



COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
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Board of COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)

1. Membership of COSCA Board

Members of COSCA's Board make up COSCA's governing body and have the general control and management of COSCA. They represent an area of interest linked to COSCA's Development Plan, including all the various kinds of counselling and psychotherapy in Scotland. The remit of the member is to assemble a broad overview of his/her area of interest and keep abreast of developments, as well as carrying out their general governance roles and activities.

COSCA members are encouraged to contact specific members of the Board to pass on information related to his/her area of interest and/or to request advice/assistance with respect to that area of interest.

The table below contains the names of COSCA's Board and provides information on their respective area(s) of interest.

You may contact the COSCA Board members at info@cosca.org.uk

Name	Area of Interest
Jan Kerr	Chair/ Training; Recognition Scheme
Birgit Schroeter	Vice Chair/ Accreditation – Counsellors and Trainers
Vacant	COSCA Treasurer
Stuart Valentine	Specialist Counselling Area – Relationships
Linda McLachlan	Specialist Counselling Area – Alcohol/Drugs; Bereavement
Jill Whitfield	Rurality
Caron Westmoreland	Statutory Agencies
Linda MacLeod	Criminal Justice
Mary Maccallum Sullivan	Ethics
Daniel Reilly	Co-optee Lay Representative
Vacant	Co-optee Lay Representative

Vacant	Research
Vacant	Membership Services; Human Resources

2. Guidance on Public Attendance at COSCA Board Meetings

- The public may attend meetings of COSCA's Board as an observer only. Due to space restrictions, the number of attendees is limited to 10.
- No Board papers will be issued to the public attending as observers.
- Those wishing to attend must apply in writing to COSCA's office in Stirling two weeks in advance of the date of the Board meeting. Places will be allocated in the order that requests are received. Applicants will be informed about the outcome of their request prior to the meeting date.
- Those members of the public attending Board meetings are required to respect that the meeting is a Board meeting to conduct the business of COSCA and as such members of the public must not interrupt the discussion of the Board.
- COSCA reserves the right to discuss confidential matters at Board meetings in private
- No cameras or any recording equipment are allowed unless prior approval has been granted.
- Members of the public who attend Board meetings are not entitled to claim expenses for attending. They are also not entitled to any catering that may be provided for Board members.

3. Dates of COSCA Board Meetings

16th August 2021

8th November 2021

4. COSCA Board Minutes

Approved minutes of COSCA Board meetings are posted on COSCA's website under About Us, www.cosca.org.uk.

Brian Magee

Chief Executive

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)



A meeting of the COSCA Board was held on Monday 24th May 2021 from 11 am to 1 pm via Zoom

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. PRESENT

Birgit Schroeter	Vice Chair/Accreditation – Counsellors and Trainers
Linda McLachlan	Alcohol/Drugs & Bereavement
Linda MacLeod	Criminal Justice
Jill Whitfield	Rurality
Mary Maccallum Sullivan	Ethics
Caron Westmorland	Statutory Agencies
Tatjana Hine	Co-optee – Lay Representative
Brian Magee	(in attendance)
Ashleigh Greechan	(Minute Recorder)

2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Vice Chair chaired this meeting of the Board. The Vice Chair welcomed the Board members.

Apologies: Jan Kerr, Stuart Valentine, Scott Harris

Absent: Lachlan MacKinnon

Left meeting at 12.30: Linda MacLeod

3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

4.1 Minutes of the Board Meeting of 15th of February 2021

Paper previously circulated.

Decision: The minutes of the Board Meeting of the 15th of February 2021 were approved as a true record.

4.2 Redactions of Minutes

There were no redactions of the Minutes of 15th of February 2021.

5. MATTERS ARISING: 15th of February 2021

There were no matters arising.

6. RISKS

6.1 Assessment of New Risks to Clients

No new risks were identified.

7. DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING AND MARKETING COSCA

7.1 Financial Report to March 2021

Paper previously circulated.

In the absence of the Treasurer, it was reported that no questions about the Treasurer's Report had been raised in advance, as required under this consent agenda item. The Vice Chair asked members to give their consent to the above paper. MMacS abstained from the decision due to the Treasurer not being present at the meeting.

Decision: Consent was given to the Report.

7.2 Report of the Treasurer to March 2021

Paper previously circulated.

In the absence of the Treasurer, it was reported that no questions about the Treasurer's Report had been raised in advance, as required under this consent agenda item. The Vice Chair asked members to give their consent to the above paper. MMacS abstained from the decision due to the Treasurer not being present at the meeting.

Decision: Consent was given to the Report.

7.3 Scottish Government Grant

Verbal Report

BM reported to the Board that it is expected that COSCA will receive the Scottish Government grant later this year, and that this is what has happened in the last few years. There is currently a general delay in Scottish Government grant awards that other organisations are also experiencing, and not just COSCA.

Decision: Verbal report was accepted as information

7.4 COSCA Budget 2021-2022

Paper previously circulated

BM spoke to the report which includes the expected income from the Scottish Government. The report used calculations based on the last financial year and forecasts a deficit budget which may be turned around depending on when the current COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The Board was asked to note that there will be no COVID-19 support grant from Stirling Council again this year. With face to face delivery of courses possibly returning within this financial year, the income from training materials may increase. This is the best case budget to present to the Board at this stage.

Decision: The report was accepted as information.

7.5 Board Members Areas of Interest

Papers previously circulated

The Vice Chair stated she was impressed with both reports and asked the Board members if they had any feedback on the reports.

A short discussion took place around the Statutory Agencies area of interest report and how it related to the COSCA development plan and objectives. It was reported that information referred to in this report about the Scottish Government's research into counselling services during Wave 2 of the pandemic was still awaited.

The area of interest report on Ethics was presented for information. No Board members asked for further information on this comprehensive and wide ranging report.

A discussion took place around the principles involved in the presentation of such reports to the Board. The Vice Chair then explained that as this was an information agenda item and not a discussion agenda item, it does not require approval, discussion or decision by the Board.

Decision: Reports were accepted as information.

7.6 COSCA Corporate Affairs Group

Paper previously circulated.

BM spoke to this paper. COSCA is seeing membership numbers increasing, in particular student members whom we hope to retain as members once they are qualified. If we did notice a significant reduction in membership, then this would be reviewed by CAG.

Decision: The report was accepted as information.

7.7 Co-option of Lay Representative

Paper previously circulated.

As per COSCA's standing orders, BM explained that he and the Chair had interviewed the individual for the upcoming Lay Representative position. It was stated the nominated individual would be a good fit on the COSCA Board and has the right background.

Decision: Board approved appointment.

7.8 Audit of COSCA Members

Paper previously circulated.

BM explained that a selection of members are audited twice per year which is in line with our agreement with the Professional Standards Authority. The audits are carried out on two organisational and five individual members to ensure compliance with our membership standards.

Decision: The report was accepted as information.

8. INFORMING AND INFLUENCING POLICY MAKING

8.1 Scottish Government: counselling in schools, colleges and universities

Verbal report

BM reported that since the last Board meeting he has attended meetings of the new Scottish Government's Counselling in Schools Coordinators Network. It was still not clear who have filled the counsellors posts, and whether they are competent to work in these roles. At least one large company, which does not appear to have professional body membership, has been awarded a contract from a Local Authority. There was discussion around referrals to and from GPs, and whether there was consistency of practice around Scotland; counsellors being asked to do too much in schools; and teachers being trained in mental health first aid in place of counsellors being put into schools. Local authorities have to report to the Scottish Government in July 2021 on what is happening within the schools in their remit. From these reports it is hoped that a better picture will emerge of what is happening in schools, including how the funding is being used. It was highlighted that some members of COSCA are concerned about what is happening for children in schools and that it is important COSCA are on top of this and let members know what it is doing about it. The importance of finding out more about the companies that have been contracted to fill positions was highlighted. It was also suggested that an appeal could be put out to members to gather evidence on what is happening in schools.

Decision: Verbal report was accepted as information.

Action: BM will consult members about their experience of the above counselling in schools project.

9. INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES

9.1 Impact of Coronavirus on Counselling Services in Scotland

There was no discussion on this item due to an unintentional oversight during the meeting.

Decision: No report was submitted.

9.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Paper previously circulated.

BM explained that this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan had been produced with input from staff members and has been approved by the Ethics committee. It was suggested that this process information was put into the Action Plan. The Vice Chair stated how impressed she was with the definitions and how it goes beyond the protected characteristics. Discussion took place around what would be next and what the ambition was. COSCA would now look for ways to implement the Action Plan. This could, for example, include holding a trainers event on diversity and the Journal could also carry relevant articles. The progress on implementation would be reported back to Board every year. It was stated we weren't at the stage of deciding on specific actions at this meeting, but that acceptance of the Action Plan is what is needed from this Board meeting. The Board was reminded that EDI is now a standing agenda item at its meetings.

Decision: Report was accepted.

10. INCREASING ACCESS TO TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

10.1 Past Events

10.1.1 Recognition Scheme Café's

Verbal report

BM spoke to this report. The Recognition Scheme is a quality assurance system which allows COSCA to step into the life of member organisations and get a sense of their culture and practice, and allow us to highlight any issues we come across.

These cafes have been run once per month for RS members throughout lockdown and the Development Officer Jenna has done a fantastic job with them.

Decision: Verbal report was accepted as information.

10.2 Future Events

10.2.1 COSCA 23rd Annual Trainers Event: 08.06.21

Paper previously circulated.

BM noted the positive response we had to this event and that it is now fully booked. After consultation, there may be another repeat event later in the year for those who missed out. The positive response to the event could be due to the topic that was chosen, which is on assessment of students.

Decision: Accepted as information.

10.2.2 Recognition Scheme Standards Event: 12.08.2021

Paper previously circulated.

Decision: Accepted as information.

10.2.3 COSCA AGM 08.09.21

Paper previously circulated.

BM explained that the legal advice COSCA has been given is to cancel the AGM this year, as explained in detail in the above paper. Discussion took place around what would happen in the future but it is still unknown at this stage what impact the pandemic will have on the holding of live events. If we were to hold an online AGM then the constitution would need to be changed accordingly. It was suggested we should act on the advice received and the proposal in the above paper and cancel the AGM for this year, and let members know why we are cancelling.

Decision: Decision was made to cancel AGM.

Action: BM to inform members about the cancellation of the AGM 2021.

10.3 Online Delivery of COSCA Validated Courses

Paper previously circulated.

The Vice Chair stated this was an item for discussion.

The above paper was discussed in detail. The general view supported the possibility of blended delivery. However, there was some concern around the possible shift in position, as COSCA has always stated that the courses must be face to face and emphasised the need for physical embodiment on validated courses. It was felt that compatibility and consistency with other professional bodies was an important but not the

only factor to consider in making this change. We can't get this wrong because if other relevant stakeholders don't allow online or blended learning and we do, we could lose training providers and students. Similarly, if it was the other way round and we didn't allow online we could also lose them. There needs to be some balance and a consideration of how much is done online. Care must be taken over group dynamics, inclusion, exclusion and quality of interaction and dynamics. There is an obligation to have some face to face experience and it has to be contained and safe. It was highlighted that online is beneficial for those living in rural locations as it negates the need to travel. Many members previously thought online delivery would not work but after being forced into delivering courses online during the pandemic it has shown to some dissenters that it really does work. BM emphasised that we need to check what our training providers think about this possibility and consult with the Course Validation Panel and staff to check feasibility. BM also raised the issue of our capacity, and in particular the workload of staff, to deal with changes to online delivery e.g. if we suddenly received fifty new applications for online delivery. Other concerns included universities and colleges possibly not considering online delivery post pandemic. It was suggested a blended approach could allow those in rural areas to enrol in courses. It was stated that face to face training at the moment with tutors and students wearing masks is really unpleasant and education at large might not go back to what we once had in regard to face to face delivery. There are so many doubts and care needs to be taken not to go too fast and fall flat on our faces. We also need to check out with PSA if they will allow us to accept online delivery and remain an accredited register.

BM reported that the online delivery pilot of the COSCA Counselling Skills Certificate is currently in its final stage, and if this is approved by the Course Validation Panel. then it opens it up to be delivered fully online. However, the above paper argues that other courses such as diplomas would need to be blended learning. The paper also identifies some barriers for those who don't have internet access along with technical digital knowledge and expertise, and finding a quiet, private space to carry out the course.

BM stated he is currently working with a Scottish University on our application for the renewal of the credit rating of the COSCA Counselling Skills Course and the COSCA Counselling Supervision Course, and has been required to evidence how online delivery would be quality assured by COSCA So, it is not a simple matter of shifting to online delivery as we need to check out so many connected matters to ensure that we, and our training providers, would indeed be allowed and competent to deliver blended learning under current academic SQCF awards. The importance of being transparent with people from the start was highlighted.

Decision: Verbal report was accepted as information.

Action: BM will consult staff, the Course Validation Panel and training providers and report back to the next Board meeting.

11. DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING SYSTEMS AND STANDARDS

11.1 COSCA Re-Accreditation application to PSA

Verbal report

BM reported that the application had been submitted and that an outcome was awaited.

Decision: Verbal report was accepted as information.

11.2 Professional Standards Authority Consultation on Accredited Registers Scheme

Paper previously circulated.

BM reported that PSA have decided to make changes to the Accredited Register programme. These changes include a change in fee's which will see COSCA's fee increasing by between £4k and £5k per

annum. Some other professional bodies have seen more substantial increases. PSA plan to change the renewal period from every year to every three years, but not necessarily for all registers. PSA is also going to change the standards of accreditation, particularly around the evidence of the efficacy of registrants. The PSA Collaborative of Registers, of which COSCA is an active member, has met many times recently regarding these changes and asked PSA to deliver more for the fees paid by registers, such as promoting the Accredited Registers programme to raise the profile of registrants with relevant stakeholders and the public. BM stated that there is no plan to place these additional PSA costs directly on to COSCA members.

Decision: Report was accepted as information.

11.3 Recognition Scheme Annual Report 2021-22

Paper previously circulated

Decision: Report was accepted as information.

11.4 Recognition Scheme Business Plan 2021-22

Decision: Report was accepted as information.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Vice Chair thanked all Board members for attending and for their contributions and the meeting finished at 1pm.

The date of the next meeting is - Monday 16th August 2021 11am to 1pm

All Board members agreed that this should be a Zoom online meeting.