

**Minutes of the 100<sup>th</sup> Council meeting of the Patient and Client held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in person:**

**Open session: 10am – 1pm**

**Present:**

Ms Ruth Sutherland (Chair)  
Mr Stephen Mathews  
Mr Alan Hanna  
Mr Paddy Farry (joined via Zoom)  
Mr Paul Douglas

**In Attendance:**

Ms Meadhbha Monaghan, Chief Executive  
Ms Una McKernan, Head of Operations  
Mr Peter Hutchinson, Senior Policy Impact and Influence Manager  
Ms Clare McGlone, Executive Assistant  
Mr Martin Quinn, Regional HSC PPI Lead, PHA (joined via Zoom)

**Apologies:**

Cllr Martin Reilly (Co-opted member)  
Mr Tom Irvine  
Ms Carol Collins, Head of Business Support

**1. Welcome**

The Chair opened the meeting at 10.10am and noted that Cllr Reilly, Mr Irvine and Ms Collins were apologies. The Chair welcomed Mr Farry and Mr Quinn (PHA) remotely. The Chair welcomed Ms McKernan and Mr Hutchinson to their first Council meeting and asked members to introduced themselves.

Ms Monaghan added that as Ms Collins was an apology, Ms Monaghan would present the papers.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and matters arising**

The minutes from 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were reviewed and approved. The Minutes from 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were reviewed and approved.

Items on matters arising were covered in the papers. Mr Farry highlighted that Risk should be a standing item on the agenda. Mr Hanna asked for an update on the training to be provided by Mr Nicholl. Ms Monaghan advised that CEF

had training availability and it was suggested that training for Council members was put on hold until the recruitment of additional members was complete. Council members agreed to close this off and agreed to include this as part of the recruitment.

ACTION risk to be a standing item on the agenda going forward

**3. Declaration of Interests**

None noted.

**4. Chair's Update**

The Chair advised there had been a lot of activity around Council recruitment. The Chair had asked Public Appointments Unit to extend the deadline for applications. The sift would be taking place week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and interviews would take place throughout October 2023.

The Chair shared a presentation on her objectives which were leadership of Council, challenge and support with the CEO, raising public awareness of the PCC, promoting membership and championing how the PCC works to address inequalities in health and social care. The Chair was happy to get feedback on this.

**5. Chief Executive's Update**

Ms Monaghan provided an update on the key priorities set for the first few months in post.

**Stability**

Ms Monaghan was delighted to have Mr Hutchinson and Ms McKernan in post and had been investing time in their induction. Now a Senior team had been appointed there would be a focus on culture and development which would be a focus going forward. Ms Monaghan provided an overview of posts that were being developed.

**Visibility/Continuity**

Ms Monaghan attended key meetings across engagement and advocacy, and met BHSCT and RQIA. Ms Monaghan and Mr Hutchinson had met with NMC to discuss public engagement work and what this could look like. A meeting will also be arranged with the new body in Wales, Llais.

Looking towards key strategic drivers, Ms Monaghan presented the Strategic Outline case to the DOH and work had continued with Sponsor Branch. Ms Monaghan was working on a paper for the Top Management Group to present the Strategic Outline Case. PCC had received the final amendments and comments from DOH on the Partnership Agreement and the final step would be to submit this to Department of Finance.

The key focus would be Information Governance and key work in relation to the SAI redesign policy. PCC had also been developing a proposal for NICON. In relation to the inquiry work, PCC were engaging proactively with their legal representation, Ms McKernan and Ms Collins would be working on a resourcing plan which may be discussed later as part of the financial plan.

The Chair highlighted work had been full on since July and Ms Monaghan had done well to get a Senior team in place.

## **6. Strategic discussions**

Ms Monaghan and Chair had wanted strategic discussion on the agenda. Ms McKernan and Mr Hutchinson had been working on a horizon scanning process to be discussed with Council. The Chair and Ms Monaghan had discussed the need for a board schedule for formal board business meetings and strategic discussion workshops that will support the workplans of PCC. Chair and EMT to meet to discuss this with the outcome being a paper to come to November Board for discussion and approval.

### 'Collective Voice' paper for Regional Learning

Ms Monaghan provided a brief overview of the context of this paper. PCC had been asked if they could support the voice of those with lived experience at the resettlement summit. PCC had engaged with SPPG, and Ms Kelly and Ms Murray had looked at how this could be integrated rather than individual. Ms Kelly had worked with the engagement platform to develop a collective voice piece and engaged with a number of voluntary organisations to ask for support and look at what resources there was to demonstrate lived experience. This piece of work was a product of the Engagement platform work and taking together all submissions received.

Mr Douglas added that this was a very good piece of work to get voices of the people facing issues. Mr Mathews agreed this was an excellent piece of work and outputs were powerful in terms of issues. Mr Mathews highlighted a major issue was ensuring PCC's representational role and asked were there any gaps in representation and given budget constraints, was there a chance of this being delivered. Mr Hanna agreed this paper was very succinct and applied beyond Muckamore. The issues raised around lack of choice and communication were very strong points. The Chair commented that this was a quality piece of work, emphasising that it was important for PCC to be involved at the earliest point if we are to produce quality work. The Chair queried if the health trusts were working with all partners to stimulate resettlement solutions. The Chair queried if there was any way to publicise this work.

Ms Monaghan advised that PCC were looking to have constant conversations and there was commitment from SPPG to attend the Engagement platform. Ms Monaghan confirmed a draft report was being prepared following the resettlement summit but there was still work to do to understand representation. PCC were discussing with Sponsor branch about developing a blue print of how

PCC do work. Mr Mathews provided an update on his experience of working with Health trusts and the Chair provided background of experience working with health trusts in England.

## **7. Information Governance**

Ms Monaghan highlighted it was important to understand how information governance was currently managed in PCC and queried if Council had any comments or questions following reading the report. Mr Douglas read nothing that was concerning and was hopeful PCC would learn from mistakes. Mr Mathews highlighted it was important to note that PCC responded appropriately and followed a comprehensive process, which the ICO were content with. Mr Mathews added that PCC turned a challenging situation into a positive one. The Chair agreed it was important to develop an information governance culture rather than simply policy and procedure. Steps were being taken to improve the uptake of mandatory training within PCC and there was a need to assess the impact of training if staff have completed this.

The Chair suggested it was not always practical to have a separate laptop for PCC business and wanted to ask BSO for a better solution that takes account of the needs and ways of working of NED's. Ms Monaghan agreed and the month 4 financial report sets out spend related to project management support for the last 6 months of the year. Ms Monaghan confirmed BSO ITS was very proactive at looking at alternative ways for Council to work however in the meantime it was best to use the PCC laptop. Mr Mathews highlighted that the benefit of notifications to personal emails, would be the ability to respond in a timely manner and would be helpful to receive a prompt to look at the PCC laptop. Mr Farry suggested the password was text to the Council or a text sent to Council to notify that the papers had been sent. Ms Monaghan would revisit this and take into consideration Mr Farry's point.

Mr Quinn left the meeting at 11.20am.

The Chair advised that going forward information governance would be included in Risk reporting.

## **8. Finance**

Financial plan 23-24

Ms Monaghan advised Council that this was for approval and had been presented and discussed at Business Committee. Ms Monaghan was happy to take questions but taken as read. Ms Monaghan highlighted that PCC were able to retain their current allocation. Given the challenges and key gaps in senior posts, PCC were looking at underspend of £75k with the majority related to anticipated underspend on recruitment and inquiry spend. There had been some movements which the month 4 financial report sets out.

Mr Hanna added that during Business Committee there were queries around how DOH were treating capital and added the risk and assumptions were helpful. Mr Farry was happy with financial plan 2023-24.

Council members approved the Financial Plan 2023-24.

### **Finance update - Month 4 and MAHI legal spend at August 2023**

Ms Monaghan provided an update on these papers.

Ms Monaghan drew attention to Month 4 update and the movement of the surplus position which was due to key posts being filled. Table 4 on the report set out areas of spend discussed by EMT and LMT which were areas that needed investment. Mr Hutchinson and his team were developing a proposal to rebrand the PCC and how best to engage and tell PCC's story. Ms Monaghan advised this may go through procurement process as the proposal included an animated video. PCC were exploring with BSO possible project management support to explore Alemba and understand the needs of clients. Ms Collins was in discussion with BSO to understand if a project manager could be seconded into this post. Ms Monaghan advised there were some challenges, but depended on the ability to recruit at pace, however it was clear from communications that the surplus was present across the HSC. Ms Monaghan added that the surplus was likely to increase, due to BSO reducing PCC's rent which was something that needed managed month by month, with a possible retraction being made.

PCC had discussions with DAC Beachcroft around what engagement would look like. The spend to date has been £5k and DAC Beachcroft had estimated £110k. Ms Monaghan suspected the spend would be nowhere near this and advised that this budget would impact the breakeven. Ms McKernan and Ms Collins were developing a resourcing plan, some of this was looking at information shared as part of the Core Participant status and considering if DAC Beachcroft could assist with this, rather than doing this inhouse. It had been confirmed that PCC would get the same allocation next year, Ms Monaghan wanted confirmation that a retraction would not impact next year's allocation. Ms Monaghan advised that table 5 in the month 4 report was based on proposals coming to fruition. There was a risk that handing back money could impact core allocation for next year.

### **9. Operations Management**

Mr Hutchinson provided an overview of these reports and were taken as read.

#### Monitoring and performance report

This was a snapshot across the services provided by PCC. Mr Hutchinson advised a number of amendments were made, with some outputs being removed and added. This paper was supported by an advocacy report and in the future would be supported by an engagement report. Mr Hutchinson provided an update on the citizen hubs.

The Co-production associate post was vacant and was a significant priority for the organisation.

Mr Hutchinson had provided an update to Business Committee on the section 75 development which had been paused to allow review. PCC wanted to enhance and articulate better what was meant by marginalised groups.

Ms Monaghan added that some outputs may be stood down rather than have these rated as red and PCC were taking a proactive decision to review these. A lot of this work was looking at network of networks and what was the best use of PCC's resources. The Chair was supportive of this approach.

## **10. Safeguarding report**

Ms Murray joined the Council meeting at 11.45am.

This paper would be taken as read and Ms Murray would answer any queries from Council members. The Chair highlighted this paper appeared straightforward, agreed PCC's approach was the right thing to do. Ms Collins had previously asked for a Safeguarding Champion at Council level, The Chair was happy to take this role while waiting for new Council members to join.

Ms Murray advised the Service Managers were working on a Standard Operating procedure for Safeguarding and ensuring staff were trained. Ms Monaghan advised Council that at year end a request was received from DOH ARAC for raising concerns figures, this kind of request had not been received previously. Ms Monaghan had engaged with Sponsor Branch to understand this request and would be expected annually going forward. The Chair requested that Safeguarding training was completed with Council members when Council recruitment was completed, this was being explored.

Mr Mathews queried when issues from general public comes to attention of PCC, how significant these concerns were. Ms Murray advised not many come through, but the outcomes can be significant and ramifications can be significant. Ms Monaghan added that whilst the number was small, they had seen a greater uptake. Concerns needed to be discussed at senior level, with Service Managers engaging with Head of Operations and CEO if required to decide if there was a potential criminal concern or employer matter. Ms Collins was working on a Standard Operating Procedure to formalise this.

## **11. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)**

Mr Farry advised ARAC hadn't met since the previous Council meeting. There had been a lot of activity in July with the Annual Report and Accounts being approved. The next ARAC was scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

## **12. Business committee**

Mr Hanna (Business Committee Chair) provided a brief update to Council members. Mr Hanna advised that some papers reviewed at the Council meeting were also reviewed by Business Committee in July. During the meeting in July, members had received had some further detail on the information requests, contracts register, wider information governance action plan and had completed a committee self-assessment. Ms Collins had been working on some complaints along with the Service Improvement tracker.

The Business Committee minutes from May 2023 were reviewed by Council and approved.

### **13. Business Support/ Governance**

#### Workforce information report

Ms Monaghan took this as read and the report was an overview of the current position. Ms Monaghan highlighted absence that was short term, with no long-term sick at the moment. Given the small size of the PCC and the fact most of the budget related to staffing, cost related to sick leave was high. Ms Monaghan advised PCC had no agency staff at present. Ms Monaghan confirmed that Mandatory training would be a focus over the next few months and EMT had recognised the need to review this and monitor compliance levels.

The level of Annual leave taken would be updated for the next Business Committee meeting and staff were being encouraged to take their annual leave, this would also mean management would be able to plan ahead in terms of operations.

Mr Hanna queried if it would be expected that staff complete all mandatory training. Ms Monaghan confirmed this and expected that this would be higher number completed for the next report. Ms Monaghan added that the bulk of training was in relation to governance and didn't touch on operations side. The reporting also didn't reflect training completed on safeguarding, advocacy and engagement. Ms McKernan agreed it was important to complete other training which could be reported separately and create a culture where information governance is always on the agenda.

The Chair added it was useful to have trend data for sickness and turnover and the report was a good snapshot and indication of where the PCC was.

### **14. AOB**

Mr Mathews queried if there was movement around the issue of legal cover for past staff members. Ms Monaghan advised there was no movement and sought clarity through the inquiry, discussed with their solicitor, the Inquiry advised this was a PCC decision. Ms Monaghan would update the paper presented to Council with this advice and confirm with DOH that this is the position. This would be a Council decision to be discussed in a closed session.

Regarding the ongoing engagement of Ms McConvey with the inquiry, Ms Monaghan had a paper on the rationale and was working with HR on this.

Ms Monaghan advised that Risk should be a standing item at Council. The Business Support team were updating the Risk Register to come to the next ARAC. Many of the risks on the Risk register were still reflective of risks at a corporate level and would point to information governance and reputational risk. Insufficient resource had now gone the other direction and PCC had more of an underspend, however Ms Monaghan wouldn't change this on risk register.

The Chair informed members there was a board schedule for meetings and discussed a parallel schedule would be in place for workshops. The Chair hoped to bring this to Council to review in November 2023. The Chair proposed standing down the next workshop scheduled for October to review the schedule of work. Members agreed

Next meeting – 14th November 2023 and will be via Zoom.

**15. Close**

The meeting closed at 12.10pm.

Signed: *Ruth Sutherland* Date: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023