



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
Tatjana Hine	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
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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

Monday 23 May 2022
Monday 15 August 2022
Monday 7 November 2022

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 8th November 2021 from 11 am to 1.00 pm via Zoom

MINUTES OF MEETING

1. PRESENT

Jan Kerr	Chair/Training & Recognition Scheme
Birgit Schroeter	Vice Chair/Accreditation – Counsellors and Trainers
Stuart Valentine	Relationships
Linda McLachlan	Alcohol/Drugs & Bereavement
Jill Whitfield	Rurality
Mary Maccallum Sullivan	Ethics
Caron Westmorland	Statutory Agencies
Daniel Reilly	Co-optee – Lay Representative
Brian Magee	(in attendance)
Ashleigh Greechan	(Minute Recorder)
Carol Smart	Prepared Treasurers report

2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed the Board and introduced Carol Smart who stepped in to do the Treasurers report for this month. The Chair stated it was great to see everyone on the away day last month.

The Chair noted that there was a new layout to the agenda items and that this was the first meeting in which this new layout would be used. This should provide more time for discussion and decision-making items.

Apologies: Linda MacLeod

Absent for most of meeting: Stuart Valentine, MMS (partial remote access only)

3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest was identified from one Board member who is a trainer on a COSCA validated diploma course. The conflict was in relation to the decision on online delivery in item 11.1. The conflict was duly noted by Board members.

4. INFORMATION AGENDA ITEMS

All papers previously circulated.

The Chair listed the information and consent items but no discussion took place around them, it was stated that Board members had been expected to have read both the information and consent items and that any comments or questions they had about the consent items should have been highlighted to BM before the meeting.

Developing, Communicating and Marketing COSCA:

4.1 Scottish Government Grant

4.2 OSCR Annual Return

4.3 Board Member's Areas of Interest

Board members stated that the Area of Interest report was interesting to read and thanked JK for producing the report.

4.4 COSCA Corporate Affairs Group

4.5 Dates of Board Meetings 2022

4.6 October e-Bulletin to members

Informing and Influencing Policy Making:

4.7 Counselling in schools project

Increasing Access to Training, Knowledge and Information:

4.8 COSCA Courses SCQF Award

4.9 Developing International Role: Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy

Developing and Promoting Systems and Standards:

4.10 Re-accreditation application to PSA

4.11 Meeting of COSCA Ethics Committee

Information: All items were accepted as information.

5. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Minutes of Meeting:

5.1 Board Meeting of 16 August 2021

Paper previously circulated.

Decision: The minutes of the Board Meeting of the 16th of August were approved as a true record.

Developing, Communicating and Marketing COSCA:

5.2 Financial Report to September 2021

Paper previously circulated.

Decision: Consent was given to the report.

5.3 Report of the Treasurer to September 2021

Paper previously circulated.

The Chair thanked CS for standing in and preparing these reports and invited CS to speak to the report. CS stated she was very happy to help out and also glad that COSCA has someone to take over permanently as Treasurer. CS found it very interesting to do the report and was pleased to say the sense she got from preparing the report was that COSCA is back on track after the pandemic. The Chair welcomed BM to speak to reports and he stated COSCA's current financial system for the year so far looks very positive.

Decision: Consent was given to the report.

6. MINUTES OF MEETING

6.1 Matters Arising: meeting on 16 August 2021

Item 7.2

BM reminded Trustees to complete the annual statement of trustee suitability – performance pro-forma which had been sent to them. BM reported to Board that the whistleblowing procedure title has been updated following discussion at the last Board meeting.

Regarding the recent Board away day (6.10.2021) which everyone attended, Board members had been invited to reflect on what their roles and responsibilities are and to take away their own learning points as homework. The main outcome was that Board members had had an opportunity to learn more about what their roles and responsibilities were and that this learning will continue to develop going forward.

6.2 Redactions of Minutes: 16 August 2021

No redactions were made to the Minutes of the 16th of August 2021.

7. RISKS

7.1 Assessment of New Risks to Clients

The Chair asked if there were any updates to existing risks, if there were any new risks or anything that has come to anyone's attention. BM spoke to critical social justice theory and the possible harmful experience clients may receive in the counselling room when they express their prejudices. Discussion took place around an example of clients' prejudices being criticised by the leader of a service in Scotland, and how this has been covered in social media. However, the question for COSCA was around whether it was actually experienced by clients. As there is no body of evidence available to confirm this happening to clients, it is not an immediate risk for just now, but it may become a risk in the future.

8. DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING AND MARKETING COSCA

8.1 COSCA Development Plan 2022-23

Paper previously circulated.

The Chair stated that this was a decision agenda item and that the Board has been invited to decide on the draft Development Plan 2022-23. The Chair invited comments from the Board. BM spoke to the plan and stated it included COSCA's vision, aims and objectives and that for each of the 5 objective that it was structured around targets, costings, benefits, expected outcomes, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The plan is the basis of the Scottish Government's funding of COSCA in recent years and it uses the template provided by the Scottish Government. The plan covers one year currently, but if the SNP's manifesto commitment for this Parliament to award national organisations funding over 3 years, the plan may become again a 3 year plan.

The Chair stated she was aware when completing her area of interest report that it flagged up how all encompassing this plan was and the wide area of work the objectives covered. It was acknowledged there was a huge amount of work put in to produce the plan. The Chair welcomed any other comments or questions. It was stated the plan was well laid out and well structured and that it has a large scope and provides a sense of confidence that there is a direction of travel clearly marked out.

Decision: Consent was given to the Development plan.

8.2 Register of Interests

Paper previously circulated.

BM stated there is an annual invitation to all Board members to complete and send the up-dated register of interests form to COSCA. BM stated it is on the agenda as a reminder to do this. As it is a financial type of interest to be registered and not a conflict of interest, it should not hopefully present difficulties. BM requested that Board members complete and send to Administration in order that the full register of interest report of all members can be completed. It is deemed as good practice to do this.

Decision: The report was accepted as information.

8.3 COSCA Risk Management Report

Paper previously circulated.

The Chair handed over to BM for comment.

What we are trying to do is keep this up to date. For example, things may have changed with the pandemic with the way services have been delivered, so we may need to change this report. Digital services have certainly increased and we need to think of adding digital services and e-health which is now huge in NHS.

Discussion took place around mode of delivery and how some counsellors decided to stop delivering their services due to the pandemic after being unwilling to move online. We need to consider what is happening currently in the field of counselling.

Discussion took place around natural disasters and if we should put pandemics in the report as they can come along and wipe out organisations including COSCA which had to be able to shift from office based to home working and have the means to do that.

It was suggested that there is a governance risk that should be considered in relation to the competence of Board members. We should put in a risk about reputation of COSCA and Board members bringing COSCA into disrepute.

Another risk identified was related to Brexit. This is already identified as a risk in the report as it expected that the counselling field would be decimated with people moving back to Europe and/or not coming from Europe to work here as counsellors. We previously had reports from organisations that a lot of European people who didn't have visas would go back to Europe. It was suggested that it is still too early to tell the real impact of Brexit on counselling in Scotland. Discussion took place around European students and what they would do once qualified. It was suggested that there may be less students on courses but we don't have any evidence of this yet. BM stated it is important to keep COSCA's connection with Europe, and being a member of the European Association for Counselling could help with this but COSCA still is not eligible for membership currently despite overtures regularly made for EAC to change its membership criteria. No change was made to the report regarding Brexit.

Action: Risks identified to be added

8.4 Stakeholders Engagement Strategy

Paper previously circulated.

BM spoke to the report. The main thing is we acknowledge and identify COSCA's stakeholders. The ways in which we try to engage with all our stakeholders are laid out in this strategy. It's part of PSA's requirements to have this strategy. BM not proposing any changes.

The question was asked why staff wasn't showing on the strategy and it was explained it was for external stakeholders only and that there is the separate governance and management structure document on our website that includes staff.

Decision: Consent was given to the report.

Action: Update report to 2021.

8.5 Appointment of COSCA Treasurer

Paper previously circulated.

BM spoke to paper The Treasurer post has been vacant since two meetings ago and we have advertised extensively. We have recently had an application from someone to fill that post. The Chair and BM have discussed the application and would like to propose that this person, Tatjana Hine, be our new Treasurer. The Board was invited to decide on this proposal.

Decision: Board appointed new Treasurer.

10. INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES

10.1 Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

Verbal report.

BM reported that COSCA are still planning to publish an article in the next journal about developing more inclusive messaging strategies.

There were no other comments.

Decision: Report was accepted as information.

11. INCREASING ACCESS TO TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

11.1 Blended Delivery of COSCA Validated Diploma/Specialist Courses

Papers previously circulated.

BM spoke to this report and stated the Board have had a chance to read through this prior to this meeting. The background reading is the consultation paper and the response summary. The Board have discussed blended delivery previously so with this being the third discussion period on this, the focus is on deciding on the six proposals.

The first proposal is almost conditional on the other five. However, the Board has already decided to move towards blended delivery of COSCA validated diplomas and Specialist courses. The other proposals show what this blended delivery would look like. BM ran through the proposals as follows and invited discussion and decision.

Proposal one - that COSCA allows, but does not require, the blended delivery of COSCA validated diploma and specialist courses for training provider who meet the respective conditions for diploma and specialist courses set out in the proposals below for delivering in this format.

Proposal two: that diploma courses can include some online training delivery provided that no more than 30% of total tutor contact time is delivered online via synchronous, live methods. The rest of the course must be delivered face-to-face.

Proposal three: that up to 30% of counselling sessions on counselling practice placements can be delivered remotely.

Proposal four: that diploma courses delivered in a blended format and which allow participants to deliver counselling remotely should be required to train participants in remote counselling and/or signpost them to relevant training courses.

Proposal five: that COSCA Accredited and Approved trainers on blended courses whose participants can work remotely with clients during counselling practice placements should be required to evidence that they are competent to train participants in working online as counsellors.

Proposal six: that participants on blended courses should be required to attend physically in person and in the training room in real time for the face-to-face parts of the courses. For the online parts of the course students should be required to attend in person the live, synchronous online delivery. They should also meet the attendance requirement for each delivery method.

These proposals were produced so the Board could decide on them. Once a decision is made then as a staff group we could put a quality assurance system in place to show that the requirements are met before we approve a training provider to deliver in this way.

The Chair thanked BM for running through this stating it was helpful.

The Chair said it felt rushed at the last Board meeting and stated she had been a bit concerned about those who are currently studying but noted these proposals are for when all the restrictions are lifted post covid. It is an opportunity for flexibility and a blended learning opportunity. BM confirmed that there are flexible arrangements in place at the moment. At some point in the future when the Scottish Government guidance says all restrictions are lifted, the change of delivery to blended delivery, if approved, would apply from then.

BACP have put their blended delivery requirements, which are similar to those in these proposals, in place as of the 1st of September 2021. However, restrictions aren't fully lifted in Scotland yet, and for some training providers they are currently working at 50/50 or at different ratios for face to face/online delivery, while others are not back face to face at all.

Discussion took place around what 'online' means and if it includes telephone and instant messaging, and the terminology should be 'remote' counselling which would cover online and telephone. It was highlighted that the training to become an online counsellor was quite onerous so there is a question over what we mean by online. We are not specifying that trainers need to do extensive training, but we are asking them to be competent in delivering remotely. The question was asked whether there were courses that trains trainers to work remotely. There is an understanding that courses like these are being worked on at the moment and that more of these will become available going forward. We asked trainers about their competencies in the survey and the responses we received stated that they would be competent to train online and train participants to work remotely very quickly.

The Chair asked Board if they could make a decision on the proposals.

BM stated the COSCA Course Validation Panel have been consulted and they will be supportive of these proposals. The Chair stated if COSCA doesn't allow blended delivery then it could be left behind.

All proposals were accepted with the following adjustments –

Proposal three – change wording from 'online' to 'remotely'.

A question was raised on whether practice hours 'online' included email and instant messaging. It was suggested that it needs to be clear that those not trained in online counselling can't call themselves 'online counsellors' and should instead call themselves 'counsellors working remotely'. The protection of clients was questioned in the case of clients who receive email or instant messaging counselling from those who are untrained in these methods of delivery. It was confirmed that students must be trained in all methods of remote delivery they are expected to use. It was noted that it is the trainers' responsibility to ensure they are only training participants in the methods of delivery that they themselves are competent to train them in. It was stated the above quality assurance system can be revisited and amended if needed.

Proposal four – changing wording from 'online' to 'remotely'.

It was stated that it is important to stick to the mode of delivery for each part of the course and proposal six was very clear on this. BM stated that if anyone knows of good quality courses in remote counselling that we signpost training providers to let him know.

MMS abstained from voting on all proposals.

Decision: All proposals accepted.

12. DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING SYSTEMS AND STANDARDS

12.1 PSA Revised Standards: AR Scheme

Paper previously circulated.

BM spoke to reports, and confirmed that PSA's standards and the fee structure have changed. The most problematic change in the standards is related to 1 (b) and the public benefit test. All accredited registers from now on will have to evidence what the benefits of their registrants are to the public. This will mean submitting relevant pieces of research to PSA. BM has had two meetings already with PSA on this. PSA is trying to guide accredited registers towards what would be satisfactory evidence. A number of registers are very concerned about this test and whether it will be only the kind of evidence acceptable to NICE and SIGN that PSA will accept.

BM appealed to Board members to share information if they have or know of any research that is relevant to this that PSA do not already know about especially Scottish research. If COSCA is unable to provide this information we will struggle to continue to be accredited by PSA. A question was raised if COSCA should be doing its own research. It was stated there was much more qualified people than professional bodies out there doing research. It is expected PSA will produce a baseline of what they are looking for in Counselling & Psychotherapy. It was noted that there is a lot of pressure being put on all registers to provide this information to PSA.

Decision: Report was accepted as information

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair thanked Board for attending and the meeting finished at 1pm.

Monday 14 February 2022 11 am to 1 pm

Zoom session