



**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](mailto: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

## 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 19th February 2024

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024

## 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)



## DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING

A meeting of the COSCA Board was held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024 from 11 am to 1pm on Zoom.

### 1. PRESENT

Jan Kerr	Chair
Birgit Schroeter	Vice Chair/Accreditation – Counsellors and Trainers
Stuart Valentine	Relationships
Craig Ferguson	Criminal Justice Co-optee
Caron Westmorland	Statutory Agencies
Tatjana Hine	Treasurer/Funding
Martha Pollard	Research
Brian Magee	(in attendance)
Christina Oliver	(Minute Recorder)

### 2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The chair welcomed Board members and expressed how good it was to see everyone.

**Apologies:** Jill Whitfield

**Not Present:** Linda McLachlan, Lisa McGilvray, Daniel Reilly & Eleni Kepelian.

### 3. CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

No conflicts of interest.

## **4. MINUTES OF MEETING**

### **4.1 Board Meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

Paper previously circulated.

**Decision:** Consent granted for minutes.

### **4.2 Redactions of Minutes: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

No redactions were suggested.

### **4.3 Matters Arising: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

No matters arising were suggested.

## **OVERVIEW**

### **5.1 Information on items 5.4, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11 5.12 5.13 and 5.14.**

Paper previously circulated.

JK reminded Board members that it had been previously agreed that any questions or queries relating to these items should be raised prior to the meeting.

JK thanked 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**

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK explains that the Corporate Affairs Group met on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 and from looking at the table of results from that meeting, it is good to see that the number of memberships is healthy and increasing.

JK thanked the Corporate Affairs Group for updating the Board.

### **5.3 Board Members Area of Interest Report**

Paper previously circulated.

JK thanked CW for her final report before stepping down from the Board.

JK acknowledged the enlightening report on historic forced adoption and noted that the feedback received from the participants and the study, shows the quality of support received by the range of health professionals across the body, which depended very much on their own experience and knowledge beforehand.

CW added that if anyone is interested in the report itself, that it is a very interesting read in terms of how counselling sits within any of the support services offered to people. It is an area, which she has worked in, in terms of adoption and fostering. Moving forward she wonders if there will be any impetus to fund or support development of training, or further learning.

BM added that he is in semi-regular contact with a campaign group in Scotland around adoption and forced adoption. BM hopes that in the future the person who fronts the campaign may write an article for the COSCA Journal on the lived experience of being adopted.

BS adds that she thinks the report makes a good point, and the use of the term counselling in the US is a much more direct advisory activity, rather than what the UK offers. Sometimes there is transatlantic impact on vocabulary that is not helpful.

#### **5.4 COSCA Board Elections 2024**

Information in overview document 5.1.

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JK noted that there will be two vacancies due to the retirement of Vice Chair BS in September 2024 and CW decision to step down from February 2024 due to personal reasons.

JK explained that as a Board, we are invited to assist with the nomination process for both vacancies and members of the existing Board may wish to nominate themselves or another member of the Board for the role as Vice Chair. JK asks the Board to give this some consideration and an election process will begin in May 2024 and the appointment process for the new Vice Chair before the next Board meeting.

BM added that he would be in touch with Board members about the process of appointing a new Vice Chair before the next meeting of the Board in May 2024.

#### **5.5 COSCA E-bulletin to Members**

Paper previously circulated.

JK explained how she found this e-bulletin to be very informative. It informed our members about the General Meeting, Craig Ferguson's recent appointment to the Board, the EDI Survey of Registrant, the 'Race is Complicated' toolkit, Rafena Saleem's Guide to Working with Muslim Clients, COSCA's Ethics Event, calls for articles for the Journal, a reminder to update Profiles of Registrants on the COSCA's register of Counsellors/Psychotherapists, an updated to COSCA's Submission to the PSA regarding the Authorities new standard and an update on the Recognition Scheme Annual Event.

JK thanked Brian and his staff for facilitating this E-Bulletin.

### **5.6 COSCA Board Register of Interests**

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK highlighted that some members have not submitted their Register of Interest form and ask if this this could please be completed and submitted as soon as possible.

### **5.7 COSCA Board Annual Performance Review**

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK highlighted that some members have not submitted their Annual Performance Review form and ask if this this could please be completed and submitted as soon as possible.

SV asked if Board Members who have not completed the forms could be emailed a reminder for this. It was agreed that CO would send out a reminder email.

### **5.8 COSCA Vacancy – Lay Representative**

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK highlighted that there is one vacancy left on the Corporate Affairs Group and if any help could be given to fill the post it would be most appreciated.

***Developing and Promoting Systems and Standards:***

## **5.9 Race is Complicated Toolkit**

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK suggested that the Toolkit is something that looks to be promoted at the next Trainer's event.

JK added that this is only one protected characteristic and it is good to be focusing on this but being mindful not to forget about other characteristics too.

BM added that there is many other Toolkits to follow on from this on other protected characteristics.

## **Increasing Access to Services**

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

## **5.10 PSA's Accredited Registers Scheme: Tackling Barriers to Complaint Event**

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK stated that BM was invited and attended an event last month held by PSA and the Parliamentary Health Officer.

BM highlighted that the main thing the Board needs to be kept aware of is the possible changes PSA are going to make on how Accredited Registers handle complaints. PSA are working on a set of guidelines on complaint handling, which is going to be published over the next few months. This could mean some particular changes to COSCA's complaints handling.

The purpose of this Agenda item is to remind the Board that we are potentially looking at yet another change to the PSA Accredited Register Scheme relating to complaints in the course of this year.

## **5.11 COSCA Register of Counsellors & Psychotherapists: Standard One Assessment**

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK was delighted to note that PSA confirmed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2024 that COSCA had passed this assessment and was awarded the highest level of rating, with nothing identified as affecting the impact assessment. JK thanked BM and the staff on behalf of the Board for compiling the required information and evidence to confirm to PSA the effectiveness of counselling.

## **5.12 Survey of COSCA Validated Diploma Course Providers**

Information in overview document 5.1

JK noted that as part of the review of the COSCA diploma validation guidelines and to ensure that courses are as well delivered as possible, COSCA will shortly be consulting validated diploma training providers on a range of topics listed in the overview.

### **5.13 Renewal of Credit and Levelling of COSCA's Skills & Supervision Courses**

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK shared great news that this item was successfully renewed in December 2023 due to the inclusion of the comprehensive information.

## ***Informing and Influencing Policy Making***

### **5.14 Scottish Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group**

Information in overview document 5.1.

JK acknowledged that this item highlights that the Scottish Government will soon be consulting with the members of the Scottish Government Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group on the draft Student Mental Health Action Plan.

BM added that he would be attending a meeting to discuss with the Scottish Government the draft report.

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## **6. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

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

#### **6.1 Financial Report to December 2023**

Paper previously circulated

JK invites the Board's consent for this report.

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

#### **6.2 Report of the Treasurer to December 2023**



Paper previously circulated.

JK thanked TH for the preparation and presentation for these two reports and invited TH to add any additional comments.

TH added that the income from training and workgroups would improve towards the end of the year.

BM shared with the Board that discussions are ongoing about next year's grant and he will update the Board as soon as decisions have been made regarding the awarding of COSCA's grant from the Scottish Government.

SV acknowledged that is nice to see COSCA is on target, with very small variations due to good financial planning and delivery on all accounts.

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

### **6.3 Memorandum & Articles of Association & COSCA General Meeting**

Paper previously circulated.

JK informed the group that COSCA's General meeting which will take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at The Barracks, Stirling is quorate and thanked Board members who have been able to confirm their attendance.

## **7. RISKS**

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

Verbal report.

BM added that work is ongoing on a set of guidelines regarding suicide ideation and self-harm as well as working with diploma providers to embed this into COSCA training courses. Once this is finalised, it will be brought to the Board for an addition to be made to the Client Risk Matrix.

## **8. INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES**

### **8.1 Equality, Inclusion and Diversity**

Verbal report.

JK opened the space for any thoughts or comments for discussion on this.

SV highlighted that Relationship Scotland is doing work with an organisation called The Mark of Inclusion around equality, inclusion and diversity. They are now nearing the end of this work and once SV's Board has agreed on the details of the report, he would be very happy to share and discuss the report with BM and the Board to give an indication on the types of practical things they are doing to move forward.

## **9. DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING and MARKETING COSCA (3)**

### **9.1 COSCA Development Plan 2024-25.**

Paper previously circulated.

JK thanks Brian for the preparation of this report and highlights that it allows us to review annually the aims, objectives, funding and continuity of COSCA's work.

SV shared his love for COSCA's vision statement and requested in a future meeting it would be useful to spend a little more time on the development plan.

BM shared that the First Minister at the SCVO's Gathering in November 2023 said they might consider multiyear funding to go ahead in the next financial year. In the meantime, if there is anything in particular that Board members feel could be further developed that could be done outside of the plan.

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

### **9.2 New Membership Category Proposal**

Paper previously circulated.

JK opened up the Agenda item for discussion.

BS shared that she thinks this would be a great idea, in terms of inclusion of people and to bring wisdom from retired members that we can draw on if we provide a way for them to remain in connection as COSCA members.

BM stated that up until now COSCA has used the Subscriber membership category for retired individuals who want to keep a connection to COSCA. The practical requirements relating to this item would be to change COSCA's Standing orders, a change of the Memorandum & Articles of Association and an application form created. There would also need to be an agreed period of time after retirement in which an individual could apply for this category and what their voting rights would be.

MP asked if it would be possible for a retired member to return to another membership category if required. It was agreed this is something that would need to be considered and may follow the same rules as the current 'Returning to Practice after a Career Break' application.

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

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

Paper previously circulated.

## **10. 1 Scottish Government Consultation on Conversion Practices**

JK opened up each question on the above Agenda item for discussion.

BS shared with the Board that her views have changed after a discussion with JK. She believes that there should be guidance for the time being with the possibility of legislation at a later date because the proper processes for arriving at legislation have not been implemented in a cohesive way yet. BS added that we do not know how much this is an issue, as the Scottish Government does not seem to have put measures in place to find out what is going on.

MP found this very helpful and agrees with the points made by BS, with the additional element she had not taken into consideration before reading the article in that conversion can be considered in at least two different ways – conversion to the gender/affirmed identity or conversion not to convert.

SV added that his initial reaction to this is supportive of legislation, as it is hard to see that there should be a place for this in Scotland, regardless of how much or little this is happening. SV stated that he would be in favour of COSCA taking a clear decision on this. In the absence of this, there is a potential suspicion for it to be viewed as okay under certain circumstances.

JK shared that as a practitioner she takes her ethical framework and principles very seriously and the idea of not doing harm to others, rather than forcing any view or control. \_\_\_\_\_

BM added that there is a memorandum of understanding that has been signed up to by most of the other professional bodies in the field of counselling/psychotherapy but not COSCA, as we went for our own guidance against conversion practices that can be viewed on our website.

The Christian Institute commissioned saying it is jellyfish legislation. The definitions are not there for conversion practises so how can there be legislation to ban something that is not adequately defined?

This leaves COSCA in a predicament, if we are not to follow other bodies and say we do not want legislation, how does that fit with our members and our relationship with other professional bodies? It may fit with some of the campaign's parents are having because they do not want to be criminalised as well as the Churches and pastoral work.

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

### **12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 11 am to 1 pm at The Barracks, Stirling.

JK thanked CW for all her contributions on behalf of the Board for being such a valuable and valued colleague.

CW thanked the Board for the great opportunity and that she really valued being part of the discussions and the process.

The meeting closed at 12:50pm.

