager

Ms Michelle Tennyson PHA, Assistant Director of AHP PPI and Patient Experience

#### Apologies

Ms Liz Cuddy

Ms Vivian McConvey, CEO PCC

- 1. Welcome** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
- 2. Minutes of last meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October and Matters Arising**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> October were approved.

Matters arising (Paper 617) were reviewed:

  - Update on the Peoples' Priorities Committee is on the agenda under item 8
- 3. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair declared an interest due to her position as Interim Chair of the RQIA. However, the Department of Health have confirmed that as the position is time bound and that they are actively seeking to recruit a Chair, she therefore should recuse herself from dealing with any matters which she considers would constitute a conflict of interest in relation to her respective role as Interim Chair of the RQIA.

#### **4. Chair's Update**

##### Update on Appointments

The Chair advised that recent interviews were positive and generated a good pool of candidates. The interview results await Ministerial approval on the appointments. Chair acknowledged the term extensions of Mr Hanna, Ms Cuddy and Ms McEwan and the co-option of Cllr Reilly, and hoped that appointments of new members would provide timely replacements for upcoming Council vacancies, as well as additional appointments to ensure legislative compliance.

##### Standing Orders

These will be discussed on the agenda

##### Review of Governance

The Chair formally introduced Ms Taylor, Senior Governance Manager who is providing support to the PCC on governance and would be giving a verbal presentation on her review on Information Governance and Risk Management. The Chair reminded the Council Members that Council Self-Assessments needed to be completed before the end of March 21/22.

#### **5. Chief Executive's Update**

In the absence of the CEO, Ms Monaghan delivered the Chief Executive's update.

##### Staff Stability

Ms Monaghan updated the Council on the progress achieved on the staff stability plan, noting that a significant proportion of posts have moved from agency contracts to permanent or temporary roles within the PCC since the last Council meeting, following a number of recruitment exercises. Ms Monaghan advised that of 2 new appointments to the PCC Leadership Team who would both be joining the PCC from 1<sup>st</sup> Feb – Anna O'Brien, formerly of the Southern Trust, joins the PCC in the full time permanent role of Communication and Public Affairs Manager and Denise Kelly who is joining the PCC on a 1 year secondment from the Belfast Trust in the temporary role of Service Manager (Advocacy and Engagement).

SAI's and Inquiries: Ms Monaghan explained that Trusts were now coming forward seeking PCC support and involvement when there were Serious Adverse Incidents. Although welcome, this could pose problems for capacity: such issues were very time intensive and required a high degree of skill to manage optimally. The matter has been consistently raised with the Sponsor Branch in relation to the need for an additional resource of a dedicated SAI Team within the PCC.

The Chair noted that it was an encouraging picture to see the HSC Trusts seeking support and engagement from the

PCC. The aim is to support families to engage in the SAI process which can be complicated and traumatic.

The Chair referred to staffing, and asked how the Departmental budgets are now completed (3 year budgets) and how this would impact the confirmation of funding. Ms Monaghan advised that Mr Turkington would be joining the meeting later and lead the Council through it in more detail. PCC now have guaranteed assumed recurrent funding, it means we can recruit for permanent positions. Ms Monaghan added that the confirmation of 3 year budget would help the PCC in securing posts longer term.

Mr Hanna commented that due to the staffing changes, an updated organisation chart would be useful. Ms Monaghan agreed to distribute this and pen pics for the Leadership and Executive Management Team.

The Chair commented that when things had settled down and it was safe to do so, it would be useful to have a Council and staff away day for everyone to get to know each other.

**ACTION: MS COLLINS TO DISTRIBUTE THE UPDATED ORGANISATION CHART AND PEN PICS FOR THE LEADERSHIP AND EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAMS.**

**6. ARAC Update, ToR and previous ARAC minutes**

Mr Farry began his update by thanking Ms Mitchell and Ms Taylor for the work they have completed in the ARAC and Business Committee's, adding that they had helped streamline and enhance the processes.

Mr Farry sought approval for the Minutes of the meeting (Paper 619) held on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

Ms Mitchell sought approval of 3 key governance documents (Paper 618) – the Standing Orders, Scheme of Reservation & Delegation and Standing Financial Instructions. Ms Mitchell advised that these had been updated to note new terminology, key changes and reflect best practice. Ms Mitchell also advised that they were presented at the last ARAC meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 where they were approved to be presented to Council. Ms Mitchell advised that if approved today, several internal audit recommendations would also be approved and these documents could then go onto the website and be shared with all staff.

Mr Farry added that some roles from the ARAC have been transferred to the Business Committee. Mr Farry and Mr Hanna met with Ms Mitchell and Ms Taylor to review these documents and ensured that nothing was duplicated or missed by either Committee. Mr Farry and Mr Hanna agreed

that financial matters would be a standing matter on both Committees. Mr Farry referred to the Terms of Reference for the ARAC Committee (Paper 621).

The Council approved the Terms of Reference proposed by Mr Hanna and Mr Farry.

Mr Hanna added that as part of the induction the new Council members should be taken through the papers and suggested a session with Ms Mitchell and Ms Taylor to ensure they fully understand the content of them.

The Chair also enquired on the best way to take staff through the 3 documents. Ms Mitchell agreed that it was vital that staff are aware of the documents as it contains guidance on key areas such as the Code of Conduct, and the procurement process. Ms Monaghan added that this could be presented at a staff engagement day and a different presentation completed for the new the Council Members. Ms Mitchell agreed on this approach as the Council Members needed a wider governance understanding and a wider brief on key areas such as the financial memorandum.

Ms McEwan agreed that the new Council Members, as part of their induction, get a feel for the scale of change and organisational transformation the PCC has went through and what has gone before. The Chair agreed that the PCC has gone through a journey and it was essential for them to understand what is ahead.

Cllr Reilly also agreed with this approach.

The Chair noted the requirement to keep these key documents under review and asked Ms Mitchell the best way of ensuring they are kept up to date. Ms Mitchell advised that these documents would be held in the Policies and Procedures register which Ms Taylor is currently reviewing. Part of this review will be to ensure that there is a timetable to review all policies and procedures. Ms Taylor also advised that she would be completing an Assurance Framework where a timetable of which document needs to go to each Committee will be included. This may include recommendations for these documents to have a light review annually and a more in depth review every 3 years. The Chair also added that any financial briefs sent out by the Department of Finance must be included in this and updated as and when they occur.

The Chair proposed the all 3 documents for approval and Mr Hanna seconded the proposal.

Mr Farry then referred to the Governance and Audit Annual Report (Paper 620). Mr Farry added that it was a detailed document and a fair record. Ms Mitchell added that the

report should have been completed in June when the annual accounts were signed off, but due to particular challenges, it was agreed with Mr Farry to be completed in December 2021. However, Ms Mitchell advised it was her intention that it was completed annually in June to coincide with the completion of the Annual Reports.

Mr Farry discussed the internal audit recommendations where three quarters of the recommendations were completed. Mr Farry advised that after discussions with Mr David Charles, the PCC would be awarded a satisfactory recommendation at year end. A further update will be presented by Mr Charles at the ARAC meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The Chair added that this was good news as it helped with the completion of the Annual Report and recognised the progress made in the organisation.

The Chair thanked Mr Farry for his update and the Council noted the ARAC minutes 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

## **7. Business Committee**

Mr Hanna began his update by reiterating the good work that Ms Mitchell and Ms Taylor have completed to date. Mr Hanna advised that due to the timing of the last Business Committee, some of the agenda items had been recently discussed. Mr Farry referred to Ms Mitchell's support in helping with the Terms of Reference and ensuring items did not overlap with the ARAC meeting. Mr Hanna also advised that Ms Mitchell had helped with the Business Committee timetable which gave the Committee more opportunity for key reports such as staff reports and information governance to be reviewed at the right time. Mr Hanna added that Ms Mitchell was helping to keep a watching brief and keeping the lines of communication open between the Business Committee and ARAC.

Mr Hanna referred to the key topics discussed at the Business Committee at 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022 which included Operations Performance, finance and the Alemba project. Mr Hanna also referred to the underspend that has been reported but added, that as it was related to challenges around recruitment, it was unavoidable. There was money allocated to the website project which due to a delay in the procurement meant the allocated budget needed to be returned. However, Ms Monaghan assured Mr Hanna that this had now been factored into the budget for 2022/23.

As per the ARAC update, Mr Hanna advised the Terms of Reference for the Business Committee (Paper 623) had also been updated.

The Chair noted that a tremendous amount of progress

had been made with the Committee and agreed that there was a real need to have a timetable in place to ensure there was a flow of information through the operation. Ms Monaghan advised The Chair that there was already a meeting booked with Ms Carol Collins and that the timetable should be in place by week ending the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The Chair agreed that this will help with Risk Management.

Mr Hanna made reference to the discussion at the last Council meeting regarding the external audit and the fact that it was disrupted by the pandemic. As Mr Farry had already advised, internal audit is back on track to deliver a satisfactory rating and the external audit with ASM is also on track. Ms Mitchell added that she met with external auditors in December 2021 and the external audit plan was going to ARAC on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and she believes there will not be any gaps identified due to the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Ms McEwan agreed with Mr Hanna and the need to stay on top of processes. Ms McEwan also noted that the differences between the Terms of Reference of the ARAC and the Business Committee, with one being short and punchy and the other a lot longer. Ms McEwan advised that there is a need to be able to read across them and ensure there is independence i.e. not the same the people on both committees. Ms McEwan also noted that she was unsure re the membership and this could be interpreted differently i.e. note the members on one and not the other.

The Chair referred to the Standing Orders which advise that the membership can be independent. Ms Mitchell advised that it was acceptable to have the same people on all committees but recommended that membership should be different. Ms Mitchell also added that it was good to have one same person on each committee. Ms Mitchell believed that confusion could arise because the different Terms of References were written by different people at different times so may look slightly different but assured the Council that they are in line with the Standing Orders. The Chair added that this can be looked at in the review by Ms Taylor and be fine-tuned to apply consistency. It was also added that the names of members do need to be revised as and when appropriate.

Mr Hanna proposed the amended Terms of Reference and Cllr Reilly seconded this.

The Chair thanked Mr Hanna for his update and the Council noted the BARC minutes 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

## 8. People's Priorities

Ms Monaghan gave a verbal update on the Peoples' Priorities Committee.

Ms Monaghan noted that she was hoping to have had a draft Terms of Reference in place for consideration by Mr Douglas (Chair of the Committee) and the Council but unfortunately this has not been the case due to other work commitments. Ms Barry has recruited a Senior Impact and Policy Manager (Dr Martin McCleary) who will support her to write the Terms of Reference. Once a draft Terms of Reference has been written, they will engage with Mr Douglas. Ms Monaghan noted that it was important to get this right as it will dictate the rhythm of the organisation and document how the information moves up the organisation.

The Chair noted that this is a key piece of work for the PCC and as it is new territory (and real development work), it also takes time and expertise. The Chair noted that while it's disappointing that the Committee is not up and running, she can understand the situation especially when key pieces of work such as the Inquiry commitments that needed to take priority.

Ms McEwan asked Ms Monaghan if she had considered Section 75 and to ensure it was included when looking at the guidelines. Ms Monaghan agreed that this is important and will definitely be included, adding that the new Alemba system will help the PCC collect section 75 data.

The Chair added that this information will be meaningful to add to the PCC's Equality Report at year end.

Ms McEwan stated that (apart from Section 75) it was particularly hard to reach communities and groups. Ms Monaghan advised that the PCC have made great strides this year and the equality work has improved vastly but agreed that there was a need to move to a more systemic way with rhythm and consistency being essential.

The Chair asked Mr Douglas (as The Chair of the People's Priorities Committee) his views on the progress on the Committee to date. Mr Douglas advised that he was happy with progress and added that as a small organisation, we should take our time to ensure we have the right processes in place before hitting the go button. The Chair noted it would be useful to have the Committee started before the induction of the new council members. As this is an operations (and outreach) piece, it was important to allow new members to input and help it move forward.

Comfort break at 11:00 – 11:15

**9. PCC  
Performance Report**

Ms Monaghan advised that the Quarter 3 Performance Report (Paper 624) covered results from April 1st 2021 to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. The report was presented to the Business Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and constructive feedback was favourably received.

Ms Monaghan advised that the full report is in the papers but Ms Barry will go through a presentation which gives a snap shot of the paper and will concentrate on the highs and lows.

The Chair welcomed Ms Barry to her first full Council meeting and asked Ms Barry to introduce herself to the Committee.

Ms Barry introduced herself and completed her presentation. Ms McEwan thanked Ms Barry for the presentation and reflected on the excellent work being done which was very encouraging.

Mr Hanna thanked Ms Barry for an interesting set of figures which he found encouraging especially due to the effect the pandemic has had. Mr Hanna also found the social media piece interesting and asked if Ms Barry believed that this was the way to relate to younger people. Ms Barry advised that this was an interesting piece of work which she will progress with the new communications manager, Ms Anna O'Brien. Ms Barry added that it was important for us to analysis our social media presence, especially focusing on who is using it and how we communicate through it. Ms Barry also noted that going forward the PCC will use improved creative methods of communication for different people as it is evident that the older generations use Facebook while younger people use other methods i.e. Instagram. There is also a piece of work that needs to be done around how the PCC communicate with older people that aren't tech savvy and Ms Barry added that she is hoping to bring to Council a strategic plan regarding social media. Mr Hanna enquired as to whether the PCC were receiving negative comments regarding their social media presence. Ms Monaghan advised that there have been a few comments through social media about what the PCC are doing in regards to policy but nothing negative related to the PCC using social media as a communication forum. Ms Monaghan added that was important to understand what was expected regarding communications and what we are actually communicating. There is also a piece of work to move members onto the digital platform while still supporting



those that prefer hard copies, which was the case with the Strategic Statement of Intent consultation. Ms Monaghan advised that the PCC support the public in terms of technical issues and will provide platforms through emails, zoom etc. offering technical support to provide access to as wide a selection of the public as possible.

Cllr Reilly agreed with Ms O'Brien that strategizing is the way forward as there are so many avenues of social media to use. Cllr Reilly also referred to Ms Barry touching on the work with colleagues in Scotland. While Cllr Reilly agreed this was beneficial, he advised that we need to ensure we are also reaching across all the Trust areas. Ms Monaghan agreed with this and advised that there was a digital audit completed last year which is a good road map for Ms O'Brien to start with. The PCC will also be moving to a geographical based team which will build on the networks of network.

Ms McEwan also referred to the split between young and elderly and the need to liaise with community networks such as official carers who reach into people's homes. Ms McEwan mentioned the hubs that are operating in each of the trusts, adding to bear NIAS in mind. Ms Monaghan added that NIAS remain on our radar and we will continue working with them.

Mr Hanna reflected on the discussion in the Business Committee re the Operational Report. Mr Hanna referred to the main report and that while some of areas were not easy to follow and was pleased to see the report has been reduced to a more manageable one. Mr Hanna added that over achieving is as much a pressure as the pressures when we underachieve.

The Chair reflected that the targets were set a while ago and while they need refined, it is heartening to see that there is a demand/need for our services but need to ensure we have the skills and capacity to feed into the mill.

The Chair noted that she was content that presenting this as a PowerPoint presentation instead of a paper was useful. The Committee approved the content and the new format of the paper.

#### Financial Performance Report

Mr Turkington presented his update (Paper 625) the accounts as at the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

Mr Turkington advised that there was a projected surplus in November's figures of £120K. Mr Turkington advised that part of the finance process is to review the forecast,

going through each line compared to actual spend. As the figures presented are based on the 30<sup>th</sup> November they are slightly outdated and Mr Turkington advised that January's figures were due shortly and he projected that it may be less than the £120K currency reported. .

## 10. Business Support

Mr Turkington advised on the reasons for the under spend:

- £27K already returned to the Department in October accounts because the anticipated projects could not take place.
- £40k allocated to the new website. Challenges in the procurement process meant the process could not be completed by end march 2022.
- £16K allocated to the digitisation project. This is an unknown quantity as we explore how to digitise hard copy historic records.
- Some small accruals i.e. postage, IT equipment.
- Biggest delay was due to recruitment - £8600 expenditure not incurred this year due to vacant posts.

In summary, Mr Turkington advised that the biggest challenge related to staff costs due to the issue in recruiting new staff. He added that when the right staff have been found and an estimated start date was assigned, delays occurred within the recruitment process with the full process actually taking an excess of 3 months. This does not also take into account notice periods added to the end of this process.

Mr Turkington advised that the PCC could not carry this sum of money as an underspend and while breakeven was the best case scenario, the maximum amount of underspend that could be reported was £20K. Mr Turkington advised he would be reviewing January's accounts on Monday the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and after discussing the final recommendation with Ms Monaghan and Ms Mitchell, will approach the Department and advise of the easement.

Mr Turkington noted that Ms Clodagh Cully was resigning from BSO Finance and he would work with Ms Tina Steele every month to ensure we fall within requirements to break even, which following the return of the surplus is feasible.

The Chair thanked Mr Turkington for his update and agreed that managing the staff costs is an issue.

Mr Farry asked for confirmation that we received income from Octobers monitoring and now appear to be handing it back. Mr Turkington confirmed this was the case. However, he added while some of this funding was

allocated to staffing (who never started), the majority of the money was for training. Ms Monaghan agreed that October monitoring was for training and staffing, confirming that the funding requested for training is planned and will go ahead. Ms Monaghan reiterated what Mr Turkington had advised in that the PCC had tried to use an agency to cover some of the posts but again could not get the required people.

Mr Farry raised concerns on the short time scale to complete the training before year end. Mr Turkington explained that the bids for in June/July were for the staff we needed to put in place and October monitoring was for training costs which will be used. Mr Turkington agreed that it was an unfortunate situation to be in but the PCC were not alone and other ALB's were in the same position for the same reasons. Mr Turkington added that the training that we requested the money for was bespoke and dates are in place to be completed by year end. He added that the training is being completed in the last quarter due to the procurement process.

Mr Hanna reminded Mr Turkington of the increasing costs of running the Council for the next financial year as the budget will need to cover 14/15 members instead of 8/9. Mr Turkington confirmed that the correct budget had been allocated for this.

Ms Mitchell took the opportunity to assure the Council that the process in regards to fund bidding was followed and that there were very strong management processes in place in the PCC. The Chair confirmed that she was aware that other ALBs are in the same position and the process for recruitment is slow. However, The Chair reiterated that we need to be strong with processes and know exactly what we are handing back in January.

Ms McEwan noted she understood what Ms Mitchell was saying and was comforted by her assurance. Ms McEwan also referred to June monitoring which is coming up and asked what planning had been done. Mr Turkington assured the Council that planning for June monitoring had already begun and he had a clear indication on what we would be bidding on.

The Chair added that she was reassured and that the figures were solid. The Chair also advised that it was necessary to keep liaising with BSO to ensure we get the figures we need on time but was reassured that Ms Steele, the Manager in BSO was looking after our accounts.

Ms Mitchell added that good finance people will move

roles as the current market is lucrative for them. However, she added that while a key member of BSO leaving may be leaving, Mr Turkington had a good grip of the finances and along with Ms Steel from BSO, can move forward with no risk.

Mr Hanna noted that these challenges were discussed in the Business Committee and again these may put further pressure on staff having to managing this.

### Corporate Risk Register

Ms Monaghan presented her update (Paper 626).

Ms Monaghan presented the current Corporate Risk Register to ARAC on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Ms Monaghan advised that there were no material changes to risk. There were currently 2 risks that had workarounds in place, information governance and data breaches. Information Governance will be widened out to cover information governance as a whole and is rated as high which is the same risk rating as before. Ms Monaghan added that this will be supported by the work Ms Taylor is doing and may result in overall changes. Ms Monaghan also referred to the desktop review being completed by Ms Taylor that will come to ARAC on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

Ms Monaghan discussed Stability and advised that on request from the ARAC its rating was increased. However, Ms Monaghan added that the PCC were now in a different position with the Public Appointments Unit moving forward as planned, and it has been downgraded to high (from extreme). Again, this will form part of the desktop review being completed by Ms Taylor and will be updated and presented to ARAC on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

The Chair noted that the work around governance and risk and the Council's self-assessment were major pieces of work and completing those as priority is key to place us on a solid footing.

Ms Taylor added that as part of her desk top review, she would be looking at a long term review and will be presenting a detailed plan. Ms Taylor added that there were a number of things to tidy up for year end and would update the Controls assurance to give the required assurance to the Council. Ms Taylor has completed an initial overview and will discuss with Ms Monaghan and Ms McConvey on how to progress it and bring formally to the Committees and Council to see how to take forward. Ms Taylor anticipates this to be around March 2022.

**11. Any other business**

The Chair thanked Ms Taylor for her update on her review. The Chair also noted the changes to the Corporate Risk Register and the finance report

The Chair noted Ms McConvey's recent bereavement and passed on condolences to Ms McConvey on behalf of herself and all Council members.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and noted that the meetings were running smoother and to schedule.

The Chair closed the meeting at 12:31pm

Signed   
Christine Collins  
Chair, PCC

Date 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**ACTION LIST / MATTERS ARISING**

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Reference	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status
4	<b>Council Self-Assessment to be completed by end of March</b>	R Taylor	End of March	
5	ACTION: MS COLLINS TO DISTRIBUTE THE UPDATED ORGANISATION CHART AND PEN PICS FOR THE LEADERSHIP AND EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAMS.	Ms Carol Collins	ASAP	