



**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)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Area of Interest</b>
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
Caron Westmoreland	Statutory Agencies
Alison Shoemark	Research

<b>Name</b>	<b>Co-Optees</b>
Daniel Reilly	Co-optee Lay Representative
Eleni Kepelian	Co-optee Lay Representative

## **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      21 August 2023

Monday      20 November 2023

## **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 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 from 11 am to 1pm via Zoom

## **MINUTES OF MEETING**

### **1. PRESENT**

Birgit Schroeter	Vice Chair/Accreditation – Counsellors and Trainers
Jill Whitfield	Rurality
Caron Westmorland	Statutory Agencies
Linda McLachlan	Drugs, Alcohol & Bereavement
Tatjana Hine	Treasurer / Funding
Alison Shoemark	Research
Eleni Kepelian	Lay Representative
Brian Magee	(in attendance)
Ashleigh Greechan	(Minute Recorder)

### **2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Vice Chair welcomed members to the Board meeting and explained the Chair was absent so she would be stepping in to Chair the meeting and let Board members know there would be a comfort break at 12 and a finish at 1pm. The Chair welcomed new Board member Eleni to the Board and let the other Board members know that Linda McLeod had resigned from the Board.

**Apologies:** Jan Kerr, Stuart Valentine, Daniel Reilly, Linda McLachlan left meeting at 12pm.

### **3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest reported.

## **4. MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING**

### **4.1 Board Meeting of 6 November 2022**

Paper previously circulated.

**Decision:** Consent was granted for the minutes.

### **4.2 Redactions of Minutes: 6 November 2022**

No redactions were suggested.

### **4.3 Matters Arising: 6 November 2022**

The Vice Chair acknowledged that some of the matters arising would feature later in today's agenda items and invited BM to speak to any other matters arising.

BM let the Board know that COSCA had submitted a response to the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Standard Consultation (agenda item 15.3), the outcome is expected in April/May 2023 with a view to PSA introducing a new EDI standard into the Accredited Registers Programme. PSA have since asked if it could take an excerpt from the response we provided for discussion at their Board which stated that EDI is a process, not an event, and that it takes time and can't be done through a tokenistic approach. So, it seemed interested in that point of view.

BM stated that he had also responded on COSCA's behalf to PSA on its consultation on criminal record checks - Safeguarding (agenda item 15.4). The response highlighted, among other things, that the Scottish system is different from the system down South.

## **OVERVIEW**

### **5.1 Information on items 5.3, 5.4 and 5.6.**

The Vice Chair thanked BM for putting together the overview report for the Board meeting and stated that this was helpful in providing a summary of some of the items. The Vice Chair acknowledged the format of information items being listed at the start of the Agenda, and reminded Board members if they had any queries around these items that they should be highlighted prior to the meeting.

## **DEVELOPING, COMMUNICATING AND MARKETING COSCA:**

### **5.2 COSCA Corporate Affairs Group**

Paper previously circulated.

The Vice Chair acknowledged an upward trend in membership numbers and that COSCA is continuing to grow. The Vice Chair invited BM to speak to report. He agreed that there is an

upward trend and we are retaining and getting new members. He also stated once a member organisation joins COSCA there is a whole counselling/counselling skills workforce which are working and accountable under our statement of Ethics and Code of Practice, but not counted in our numbers. So, COSCA membership umbrella is much bigger than the actual statistics in the report.

### **5.3 Companies House Confirmation Statement 2022-23**

Information in overview document 5.1.

The Vice Chair stated this information had to be submitted each year and thanked BM for submitting it for year 2022-23.

### **5.4 Board Elections – Ethics & Research Vacancies**

Information in overview document 5.1.

The Vice Chair stated that there are two vacancies on the COSCA Board that needed filled – Ethics and Research which is currently covered under co-option until September 2023. The Vice Chair asked the current co-opted member if she would be interested in standing for Research, which would see her continue on the Board after September, to which she replied that she would.

BM stated there would be a third vacancy for the area of Criminal Justice following the resignation of the Board member referred to above. He then explained the process of filling vacancies on the COSCA Board and that if Board members were interested in nominating anyone for the vacant areas of interest they could. If one person is nominated they will be deemed to be the appointee. However, if more than one person was nominated it would go to a ballot of members.

## **DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING SYSTEMS AND STANDARDS:**

### **5.5 COSCA Ethics Committee Meeting**

Paper previously circulated.

A short discussion took place on this item with the main points being that the Ethics Committee is a strength of COSCA, that its work supports clients and also members, and it is encouraging to know that complaints are handled in a developmental way. The Vice Chair invited BM to speak. He stated that COSCA's Ethics Committee are a standing group ready to go into action when they are needed. The members are an active and very important group within the structure of COSCA. There was a question asked about whether complaints made against COSCA Organisational members go through the organisations complaint procedure, to which BM explained if a complaint is investigated by an organisation or individual with their own complaints procedure, they would investigate it themselves and then they are

required to submit an Outcome Report to COSCA, which is reviewed on receipt in relation to how the member's complaints procedure had been followed.

## **INCREASING ACCESS TO TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION:**

### **5.6 COSCA Journal, Counselling in Scotland.**

Information in overview document 5.1.

The Vice Chair reminded Board members that they are encouraged to help source articles for the next and future COSCA journals.

## **5. 7 FUTURE EVENTS:**

### **5.7.1 COSCA Annual Ethics Event 2023**

Paper previously circulated.

The Vice Chair stated the event on working with clients presenting suicide thoughts and feeling was fully booked and she was pleased to see this.

## **5.8 PAST EVENTS**

### **5.8.1 COSCA Trainer Accreditation Workshop**

Paper previously circulated.

### **5.8.2 COSCA Counsellor Accreditation Workshop**

Paper previously circulated.

The Vice Chair invited BM to speak to both of the above events. BM stated these items were on the agenda to make the Board more aware of the work that is being done on Accreditation of counsellors and trainers. COSCA supports members who wish to become accredited as either trainers or counsellors. COSCA runs workshops to provide information which supports applicants through the accreditation process and we often find better applications come from those who have attended the workshops. The Vice Chair stated she attended the Counsellor Accreditation workshop in January 2023 and felt that the workshop provided plenty sources of support, with attendees being walked through what is needed to apply, which she found to be very helpful.

## **INFORMING AND INFLUENCING POLICY MAKING**

## **6. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

## **DEVELOPING , COMMUNICATING AND MARKETING COSCA:**

## **6.1 Financial Report to December 2022**

Paper previously circulated.

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

## **6.2 Report of the Treasurer to December 2022**

Paper previously circulated.

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

The Vice Chair invited the Treasurer to speak to the above reports, 6.1 and 6.2. TH stated the reports were clear and pretty straight forward and, except for renumeration, there isn't much variance. TH stated future planning for property expenses had been included in the figures. The Vice Chair thanked TH for the reports and the work that went into them.

## **7. RISKS**

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

Verbal reports invited.

It was stated this was a discussion item but that we would not expect new risks to be highlighted under this agenda item at every Board meeting and that we would expect to have them come up beforehand elsewhere on the agenda. BM asked the Board to note, however, that there may be future risks to clients that arise from the Gender Recognition Reform Act if it becomes unblocked, and Conversion Therapies Bill which may become legislation later this year.

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

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

The Vice Chair stated that we are waiting on PSA getting back to us with their new EDI standard, and we can have further discussion around this then. She then invited discussion if any Board member had anything they would like to bring.

Discussion took place around politics in Scotland and what might happen with the Gender Recognition Reform Bill as there are wide ranging political views on this. As stated above, depending on what happens we may, or may not, have to consider this. There was also a new political question around how COSCA, and other organisations who receive funding from the Scottish Government, may be impacted as a result of the recent and very sudden resignation of Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, with the suggestion that there may be new opportunities with a new First Minister and new Cabinet Health Secretary but that we could only watch and wait to see what happens.

It was stated by Board members that they really liked the fact this is a standing item for us to consider things that we may not have full information on, and keep in mind that things can change and the need for us not be complacent.

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

### **9.1 Feedback from Previous Board Member.**

Paper previously circulated.

BM stated that this feedback was requested at the last meeting by one Board member, and not the Board itself, and that there was no requirement on Board members who decide to resign to submit feedback. Discussion and reflection, however, took place around both the positive points made in the feedback as well as the suggestions made about how the Board's performance may be improved.

### **9.2 Annual Performance and Suitability Review of Trustees of COSCA**

Paper previously circulated.

This report was a result of a Board decision to have a yearly monitoring system for Board members. The Form should be completed and sent to COSCA's Administrator.

### **9.3 Register of Interests Form**

Paper previously circulated.

This yearly report is to ensure Board members register any interests they have which may impact their role as a Board member. The form should be completed and sent to COSCA's Administrator.

### **9.4 Stakeholders Engagement Strategy Review**

Paper previously circulated.

### **9.5 COSCA Risk Management Report Review**

Paper previously circulated.

**Action:** Items 9.4 & 9.5 required decisions to be made and due to there not being enough voting Board members following the comfort break, these decisions could not be made at this meeting and will be rolled forward to the next Board meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

### **9.6 COSCA AGM 06.09.2023**

The Vice Chair invited BM to speak to this item. BM stated we would need to have at least five voting Board members present for a decision to be made on whether the AGM would go ahead this year. BM explained that following legal advice the AGM, if going ahead, would need to be held face to face according to the legal advice previously received and accepted by the Board previously.



Following discussion between the Board members in attendance the following suggestion was made to take forward to an interim Board meeting to be arranged soon after this and before the next arranged one in May 2023:

**Suggestion:** that COSCA should have a face to face AGM on 6th September 2023 as we have not had one for the last two years and it was deemed important to have one this year,

**Action:** that this suggestion be taken to the interim Board meeting.

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

### **10.1 Conversion Therapies Expert Group's Report**

Paper previously circulated.

BM stated that the Board are being asked to consider the above report and decide if it is comfortable to let it go ahead as it stands and that this is the purpose of the Agenda item. Discussion took place around parents or caregivers being criminalised for seeking out conversion therapies for their child/ or child in their care. The question was raised if COSCA has had any legal advice in regards to this - we have not as there has been no reason presented so far to suggest legal advice is necessary. The question was raised if parents were criminalised what would the counsellors' duty be and how would confidentiality work in reporting a parent. BM suggested it would not be any different here from dealing with known child abuse, malnutrition etc. BM asked if there was any concern around the report. No Board members raised any further concerns and so no action is required for the moment. In the meantime, COSCA has a statement on its website stating that we do not support Conversion Therapies.

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

### **11.1 SCoPEd (Scope of Practice and Education)**

Paper previously circulated.

The Vice Chair stated COSCA's position is that it is neutral and that it is not a partner in the SCoPEd project. She invited any discussion on the project. BM stated the framework has now been adopted by all six partners and it will go forward to implementation stage. It has been agreed to by the Boards of all of the six partners involved. Discussion took place with the main points being that COSCA Board members felt "relieved" and "comfortable" with COSCA's neutrality on this project and that there is nothing to suggest that COSCA is missing out or that there is a robustness there that does not exist within COSCA's own processes. It was also stated that the framework is confusing and that COSCA would like to remain autonomous and be able to set its own standards of training and practice in Scotland.

## **11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 15 May 2023 11 am to 1 pm

Following discussion between the Board members in attendance the following suggestion was made to take forward to the interim Board meeting.

**Suggestion:** that Board meetings are held in a hybrid way with some face to face and some online, with face to face meetings allowing better personal connections, and opportunities to meet and engage with each other especially as many Board members have not yet done this, and with online facilitating possible better attendance, less travel, and less cost.

**Action:** The decision on whether this meeting will be on Zoom or face to face will be made at the interim Board meeting – to be arranged.

The Vice Chair invited any further comments before ending the meeting. Those present wished to recognise the contribution Linda McLeod had made to the COSCA Board and thank her for it.

The Vice Chair brought the meeting to a close at 1pm.