



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
Tatjana Hine OBE	Co-optee Lay Representative
Lachlan MacKinnon	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 15th February 2021 from 11 am to 1 pm via Zoom

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. PRESENT

Jan Kerr	Chair
Birgit Schroeter	Vice Chair/Accreditation – Counsellors and Trainers
Scott Harris	Treasurer
Linda McLachlan	Alcohol/Drugs & Bereavement
Linda MacLeod	Criminal Justice
Stuart Valentine	Relationships
Jill Whitfield	Rurality
Mary Maccallum Sullivan	Ethics
Caron Westmorland	Statutory Agencies
Lachlan MacKinnon	Co-optee – Lay Representative
Brian Magee	(in attendance)
Ashleigh Greechan	(Minute Recorder)

2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed the Board members.

Absent: Tatjana Hine

Left meeting at 12 noon: Scott Harris

3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

4.1 Minutes of the Board Meeting of 9th of November 2021

Paper previously circulated.

Decision: The minutes of the Board Meeting of the 9th of November 2021 were approved as a true record.

4.2 Redactions of Minutes

There were no redactions of the Minutes of 9th of November 2021.

5. MATTERS ARISING: 17th AUGUST 2020 BOARD MINUTES

Discussion took place around a matter discussed at the previous Board meeting, the drafting of new guidance for complaints panels during the pandemic. BM reported this guidance had been issued to members and was the subject of the Ethics Event which would be revisited later in the meeting in agenda item 10.1.1.

There were no further matters arising.

6. RISKS

6.1 Assessment of New Risks to Clients

Verbal report

BM reported that the Client Risk Matrix was up to date in relation to COVID and asked the Board members if there was anything else they could think of to be added to the already very comprehensive Matrix. There were no other risks identified.

Decision: Verbal report was accepted

7. DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING AND MARKETING COSCA

7.1 Financial Report to December 2020

Paper previously circulated.

Decision: Consent was given to the Report.

7.2 Report of the Treasurer to December 2020

Paper previously circulated.

The Treasurer spoke to the report stating the numbers were robust for the year showing a surplus compared to a budget expected deficit. The stand-out items were subscriptions at £11.5k which remain in a strong position. The income from resource material had gone down. Remuneration was over budget but this was due to timing and remuneration was still on target for the year. The Chair thanked the Treasurer for the report and asked the Board members for questions. Discussion took place around the income from resource material being down, it was explained this is due to training providers opting to order electronic versions of the material due to delivering courses online.

Decision: Consent was given to the Report.

7.3 Board Member's Area of Interest

Paper previously circulated

The Chair thanked the Board member for producing the report. Other Board members said they really enjoyed reading the report and discussion took place around standardisation of counselling online for those who haven't been trained to provide counselling online. BM stated guidance had been provided and was available for members to access on the COSCA website under Ethics. There was a suggestion there

should be further communication around this guidance and it was agreed that it would be sent out to members again in an e-bulletin.

Decision: The report was accepted as information

7.4 COSCA Corporate Affairs Group

Paper previously circulated

BM spoke to the report that a shows steady increase in membership numbers.

Decision: The report was accepted as information.

7.5 Companies House Confirmation Statement 2021

Verbal report

BM reported to Board that COSCA's legal requirement of reporting to Companies House had been done.

Decision: Verbal report was accepted as information.

7.6 Management of Offenders Scotland Act 2019

Paper previously circulated.

The Chair thanked BM for the report and highlighted the requirement of COSCA to keep up to date with new information and legislation. BM spoke to the new legislation which means we can no longer ask applicants for information about spent criminal convictions. Membership applications and the Corporate Affairs Group guidance on approving applications have been amended to reflect this.

Decision: The report was accepted as information.

7.7 COSCA Development Plan 2021-2022

Paper previously circulated.

The Chair explained she was looking for approval for this Development Plan and welcomed any questions or comments from the Board. Discussion took place around the value of COSCA's vision remaining the same over the years. BM explained that it has not yet been achieved and that there is more to be done. BM explained that the Development Plan outlines the core work we do year to year and that all Board members' Areas of Interest were lifted from this Plan and asked that Board members own it and be inspired by it. The comprehensive nature of the plan was praised as was the usefulness of it as a tool in understanding COSCA's history and activities. Questions arose around the objectives and how they were measured and reported to which BM explained the trustees report that is produced yearly for the AGM captures all areas of the Development plan and reports what has been achieved. The Chair suggested there were some pointers to be picked up and taken from this discussion.

Decision: Consent was given to the report

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 had met with the Scottish Government regarding counselling in schools and it was encouraging yet surprising that these posts were being filled. There is concern around who is being appointed to these posts. It is important to understand if these counsellors are properly trained and qualified to work with Children and Young People and whether they are members of a relevant professional body as laid down in the Scottish Government guidance for this project. BM shared his concern around access to appropriate training in counselling children and young people and the funding for this training and was interested in hearing from the Board members of their experiences of what was happening within schools in their local areas. Discussion took place around a number of councils who are thought to be advertising for and employing people who do not have the appropriate qualifications. BM asked for specific details so he could take it back to the Scottish Government. It was suggested that councils may not be aware of the qualification requirements for these roles. Further discussion took place around the number of training providers currently running Children and Young People courses, with some providers not delivering because of the current restrictions.

Decision: Report was accepted as information.

9. INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES

9.1 Impact of Coronavirus on Counselling Services in Scotland

Verbal report

BM spoke about the findings of a report from OSCR published in November 2020 on service delivery across 2500 charities. The findings were that 70% found a negative impact on those they support. 51% of charities reported increased loneliness and isolation, and 43% reported anxiety about the future as areas of concern for their beneficiaries. 30% reported financial security as a threat for their beneficiaries with 24% seeing increased financial hardship and vulnerability. Interestingly, grants and government funding was least affected and only 9% of charities now reported financial difficulties compared with 20% at the start of the pandemic. It was reported that 43% have adapted services to accommodate those they support. BM reported that the survey presents a mixed bag of both positive and negative aspects of what was happening to charities, including many of our member organisations, during this pandemic. Discussion took place around counsellors being offered the vaccine to allow them to get back to face to face practice. It was suggested that counsellors who are classed as NHS front line Health and Social Care staff are likely to be offered the vaccine and not those in private or independent practice. The current restrictions only allow for essential counselling services to take place. BM stated the Annual Monitoring Forms from training providers were due at the end of October and gathering data from them will provide a good indication of what training providers are doing. Discussion took place around other organisations that the Board members work with or for. One Board member stated that client numbers in a particular member organisation were increasing back up to that of pre-pandemic levels after seeing 80% moving online at the start of the pandemic. BM made an appeal to the Board members for help to invite people to write articles for the COSCA journal as we are currently not seeing an exchange of ideas from members or people coming forward offering to write articles.

Decision: Report was accepted as information.

9.2 Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

Verbal report

The Chair reminded Board members at the last Board meeting it was agreed to keep this as a recurring agenda item. BM reinforced that this is such a huge topic and there are challenges for counselling faced across all areas included in the Equality Act 2010. Discussion was invited and it was suggested there could be a scoping exercise in working with existing connections and contacts and using the expertise of others to reach out to different client groups as there are different mechanisms for reaching out to different groups. An example of this is the use of Instagram to reach students within Higher Education settings. It is worth looking through the different protected characteristics to find preferred ways of consuming information. It was suggested that the Board could co-opt someone to represent their protected characteristic group as they would have informed lived experience. Further suggestions included consultations with diverse groups of people instead of co-opting one person to represent a particular group. The Chair suggested further discussion needs to take place on this topic of inclusivity.

Decision: Report was accepted as information.

10. INCREASING ACCESS TO TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

10.1 Past Events

10.1.1 COSCA Annual Ethics Event 2020

Verbal report.

BM reported that the Ethics event had focused on the new guidance that had been produced on holding complaints panels during the restrictions caused by the pandemic. The feedback on both the guidance and the event from attendees was very positive. No one had yet needed to use the guidance but there was a sense of reassurance in it being available to them if needed. The Chair had attended the event and stated it was very informative and made her think of things that she hadn't considered.

Decision: Verbal report accepted as information.

10.2 Future Events

10.2.1 COSCA AGM 08.09.21

Verbal report.

BM asked Board members to put this date in their diaries and encouraged them to attend. BM stated that he had recently learned that charities and SCIOs would not be legally allowed to hold virtual Board meetings and AGMs after the 31st of March 2021, unless their constitutions allowed them to take place. This is based on primary legislation by both the Scottish and UK Government. If we wish to continue virtual meetings after this date COSCA's constitution would need to be amended to reflect this. Failure to do this could result in COSCA being unconstitutional and non-compliant by OSCR. In order to make the change to the Articles of Association an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) would need to take place before the 31st of March 2021 with at least fourteen voting members in attendance. All members of the Board agreed that an EGM was necessary.

Decision: An EGM was proposed and agreed by all Board members.

11. DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING SYSTEMS AND STANDARDS

11.1 Disclosure Scotland Act 2020

Paper previously circulated.

BM spoke to the report and the substantial change being made around the PVG Scheme. Once implemented at the end of this year or the beginning of next year, all practicing counsellors will be required to be a member of the PVG scheme which will result in increased public protection. There will be no costs for volunteer counsellors to apply to join the PVG Scheme but all those employed or self-employed as counsellors will incur the cost of the application fees. It was suggested there could be intermediate problems for anyone who hadn't informed their employer of previous convictions which could result in their jobs being affected, but overall it was accepted as a positive change. BM will inform members of COSCA about the above changes in due course.

Decision: Report was accepted as information.

11.2 Professional Standards Authority Consultation on Accredited Registers Scheme

Paper previously circulated.

BM stated he was hoping to submit COSCA's response to the above consultation paper in two days and was looking for any comments the Board members had. BM outlined his proposed response BM asked Board for thoughts and comments and all agreed with the responses BM had suggested. Discussion took place around the precarious nature of the employment of counsellors and psychotherapists not been guaranteed and the difficulties that some people have experienced in finding employment. It was a worry at the start of lockdown and thankfully things have worked out reasonably well for counsellors and psychotherapists as the work has largely gone online. However, the large fees of registration bodies like PSA are very taxing on especially the smaller registers. It was also suggested that we should be encouraged by the fact that the efficacy of counselling and psychotherapy can be evidenced in a convincing manner to PSA and other relevant stakeholders.

Decision: Report was accepted as information.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The 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 24th of May 2021 11am – 1pm

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