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1. REMIT AND CONSTITUTION



The Participation Forum (“the Forum”) has been established by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (Social Care Council) in line with its core value of Partnership and to provide assurance to the Board that the Social Care Council is taking forward and further developing the User and Carer Participation and Engagement agenda which is related to the fulfilment of its statutory functions. The Forum is one of four partnerships of Council and is chaired by a non-executive member of the Council.

2. PURPOSE AND ROLE



2.1. The purpose of the Forum is to:

- a) Improve participation and engagement with service users and carers in line with the principals of Co-production which includes sharing their knowledge, expertise and lived experience to support the work of the Social Care Council.
- b) Support the Social Care Council to raise practice standards of registrants working in Social Work and Social Care.
- c) Hold the Social Care Council to account for their participation and engagement activities with Service Users and Carers.
- d) Support and develop the Service User and Carer members of the Participation Forum.

3. AIMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



The following aims and responsibilities fall within the remit of the Forum:

	<p>3.1. Ensure that Users and Carers are involved in the Social Care Council’s planning processes to include the Council’s Corporate Plan and the Council’s annual Business Plan.</p>
	<p>3.2. Provide objective assurance to the Board that there are adequate arrangements in place to promote the efficient and effective engagement of users and carers in the work of the Social Care</p>

	Council.
	3.3. Monitor the progress of Service user and Carer engagement activities through the review of the Participation Action Plan and evaluation of the impacts of involvement activity at each meeting.
	3.4. Oversee the Social Care Council's strategic policy on Personal and Public Involvement including carer and user feedback and recommend any User and Carer engagement and participation policies on behalf of the organisation to the Council for approval
	3.5. Satisfy itself that adequate arrangements are in place to promote the efficient and effective engagement of users and carers within the organisation which includes the oversight of the User and Carer database and invitations to sector organisations to reflect on their users and carer engagements.
	3.6. Ensure an adequate induction programme and ongoing training & development opportunities are available for each member of the forum.
	3.7. Report to Council immediately if there is any internal failing in systems, or risk to the processes associated with User and Carer participation including recommendations and remedial action taken or proposed
	3.8. Complete an annual audit of the work of the Forum and perform a self-effectiveness assessment annually in accordance with good governance practice.

	<p>3.9. Complete and Annual Review of the Forum Terms of Reference and recommend to Council for approval.</p>
	<p>3.10. Have oversight of any other matters that pertains to user and carer participation and engagement.</p>

4. COMPOSITION OF THE FORUM

The Forum is chaired by a Non-Executive Director of Council and is composed of three additional Non-executive Directors, the Director of Registration and Corporate Services, a Professional Adviser and a minimum of 3 service users and 3 carers.

The quorum for the Forum is one Non-executive, one Social Care Council Attendee and 2 participants from the Users and Carers membership.

5. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Attendance

The Director of Registration and Corporate Services and/or the Nominated Professional Adviser to the Forum, or their deputies, would be required to be in attendance at all meetings of the Participation Forum. The Director of Registration and Corporate Services will provide support to the Forum and, in particular, provide advice and guidance to the Chair.

Duties include:

- Agreement of agenda, minutes and meetings with the chairman;
- Collation and distribution of papers 7 days in advance of the meeting;
- Drafting the annual Forum action plan in consultation with members of the Forum;
- Maintaining an oversight of matters arising from meetings.

The Chief Executive shall ensure secretariat facilities are provided for the Participation Forum.

Frequency of Meetings

The Forum shall meet at least four times a year to coincide with key Board Meeting dates for reporting purposes. The Forum shall meet more frequently if considered necessary by the Chair in order to effectively discharge the execution of important business.

Proceedings

In accordance with Council practice and the ethos enshrined within the Councils 'Standing Orders', decisions of the Forum will normally be arrived at through discussion and consensus rather than by voting on a show of hands. Where votes are taken, the Chair will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.

Members absent from a particular meeting are expected to abide by agreed decisions of the Forum, although they shall have a right to query the agreed decisions at the next meeting at which they are present (to the extent such query is then relevant).

The Participation Forum values communication and debate to reach the right decisions which provides assurance on the Forums work to Council. As a member of the Participation Forum it is accepted that members, **when representing the NI Social Care Council**, will always represent the decisions made in Forum meetings even if a member did not vote for or agree with a particular decision. Where a member wishes to disagree with a Forum decision they may have their objection recorded in the minutes.

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Information which is shared at a Forum meeting, and identified as needing confidential protection shall be treated as such by all those present, including

deputies, guests or invitees, as the case may be (this relates to personal commentary made at the meeting as well as all other confidential written material).

Minutes

The minutes of the Forum shall be written up and issued to the Chair within seven working days of the last meeting. The minutes of the Forum shall be made available to Board members at the first opportunity once approved. As a formal Committee of the Social Care Council, minutes of the Forum meetings will also be published on the Social Care Council website.

Reporting

The Chair will provide an annual report on the Forums actions, progress and effectiveness in time for approval of the Social Care Council Annual Report and Accounts.

Training

All new members will be provided with Induction training. Training will also be provided to members of the Forum as appropriate and will include relevant developments in engagement and participation working and related organisational matters.