



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

Name	Area of Interest
Jan Kerr	Chair/Training & Recognition Scheme
Birgit Schroeter	Vice Chair/ Accreditation – Counsellors and Trainers
Scott Harris	COSCA Treasurer
Stuart Valentine	Specialist Counselling Area – Relationships
Linda McLachlan	Specialist Counselling Area – Alcohol/Drugs; Bereavement
Jill Whitfield	Rurality
Caron Westmorland	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

Charity Registered in Scotland No. SC018887  
 Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in Scotland No. 142360

Charity Registered in Scotland No. SC018887  
 Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in Scotland No. 14236  
 February 2021

## **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**

24<sup>th</sup> May 2021  
16<sup>th</sup> August 2021  
8<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.cosca.org.uk).

Brian Magee  
Chief Executive  
COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)



A meeting of the COSCA Board was held on Monday 9th November 2020 from 11 am to 1 pm via Zoom

## MINUTES OF MEETING

### 1. PRESENT

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

### 2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting of the Board, for some members this was their first Board meeting and because of this the Chair invited everyone to introduce themselves. The Chair introduced herself stating it was a great honour to be on the Board.

**Apologies:** Linda MacLeod

**Absent:** 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 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Paper previously circulated.

**Decision:** The minutes of the Board Meeting of the 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020 were approved as a true record.

#### 4.2 Redactions of Minutes

There were no redactions of the Minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

### 5. MATTERS ARISING: 17<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2020 BOARD MINUTES

Discussion took place around a matter discussed at the previous Board meeting regarding the counselling in schools project and the appropriate training of counsellors to fill the roles as Children and Young People counsellors. The Chief Executive referred to an agenda item that would be discussed later in the meeting about this matter.

There were no further matters arising.

## **6. RISKS**

### **6.1 Assessment of New Risks to Clients**

Verbal report

BM identified a new risk concerning the complaints procedures of COSCA member organisations and the holding of complaints panel meetings. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic face to face complaints panel meetings may have shifted online. BM will produce guidance and issue it to members and arrange an online café to give those wishing to the opportunity to discuss the guidance and what it means for their organisation.

**Decision:** Verbal report was accepted and guidance to be written for identified risk. Client Risk Matrix to be amended accordingly.

### **6.2 COSCA Risk Management Report**

Paper previously circulated.

BM explained this is a report which is on a checklist which is used to bring documents to the Board meetings across the year. It was discussed that Covid 19 should be added to the risk assessment report. It was suggested that another column could be added to give the likelihood of the risk happening, BM agreed that this was a good idea. Discussion took place around the current situation we find ourselves in with the pandemic and how it is making us think about the future. Examples given were security when using IT, if there was another economic collapse and how would that affect COSCA and if students could not pay for training what would happen. BM stated there would be knock on effects of Covid, specifically stated was the competition within the counselling field with digital delivery of services and a massive increase in online, e-therapy and internet based CBT being a major competitor to other face to face therapies. BM stated the Scottish Government are investing in online CBT which is a real competitor to more traditional methods. It was noted that care had to be taken around distinguishing between the mode of delivery and the modality of therapy as delivering counselling online would not be classed as a risk to COSCA. The possible impact of the Scottish Government and the NHS having a preference for CBT as a modality, due to the announcement that the Scottish Government were investing in digital delivery of CBT (ECBT), was discussed. An ethical issue was highlighted in that the economically challenged would have a lack of choice when it comes to counselling modality and that they may also have a lack of access to digital services and internet connectivity. It was also highlighted that people accessing counselling may not have the private space at home to engage in counselling sessions and this brings a risk of exclusion.

**Decision:** The report was accepted as information. The COSCA Risk Management Report to be amended to reflect the above discussion.

## **7. DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING AND MARKETING COSCA**

### **7.1 Financial Report to September 2020**

Paper previously circulated.

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

### **7.2 Report of the Treasurer to September 2020**

Paper previously circulated.

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

### **7.3 Dates of Board Meetings & AGM 2021**

Paper previously circulated

The Chair read out the dates and asked Board members to put the dates in their diary.

**Decision:** The report was accepted as information

### **7.4 Funding of COSCA 2020-21**

Verbal report

BM reported that the Scottish Government has awarded grant for 2020-21, and the grant was included in the budget report. Finances look in good shape.

**Decision:** Verbal report was accepted as information.

### **7.5 Board Members Area of Interest**

Verbal report

BM explained this item would usually contain two reports from Board members on their areas of interest. However, there would be no reports at this meeting due to the existing Board members providing reports recently and not requiring to do so again for a while. It was felt unfair to ask new Board members to provide these reports in their first Board meeting. BM explained it was a device for the Board to keep areas of interest in mind and to keep the COSCA development plan on track.

**Decision:** Verbal report was accepted as information.

### **7.6 COSCA Corporate Affairs Group**

Paper previously circulated.

BM stated the report showed a steady increase in membership numbers.

**Decision:** The report was accepted as information.

### **7.7 Draft Minutes of AGM 2020**

Paper previously circulated.

It was noted that the minutes were an accurate representation of the AGM.

**Decision:** The minutes were agreed and will be presented to the AGM for approval.

### **7.8 OSCR Annual Return 2020**

Verbal report

BM reported that the OSCR annual return had been submitted and accepted.

**Decision:** Verbal report was accepted as information.

### **7.9 Register of Interests**

Paper previously circulated.

The Chair thanked everyone who had submitted their register of interests.

**Decision:** The report was accepted as information.

### **7.10 Stakeholders Engagement Strategy**

Paper previously circulated.

BM explained that if there were no changes by the Board to the list then it would be accepted for another year. It was noted that Abertay were no longer stakeholders and need to be removed from the list. The credit rating of COSCA courses by Napier University would cease next year and the need to find another institution to provide credit rating was discussed.

**Decision:** The report was accepted as information.

## **7.11 Chair's Action**

Verbal report

The Chair announced two actions, the first one being creating a new post of Course Validation Secretary due to an increase in workload. The second action involved amending an existing post.

**Decision:** Verbal report was accepted as information.

## **8. INFORMING AND INFLUENCING POLICY MAKING**

### **8.1 The Matrix: A Guide for Delivering Evidence based Psychological Therapies (2011)**

BM reported that the above Matrix has been removed from the Scottish Government's website to be reviewed. BM will keep the Board up to speed with any developments. It is important to get counselling on this Matrix and as high up the category levels as possible. BM stated COSCA is actively involved and working with SAMH to have counselling and psychotherapy included in the Matrix. Alongside these attempts to raise the profile of counselling, BM described COSCA's involvement in the current UK-wide Covid 19 counselling campaign. This promotes the relevance of counselling during and after the pandemic. Further discussion took place around the need for practice-based evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of counselling to be acceptable for counselling and psychotherapy to be included in the above Matrix. It was noted that the kinds of acceptable evidence should be widened to include this and other evidence, and not limited to the evidence from random controlled trials, which is currently the norm.

**Decision:** Report was accepted as information.

## **9. INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES**

### **9.1 Impact of Coronavirus on Counselling Services in Scotland – SAMH's Report**

Paper previously circulated.

SAMH's research shows that mental health services are not being delivered as before, not at the same frequency or the same quality. It would suggest by implication that people are not benefiting from the efforts that have been put in place to allow counselling to continue. There are indications that suicide rates are on the increase, but statistics won't be released for another nine months. Through its COVID-19 guidance, COSCA has put measures in place to try to prevent what SAMH report is stating. Discussion took place around clients wanting to continue counselling sessions online or if they would prefer to postpone sessions until they could commence face to face. It was highlighted that some clients are not able to find a quiet, private space at home to do online counselling. It is important to recognise the drawbacks and dilemmas that online counselling brings.

**Decision:** Report was accepted as information.

### **9.2 Coronavirus (COVID-19) mental health – transition and recovery plan**

Paper previously circulated.

BM spoke to the report to highlight the main points to consider which are relevant to counselling. These are as follows: the new CBT platform which will support 10,000 people initially with the aim of supporting 30,000 people by the end of the year; the Spark's relationship helpline and associated counselling service; additional school counsellors; and the addition of 80 counsellors in colleges and universities. It was noted that the report contained a very welcome and significant reference to counselling.

**Decision:** Report was accepted as information.

### **9.3 Equality, Inclusion and Diversity**

Verbal report.

BM reported that this is a new agenda item and it is proposed that it should be kept as a standing item. It is important as a professional body to constantly take action in this area. Discussion took place around communication, the way support is communicated, and the use of language is very important. It is a useful agenda item as a reminder of the importance of equality, inclusion, and diversity. The services are there but we have a responsibility to ensure they are meeting users' needs. It was noted in relation to the recent Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement that the counselling profession is predominantly white Europeans and British, and greater access to counselling and training should be considered to make the profession less predominantly white. The temporary access to online training has opened up access to some people who would normally be unable to attend face to face training.

**Decision:** Verbal report was accepted as information.

## **10. INCREASING ACCESS TO TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION**

### **10.1 Future Events**

#### **10.1.2 Accreditation Workshops**

Verbal report.

BM reported online accreditation counsellor and trainer workshops were being run to continue to help members achieve accreditation.

**Decision:** Verbal report accepted as information.

## **11. DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING SYSTEMS AND STANDARDS**

### **11.1 Counsellor & Trainer Accreditation Report**

Paper previously circulated.

BM stated this was a standard report which was produced once per year and it shows a steady flow through. BM thanked Development Officer Jenny Bell for the extensive work she puts in to support both the applicants and the respective panels.

**Decision:** Report was accepted as information.

### **11.2 COSCA Register of Counsellors & Psychotherapists**

Verbal report.

BM reported that there may be significant changes to the PSA accreditation scheme/system going forward. The Registrars Collaborative Group have urged PSA to ask the UK Government for more resources for the Accreditation Scheme and questioned it on what registers receive for the initial and annual fees they pay to PSA. Additionally, PSA has been asked to raise its profile so registers, including COSCA's, can benefit.

**Decision:** Verbal 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 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 11 am to 1 pm – Zoom online meeting.