  **COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) 16 Melville Terrace | Stirling | FK8 2NE t: 01786 475 140 f: 01786 446 207 e: info@cosca.org.uk w: www.cosca.org.uk**

# 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  |
| Tatjana Hine  | COSCA Treasurer/ Funding: income generation; financial management  |
| Stuart Valentine  | Specialist Counselling Area – Relationships  |
| Linda McLachlan  | Specialist Counselling Area – Alcohol/Drugs; Bereavement  |
| Jill Whitfield  | Rurality  |
| Lisa McGilvray | Ethics |
| Martha Pollard  | Research |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name**  | **Co-Optees**  |
| Daniel Reilly  | Co-optee Lay Representative  |
| Eleni Kepelian  | Co-optee Lay Representative  |
| Craig Ferguson | Co-optee Criminal Justice  |

1. **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.

1. **Dates of COSCA Board Meetings**

Monday 19th February 2024

Monday 13th May 2024

Monday 19th August 2024

Monday 18th November 2024

1. **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)

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**DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING**

A meeting of the COSCA Board was held on Monday 19th August 2024 from 11 am to 1pm in The Barracks, Stirling.

1. **PRESENT**

Jan Kerr Chair

Birgit Schroeter Vice Chair/Accreditation – Counsellors and Trainers

Jill Whitfield Rurality

Stuart Valentine Relationships

Tatjana Hine Treasurer/Funding

Lisa McGilvray Ethics

Linda McLachlan Alcohol/Drugs; Bereavement

Craig Ferguson Co-optee Criminal Justice

Daniel Reilly Co-optee Lay Representative

Brian Magee (in attendance)

Christina Oliver (Minute Recorder)

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The meeting was led by the Vice Chair, BS, who welcomed Board members and expressed how good it was to see everyone.

**Apologies**: Eleni Kepelian & Martha Pollard.

1. **CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS**

No conflicts of interest.

**4. MINUTES OF MEETING**

**4.1 Board Meeting of 13th May 2024**

Paper previously circulated.

**Decision:** Consent granted for minutes.

**4.2 Redactions of Minutes: 13th May 2024**

No redactions were suggested.

**4.3 Matters Arising: 13th May 2024**

No matters arising were suggested.

**OVERVIEW**

**5.1 Information on items 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10 and 9.1**

Paper previously circulated.

BS reminded Board members that it had been previously agreed that to ensure time is left for discussion, that any questions or queries relating to these items should be raised prior to the meeting.

BS acknowledged thanks to BM for providing the overview paper and its helpful summary of the information items.

**DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING AND MARKETING COSCA:**

**5.2 COSCA Corporate Affairs Group**

Paper previously circulated.

BS explained that the Corporate Affairs Group met on the 11th of July 2024 and from looking at the table of results from that meeting, there looked to be an upward trend in memberships.

BS acknowledged thanks to the Corporate Affairs Group for updating the Board.

**5.3 Board Members Area of Interest Report**

Paper previously circulated.

BS thanked JK for compiling this comprehensive report on the area of interest: Training and Recognition Scheme.

JK stated that an important rationale behind COSCA’s work with regard to training, is to increase the information and accessibility of high-quality counselling and counselling training, which will in turn increase the provision of services for the public across Scotland. The rationale behind the Recognition Scheme is that through their Recognition Scheme Membership, organisations will work more safely and ethically when delivering services.

JK wished to acknowledge the amount of work which is carried out by COSCA’s staff and volunteers to ensure Training and the Recognition Scheme adhere fully to the proposed work laid out in COSCA’s Development Plan.

**5.4 COSCA Annual General Meeting**

Paper previously circulated.

BM provided updates on the event's organisation and expected attendance.

**5.5 Board Elections**

Information in overview document 5.1.

BM announced two nominations for vacant board positions, which would be filled at the AGM, and noted that COSCA operates on a yearly cycle for filling board positions, with the exception of co-opted positions that could be filled at a Board meeting. The names of the nominated individuals will be announced at the AGM.

BMthanked all members for attending to the call for nominations, and, in particular, those who submitted nominations forms and those who agreed to be nominated.

**5.6 Retired Membership Application**

Information in overview document 5.1.

BM informed the Board that the Retired membership category had been sent out via e-shot to members and the new membership application form had been posted on the website under ‘join COSCA’.

**5.7 Scottish Government Funding Application**

Information in overview document 5.1.

BM stated that that COSCA’s funding from the Scottish Government has been awarded for this financial year (2024-25) approved a full year's grant. However, BM expressed concern about potential future funding and the impact of emergency measures on the voluntary sector. SV mentioned that the response from SCVO to the Scottish Parliament Social Justice and Social Security Committee’s review of the funding of the third sector was comprehensive and supportive of multi-year funding and the protection against inflation.

**Developing and Promoting Systems and Standards:**

**Increasing Access to Services:**

***Increasing Access to Training, Knowledge and Information:***

**5.7 PSA Attendance at Board Meeting**

Information in overview document 5.1.

BM highlighted that as part of the full 3-year renewal assessment this year of COSCA’s Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists, Max Sesay, PSA Accreditation Officer, attended in person the Board meeting on 13 May 2024. Following the meeting, he expressed his gratitude for the hearty welcome he received in Stirling and for a very productive COSCA Board meeting. He thought that the discussions were frank and open, members-focused and business-like, and atmosphere relaxed and friendly.

He thanked COSCA for the information provided to him in advance, which contributed to making his trip so smooth. He asked that his gratitude and warm compliments be extended to the Chair and the entire Board.

**5.8 PSA’s Accredited Registers Scheme: Suicide prevention event**

Information in overview document 5.1.

BM shared that in September 2023, COSCA submitted evidence to the Professional Standards Authority to meet its new Standard 9: Equality Diversity and Inclusion. Assessment of the above evidence was carried out in June 2024. COSCA was recently informed by PSA that it had met the requirements of the above EDI standard.

**5.9 PSA’s Accredited Registers Scheme: 3 Year Renewal Application**

Information in overview document 5.1.

BM stated thatCOSCA’s application for renewal of PSA accreditation for this year was reviewed by PSA’s panel in June 2024. COSCA has been informally notified that our application has been overall successful and is awaiting the outcome report (expected in late August 2024) to find out the details of PSA’s responses.

***Informing and Influencing Policy Making***

**6. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

***Developing, Communicating and Marketing COSCA:***

**6.1 Financial Report to June 2024**

Paper previously circulated

BS thanked TH for the preparation and presentation for these two reports.

BS discussed the financial reports and budget forecasts, confirming no immediate financial concerns.

BS invited the Board’s consent for this report.

**Decision:** Consent was given to report.

**6.2 Report of the Treasurer to March 2024**

Paper previously circulated.

BS invited the Board’s consent for this report.

**Decision:** Consent was given to the report.

**6.3 Forecast Budget 2024-25**

Paper previously circulated.

BM explained the process of preparing the forecast budget, which is subject in to change in the course of a financial year due to unforeseen circumstances.

BS invited the Board’s consent for this report.

**Decision:** Consent was given to the report

**7. RISKS**

**7.1 Assessment of New Risks to Clients**

**Verbal report.**

No new risks were identified by the Board.

**7.2 Inclusion of New Risks: Suicide and self-harm**

Paper previously circulated.

Suicide/Self-Harm Risk

The Board discussed the levels of the likelihood and impact associated with this risk, with an emphasis on working holistically with clients and considering the context behind any suicide assessment results. The potential impact of inaccurate identification of suicide, self-harm was also discussed. The level of the impact for the exploitation of children and young people risk was discussed.

The Board agreed to set the impact level for the suicide/self harm risk at 5 and the likelihood level at 4, and to increase the impact level of the exploitation of children risk to 5. The Board concluded that accurately identifying the severe potential consequences outweighed any potential drawbacks of setting the above impact levels at their highest.

BS sought feedback on the periodic review of the Client Risk Matrix. SV and DR appreciated its simplicity and clarity. The Board hoped that the Matrix would be beneficial to COSCA members and others.

**Decision:**

The Board decided that the new risk of suicide/self-harm should be included in the Client Risk Matrix, with the likelihood level set at 4 and the impact level at 5. It also decided to raise the impact level of the child exploitation risk to 5.

**8. INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES**

**8.1 Equality, Inclusion and Diversity**

Verbal report.

**8.2 PSA’s Response to COSCA’s EDI Standard 9 Application**

Paper previously circulated.

BM highlighted financial barriers as a challenge to accessing education and counselling. The Board approved BM’s existing action plan to reduce unconscious bias, improve flexibility, and responsiveness. LM raised a point about pregnancy and maternity leave, which BM confirmed was covered under the Equality Act and included in COSCA’s Equal Opportunities Policy.

**8.3 COSCA Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan: Review**

Paper previously circulated.

It was highlighted that the purpose of this Action Plan is to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in the following 5 key areas:

* employment
* training
* training courses
* membership
* counselling and psychotherapy.

This Action Plan was produced in consultation with COSCA staff and has been approved by COSCA’s Ethics Committee. It was agreed by the Board of COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) at its meeting in May 2021.

BS, BM and SV, and others discussed unconscious bias in membership and Board selection processes. They agreed on the need to encourage more diverse representation, particularly from younger and underrepresented groups. The Board also discussed the perception that Board members should be more senior or experienced, and the need to promote the role of a Board member as suitable for young people, if they have the skills and time to be a trustee. Concerns were raised about the capacity of newer, less established members to take on Board roles, but the Board remained committed to creating an inclusive and diverse Board

**9. DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING and MARKETING COSCA**

**9.1 Changes to Charity Law**

Information in overview document 5.1.

BS highlighted that OSCR intends to introduce further measures commencing on 1 October 2024.  Under the most important of these, OSCR will provide a publicly searchable record of individuals who have been permanently disqualified by the Courts from being a charity trustee so that charities can carry out due diligence on prospective new trustees.

The remaining parts of the Charities (Regulation and Administration) Scotland Act 2023 are planned to come into force in summer 2025. BM informed the Board that Board members' names would be included on OSCR’s website from the following year.

**9.2 Draft COSCA Trustees Report 2023-24**

Paper previously circulated.

BM reported that the Trustees Report will be presented at the upcoming AGM.

BS invited the Board’s consent for this Report.

**Decision:** Consent was given to the report.

**9.3 COSCA E-Bulletin July 2024**

Paper circulated previously.

**10. INFORMING AND INFLUENCING POLICY MAKING**

**11. DEVELOPING and PROMOTING SYSTEMS and STANDARDS**

**11. COSCA Guidance on Suicide**

Brian reported a 30% death rise in suicides in Scotland in 2023, with increases among men and rural areas. BM presented what was seen by the Board as a comprehensive, evidence-based suicide guidance document for distribution to members.

**Decision:**

BM to consider incorporating suicide awareness/prevention training into future annual Trainers events.

**11.2 Recognition Scheme Annual Standards Event 2024**

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 18th November 2024, 11 am to 1pm at the Barracks, Stirling.

BS thanked everyone for attending and for their valued contributions.

The meeting closed at 12:55pm.