

## Minutes

**Meeting:** 109<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting of the Patient and Client Council

**Date and Time:** Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**Venue/Online:** via Microsoft Teams

10am-1pm

### **Council Members:**

Ms Ruth Sutherland (Chair)

Mr Stephen Matthews

Mr Alan Hanna

Ms Briege Arthurs

Mr Paddy Farry

Mr Tom Irvine

Mr Cadogan Enright

Mr Gary McMichael

Ms Paula Bradley

Ms Rhoda Walker

Mr Tom Sullivan

Mr Martin Quinn, Regional HSC PPI Lead, PHA

### **In attendance:**

Ms Meadhbha Monaghan, Chief Executive

Ms Una McKernan, Head of Operations

Mr Peter Hutchinson, Senior Policy, Impact and Influence Manager

Ms Katherine McElroy, Principal Practitioner

Ms Laura O'Neill, Senior Policy and Impact Officer

### **Apologies:**

Ms Emma O'Neill

Dr Julie Aiken

Ms Lauren Toner, Executive Assistant

## 1. INTRODUCTION

R Sutherland welcomed all to the meeting and thanked members for attending. R Sutherland welcomed observer, Martin Quinn from PHA to the meeting.

## **2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

All attendees reviewed minutes of previous meeting and approved.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

S. Matthews declared that he sits on the Board of the Equality Commission.

## **4. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

R Sutherland updated Council on her work to date since previous Council meeting. Chair shared that she was pleased that PCC Council is now to full compliment on local government representatives and hopes some new council members be present on 9<sup>th</sup> December All-Staff day. Chair will be seeking support to onboard new members.

Chair updated Council that PCC has recently been at NICON and launched the People to Partners paper. PCC participated in King's Fund Conference. PCC were received positively, and were the only NI representatives present.

## **5. CEO UPDATE**

M Monaghan shared that since the last council meeting PCC have been asked to step into assurance roles. PCC have worked with WHSCT regarding the issues with their Emergency General Surgery Consultation. PCC are working with Save our Acute Services (SOAS) and RQIA to provide assurance that public participation and patient safety are being looked at.

M Monaghan attended accountability meeting regarding BHSCT Cardiac Unit that SPPG and RQIA chair. PCC advised that more needs to be done to assure patients the service is safe. PCC have proposed that advocacy and patient voice is present.

M Monaghan sits on the Independent Sector Access Policy Board. PCC is present to advise on ethics, and oversight in the private sector. Issues raised included despite the Independent Sector providing more services, they are unable to access records on encompass.

M Monaghan wrote to the interim Permanent Secretary Mike Farrar regarding the sector guidance change or withdrawal of services. PCC believes this policy needs to be stronger and are now part of the circular.

M Monaghan met with Paul Rice Chief Digital Information Officer (CDIO). R Sutherland and M Monaghan have had on going conversations with CDIO and he is happy for PCC to have a role in digital transformation. R Sutherland said there could be an opportunity to invite CDIO to a future council meeting and provide feedback to him. T Sullivan raised issue with physiotherapists in GP practices not being able to access encompass an issue is fit notes.

M Monaghan chairs the Chief Executives forum for regional body ALBs. They are currently working on how ALBs influence regionally and how they can influence Trust Chief Executives. M Monaghan will meet with Chief Pharmacy Officer regarding the Neighbourhood Model of Care. R Sutherland and M Monaghan have met with Siobhan Casey, the Commissioner for Older People.

PCC has recruited to workstreams and worked with RQIA to develop Being Human Framework. This framework for patient safety culture across system. PCC's executive team will meet with LLAIS a welsh advocacy body, similar to PCC. M Monaghan through Centre for Peace and Democracy fellowship has also been promoting PCC's role in driving change.

M Monaghan shared that PCC won Team of the Year at the Picker Experience Network National Awards and nominated for best use of Social Media at NI Social Media Awards.

## **6. CONNECTION TO PURPOSE – PEOPLE TO PARTNERS**

M. Monaghan gave presentation on the context and findings from the 'Big Discussion' 'What the Public Think' – key findings report and People to Partners Paper. MM shared next steps on both pieces of work. Council praised the readability of the 'What the Public Think' – key findings report, which M Monaghan expressed will be something PCC considers in future

reports. P Hutchinson updated that PCC have recruited a statistician to look at the 'big discussion' data. This will enable PCC to speak more confidently on the data and build skills internally for analysing for similar datasets in the future.

## **7. ARAC**

P Farry updated all in regards to ARAC. P Farry highlighted all internal audit reports are satisfactory. There were some issues in audit regarding property management which U McKernan is working on. The Report To Those Charged with Governance from NI Audit Office reported no actions needed. On 22<sup>nd</sup> October, P Farry attended meeting with Chairs of all ALB ARACs to receive an update from Internal Audit about changes to internal audit function and on 5<sup>th</sup> November he attended the DoH ARAC chairs forum P Farry went to. U McKernan updated on Annual Report's publication which is now available on the PCC's website. P Farry recommended papers for approval.

**Action – Council approved Standing Orders, Scheme of Reservation and Delegation and Standing Financial Instructions.**

## **8. OPERATIONS – IMPACT AND INFLUENCE**

Business Committee approved the Quality Report in November. As the report needed to be published on Quality week, which commenced 10 November, this report needed retrospective approval from council.

**Action – Council approved Quality Report**

P Hutchinson gave a presentation and updated on Policy and Public Affairs. Policy Sub-Group met in August and October. It is intended they will move from a task and finish group to full subgroup of Council.

P Hutchinson updated council on NICON event, our main session, parallel session, café conversation and launch of People to Partners which was referenced and complimented throughout the conference.

Council were updated on the Adult Protection Bill. PCC wishes to be consultee on Adult Protection Bill, provisions regarding advocacy in the Bill and compliment a regional advocacy model. PCC has also pursued issues with governance structures, assurance and the use of CCTV. PCC have submitted evidence to Health Committee on Adult Protection Bill and are scheduled to give oral evidence to the Health Committee in January 2026.

K McElroy and P Hutchinson have been working on a plan to generate more interest across the network of networks to create a regional advocacy model and what PCC need to do to bring people along with us.

P Hutchinson attended to and spoke at the PSA Policy Symposium in October 2025. A key focus on symposium is how to engage better with people. PSA and PCC's relationship continues to grow, and this link has also raised PCC's profile with local regulators.

S Matthews raised query about the next steps after the publication of RQIA's Being Human Framework. P Hutchinson informed that the RQIA are interested to keep our involvement and hopefully will be reengaging soon. M Monaghan said it provides an opportunity for council to strengthen links between the Being Human Framework and People to Partners. RQIA are working towards getting the Being Human Framework to be implemented and taken onboard by Trusts.

## **9. BUSINESS SUPPORT AND GOVERNANCE**

U McKernan gave update on Equality Report. This report has been updated on the advice of Equality Unit. PCC will be writing new Equality and Disability Action Plan which PCC staff input. The Equality Unit will be present at 9<sup>th</sup> December All-Staff day. This Plan will also go out for consultation with the public.

Whilst these conversations usually start at EMT level, PCC are bringing the start of the conversation to all staff on 9<sup>th</sup> December All-Staff day to get

contribution from the start. To ensure equality and disability PCC undertaking formal review of PCC Support in the Community due in February.

The LucidTalk awareness poll has also shown gaps PCC needs to target.

**Action – Council approved Equality Report (as submitted to Equality Commission) (for noting).**

Finance (6-month Accounts) went through Business Committee. PCC need to achieve break even position of 0.5%. PCC are on track to achieve this.

**Action – Council approved Finance (6-month Accounts) (for noting)**

## **10. RISK**

U McKernan introduced the Summary Risk management (Paper). PCC wishes to extend the current risk register to March to allow for a workshop with new council members. U McKernan also noted there has been more attention given to Cyber Security by BSO.

PCC's new Information Management System (IMS) for case management will be moving to testing soon. IMS system will be ready ahead of current Alemba system contract ending in March 2026.

PCC are confident they will be staying in Linenhall Street and be able to expand beyond our current space. The PCC Lurgan office contract expires end of May 2026. PCC are currently in consultation with staff who are moving office and are working with BSO on this.

U McKernan shared update that Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry report will not be ready until March 2026.

T Sullivan asked if the Reset Plan will mean that with greater expectations on the PCC, there will be additional funds for PCC. Chair stated that there is no new money but PCC's approach has been to repurpose money already in the system and realign it. M Monaghan said PCC are also looking at the

diversification of funding for PCC and such conversations with the DoH have been positive.

## **11. BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

A Hanna updated all members in relation to Business Committee. In the Property asset management plan, colleagues said they are content with Linenhall Street office and that the Lurgan Office will be closed when the contract ends in May 2026. This will save money for PCC. M. Monaghan stated PCC has sought assurance from sponsor branch about legality of retaining regional offices. Sponsor branch said they did not need to be retained as the Support in the Community work complied with providing a regional presence across NI.

Regarding the implications of moving away from regional service, A Hanna stated that council are reassured that with PCC Support in the Community ensures PCC remains a regional service. K McElroy confirmed that PCC Support in the Community has enabled PCC to cover more areas in NI than ever had before.

**Action - Minutes from July meeting were approved.**

## **12. AOB**

None

## **13. DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

Next Council meeting will take place on Tuesday 3 March 2026 on Teams.